

# Agenda Report

August 21, 2023

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Parks Recreation and Community Service Department

**SUBJECT: RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION TO NAME POOL AT ROBINSON PARK "DR. EDNA L. GRIFFIN POOL" AND NAME THE YOUTH COMMUNITY ROOM AT ROBINSON PARK ON BEHALF OF "HONORABLE JOHN J. KENNEDY"**

## **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action of naming a City facility not a "project" as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Section 21065 and Section 15378(b)(4) and (5) of the State CEQA Guidelines and, as such, is not subject to environmental review; and
2. Name the pool at Robinson Park "Dr. Edna L. Griffin Pool" and name the youth community room at Robinson Park Recreation Center on behalf of "Honorable John J. Kennedy".

## **BACKGROUND:**

On May 23, 2023, the Recreation and Parks Commission voted to initiate the *Public Park and Recreation Facility Naming Policy* (see Attachment A) process of naming of the pool at Robinson Park.

### **Pool and Pool Building Renovations**

In summer 2022, the Public Works Department began the pool and pool building renovations at Robinson Park. This project provides for a new, pool with zero-entry access; a new pool deck; renovation of the existing pool building including accessible shower; restroom facilities; new lighting; and resurfacing of parking lot. With the completion of the \$5.9M renovation and expansion of the Robinson Park pool facilities, the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCS) will offer year-round aquatics programming beginning in September 2023. Programming includes swim lessons for all ages (toddlers through adults), water aerobics and parent and me classes, as well as recreational and lap swimming. The operating hours will be Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

### Naming of the Pool

On August 1, 2023, PRCS staff presented a report to the Recreation and Parks Commission detailing the public outreach process and the public input received for naming of the pool. The Commission also heard public comment. Following discussion, the Commission recommended that the pool be named for Dr. Edna L. Griffin and that the youth community room be named on behalf of the Honorable John J. Kennedy. The Commission indicated this recommendation reflects the importance of recognizing both significant individuals.

Per the *Public Park and Recreational Facility Naming Policy* (Paragraph III. A.), PRCS staff started an outreach effort to solicit public input to name the pool. All 372 property owners within a 1,000-foot radius of the project site received a postcard (See Attachment B) with a link to name the pool. In addition to the surrounding property owners, this naming opportunity was digitally shared with the Mayor and City Councilmembers, neighborhood associations within Council Districts 1 and 3, and to the community at-large through the City's social media channels. Public input for a preferred name was limited to one submission per internet protocol (IP) address and respondents were asked to report their zip codes. This enabled staff to distinguish Pasadena vs. non-Pasadena survey respondents.

From June 1 through July 7, the online survey was available for respondents to submit pool name suggestions based on the naming criteria below, as established in the City's naming policy:

- Geographical location of the park or facility;
- Natural or geological features proximate to the park or facility;
- Cultural or historical significance to the City or surrounding neighborhood;
- The name of an individual who has made a significant contribution to the community, country, state or the field of parks and recreation.

A total of 350 responses were received. Only the suggested names from the Pasadena area zip codes were considered, which totaled 305 submissions. Pasadena responses were vetted for adherence to the City's naming policy. The suggested names are as follows:

<b>Suggested Name</b>	<b># of Votes</b>
The Honorable John J. Kennedy Pool	266
Dr. Edna L. Griffin	19
Octavia Estelle Butler	3
Jackie Robinson Pool	2
Missy Franklin	2
Pooly McPoolface*	2
Edward Van Halen Pool	1
Hahamongna Community Pool	1
Louise Bartholomew Memorial Pool	1
Mack Pool at Robinson Park	1
Mosquito Lake*	1
North Pool	1
Paul V. McNutt Pool	1

Robinson Park Pool	1
Ruby McKnight Williams Pool	1
Sammy Lee	1
Sirhan Sirhan*	1
Grand Total	305

\* Suggestion not consistent with naming policy criteria

The following two names received the most support from Pasadena respondents, accounting for 93 percent of the responses.

- **The Honorable John J. Kennedy (266 responses)**

A Pasadena native, Mr. John J. Kennedy (1961–2022) attended Blair High School and USC, receiving degrees in International Relations and Economics. He went on to earn a law degree at Howard University School of Law. Mr. Kennedy was a man of service who served on several boards: Community Health Alliance of Pasadena (ChapCare), where he was Chair of the Board for two years; USC Black Alumni Board of Directors; founding board member of the Pasadena Police Foundation; and the Tom Bradley Legacy Foundation at UCLA. He also served on the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture’s Commission on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

He was elected to the Pasadena City Council in 2013 for Council District 3. Councilmember Kennedy was re-elected for a third term to represent District 3 in 2022 and he proudly and tirelessly worked for his constituents and the City of Pasadena. During his tenure on the City Council, he served as Vice Mayor, chaired the Public Safety Committee, served on the Finance Committee, and served as one of three City representatives to the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority. He supported livable wages, and local hiring. Always focused on the overwhelming need for housing in the community, Councilmember Kennedy advocated for the building of quality affordable housing in District 3 and throughout the city.

Throughout his career, Mr. Kennedy consistently demonstrated caring and innovative leadership. Purposeful, he exhibited initiative and an ambitious spirit in accomplishing tasks and achieving goals. His knowledge and awareness of domestic and international governmental practices and procedures, enhanced by broad travel experience and political exposure, helped him achieve consensus on scores of public issues. He was a consummate collaborator.

In 2014, then-Mayor Bill Bogaard asked Councilmember Kennedy to lead a Sister Cities delegation to China and Taiwan on his behalf. Several years ago, he led a delegation from Pasadena to Dakar-Plateau, Senegal, and as a result of Mr. Kennedy’s direct leadership, Dakar-Plateau is Pasadena’s newest Sister City.

Criteria met: Individual who has made a significant contribution to the community, country, or state.

- **Dr. Edna L. Griffin (19 responses)**

Dr. Edna L. Griffin (1905-1992) was Pasadena's first Black female physician. Her original practice was located at 891 N. Fair Oaks Ave. Dr. Griffin was also a key community leader. As a doctor and business owner, Dr. Griffin became the first Black member of the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce. She saw many injustices in Pasadena and felt it important to work for a fairer community for all. She became involved with the Pasadena YMCA and the Pasadena Chapter of the NAACP, where she served as its first woman president from 1939 to 1947.

Dr. Griffin is credited with saving the land that became Brenner Park from development, opening restaurants to serving African Americans, and most notably the hiring of five African Americans to previously white-only positions—two positions being those of policeman and fireman.

Throughout the 1940s during her tenure as president of the Pasadena NAACP, she filed more than 20 lawsuits against businesses and restaurants for discrimination. She led a successful fight for civil rights here in Pasadena long before the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. One of her most notable wins was the lawsuit against the City for segregating the Brookside Plunge.

The Brookside Plunge (later demolished and rebuilt as the Rose Bowl Aquatics Center) was built in 1914 and on most days of the week only whites could use it. Nonwhites were allowed to swim only on Wednesdays, the same night that the pool was drained and cleaned weekly. This policy insulted African American residents, who with the leadership of Dr. Griffin and the support of the Pasadena NAACP filed a lawsuit against the City. In 1942, the court ruled in favor of granting unrestricted access to the pool for everyone, regardless of skin color. This was a triumph in a time when segregation was the norm throughout most of the country, but it took five years and further action on the part of Dr. Griffin and the NAACP to get the pool reopened and fully desegregated in 1947.

Criteria met: Individual who has made a significant contribution to the community, country, or state.

Upon approval of a name by the City Council, City staff will have a plaque fabricated and installed.

**COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

This action aligns with the City Council's goal of improving, maintaining, and enhancing public facilities and infrastructure. The naming process presented is consistent the City's Public Park and Recreational Facility Naming Policy.

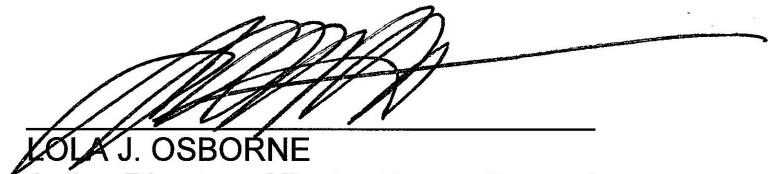
**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

CEQA excludes from environmental analysis those actions that are not "projects" as defined by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. That section excludes from the definition of "project" the creation of government funding mechanisms and fiscal activities which do not yet commit the lead agency to any specific project, and also excludes organizational or administrative governmental activities that do not result in physical changes to the environment. The action proposed for the naming of a pool facility is part of the City's normal administrative process.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact for this action.

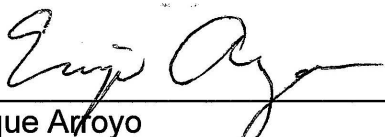
Respectfully submitted,



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LOLA J. OSBORNE  
Acting Director of Parks, Recreation and  
Community Services

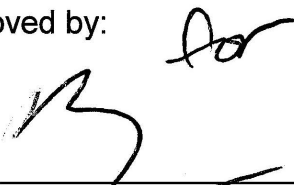
Prepared by:



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Enrique Arroyo  
Management Analyst V

Approved by:



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MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ  
City Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Public Park and Recreational Facility Naming Policy
- Attachment B: Name Your Pool Postcard (English)
- Attachment C: Name Your Pool Digital Flyer (Spanish)