

To: Recreation and Parks Commission

From: City Staff

Subject: Recommendation for the Recreation and Parks Commission to City Council Regarding a Name for the New Santa Monica Civic Center Park

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission take public input, review the results of surveys and public suggestions to date, discuss options, and recommend a name, or names, for the Civic Center park currently known as Palisades Garden Walk, and direct staff to forward the recommendations to City Council.

BACKGROUND

The City Council adopted a policy for naming City-owned land, buildings and facilities on [July 9, 2002](#) which established formal guidelines and a procedure for considering appropriate names (see Attachment A for summary of guidelines). As required by policy, Council seeks recommendations from “related advisory bodies such as the Recreation and Parks Commission, the Library Board and the Landmarks Commission.” The City Council then makes its determination at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Council at which staff, representatives of advisory bodies and civic organizations and the general public may offer testimony. Since the Recreation and Parks Commission has purview over parks, and is thus the related advisory body, it is appropriate that it take comments and make a recommendation on a name or names for the park identified in the Civic Center Specific Plan (CCSP) as Palisades Garden Walk, a 6-acre site bounded by Main Street, Civic Center Drive, Ocean Avenue and the I-10 Freeway.

On [April 13, 2010](#), Council awarded a design contract to James Corner Field Operations (JCFO) for the design of Palisades Garden Walk. The JCFO team worked with staff to organize a series of well-attended community workshops. The first held on July 24, 2010 attracted over 200 community members. The workshop and related on-line survey helped establish, along with the CCSP, a direction for programming the park and provided direction on key design themes. JCFO then developed three Concepts Designs (“The Arroyo Wash”, “The Arroyo Ravine,” and “The Arroyo Dune”) and presented these to 100 community members and the Commission at a community workshop on September 19th. On [October 12, 2010](#), Council provided input on the three initial design concepts and encouraged the team to move forward with a Schematic Design.

On November 13, 2010, approximately 130 community members attended the third community workshop and Commission meeting. The Schematic Design of a revised “The Arroyo Wash” was reviewed and a survey distributed. After the workshop the survey was posted on-line for one month. Question number 4 on the survey solicited ideas for park names which in turn produced a long list of potential names. There was not much consensus when it came to names. Many felt that “Palisades” should be reserved for Palisades Park. The words “Arroyo”, “Ocean” and “Gardens” were often used and there were a number of suggestions for naming the park after Arcadia Bandini (see Attachments B and C).

On [December 14, 2010](#), Council reviewed and approved the Schematic Design for the park and authorized JCFO to begin Design Development. The fourth Community Workshop was held on February 26th, and 80 people attended. Following a presentation of Design Development renderings and plans, participants joined break-out groups. Following a critique of the design, each breakout group was asked to consider the list of suggested park names gathered to date and either pick a recommendation from the list or suggest a different name as a group. Most groups failed to agree on a recommended name. The few groups who reported recommendations had differing suggestions as follows. One group favored “Moomat Ahiiko”, another favored names that included “Santa Monica” or “Central” but not “Arroyo” or “Walk”. Another group recommended “Civic Square” and “The Arroyo”, another liked “Central Park” and “Community Square” and “Arroyo Park” or “Palisades Garden Walk.” One group worried that using “Arcadia” in the name might be lead to confusion with the City of Arcadia.

At the end of the fourth Community Workshop survey forms were again distributed. The survey was posted on-line and remained open for one month. 121 surveys were completed, 91 community members selected up to three top names from a long list of suggestions (see Attachment D).

Voting on “Palisades Garden Walk” names from the list of suggestions was, as before, quite divergent of opinions. Top choices went to:

- Civic Ocean Park, 15 votes
- Arcadia Park, 13 votes
- Palisades Garden Walk, 13 votes
- Santa Monica Garden Park, 13 votes
- Arroyo Park, 12 votes
- Arroyo Gardens, 12 votes
- Ocean Garden Walk, 12 votes
- Santa Monica Central Park, 12 votes

Staff recommends that the Commission review public and staff input regarding names for Palisades Garden Walk and develop a recommendation to be forwarded to the City Council for consideration. The Landmarks Commission will be asked take public input, review the results of surveys and public suggestions, and develop a recommendation or naming the 1-acre City Hall plaza identified in the CCSP as Town Square, since it is a

designated landmark. Landmarks Commission recommendations will be transmitted concurrently with those of the Recreation and Parks Commission in the fall.

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Attachment A: Summary of Naming Guidelines

Attachment B: Third Community Workshop Survey

Attachment C: About Arcadia Bandini Stearns de Baker

Attachment D: Fourth Community Workshop Survey

Attachment A
Summary of Naming Guidelines
Adopted July 9, 2002

In naming public land and buildings, the City Council and its advisory bodies shall consider the following:

- Incorporating “Santa Monica” in the name where it is important for civic or other reasons for a building or facility to be identified with the City;
- Recognizing geographic, topographic or historical features or events associated with Santa Monica;
- Commemorating persons who have served the City in an exceptional manner;
- Commemorating persons who have served the state, nation, or world in an exceptional manner and who have an association with the City;
- Commemorating persons who have served the state, nation, or world in an exceptional or distinguished manner where the contribution is of such major significance that a local association pales in importance;
- Commemorating individuals or organizations who have made important donations of land, funds or materials, equipment and/or facilities; and
- Avoiding recognition of those whose contribution has been appropriately recognized in other city venues or by other means.

The City Council will not name any buildings, land or facilities after current office holders.

Attachment B

Third Community Workshop Survey

During the Third Community Workshop held on November 13, 2010, a survey was distributed to those in attendance. The survey was also posted on-line for a period of one month. The survey was included on the project web site, included in e-blasts, and periodically posted on the City's main web page and in on the City intranet page.

QUESTION NO. 4. During the initial planning process that resulted in the Civic Center Specific Plan, the two parks we are currently planning were identified as "Palisades Garden Walk" and the "Town Square." The name, "Palisades Garden Walk," was selected to convey the concept that the user's experience in this park should be similar to and an extension of the type of experience in Palisades Park -- one of discovery as one walks on pathways from one area to another. The name "Town Square" was intended to convey the democratic and civic nature of that space in front of City Hall. Since that time, the City Council has asked that the community be involved in finalizing the names for these two new parks. What are your ideas?

QUESTION NO. 4. RESULTS

109 surveys were completed. 69 participants responded to Question No. 4. A long list of names was suggested. These were the basis for the more specific naming question included in the fourth Community Workshop survey (see Attachment D).

For "Palisades Garden Walk," in general:

- Arroyo was included in 15 suggestions
- Arcadia or Bandini was used in 8 suggestions
- Ocean was used in 7 suggestions
- Gardens was used in 7 suggestions

Attachment C

About Arcadia Bandini Stearns de Baker

Arcadia was born into the Bandini Family, one of the most prominent of “Californio”* families. Her father, Juan, was known as the first citizen of San Diego. The Bandini ranchland holdings spread out from San Diego through the counties of San Diego and Riverside to the mountains of San Bernardino County. The Bandini home, Casa de Bandini, was the social center of San Diego.

Her life spanned the decades of the Mexican Rancho days, the U.S. and Mexican War, the Gold Rush, the growth of Los Angeles from a dusty pueblo taking its’ first steps toward becoming a major city and she was considered the “Godmother of Santa Monica” as her vision shaped much of the physical beauty of this seaside community.

Arcadia was the eldest of three daughters (praised for their beauty and gentleness) born to Juan and his wife, Dolores. Juan and Dolores had five children (two sons) and after Dolores died Juan married Refugio Argüelles and three more sons were added to the family. Arcadia would become the Matriarch of a large family.

At age 15 Arcadia was married to Abel Stearns 43, a business partner of Juan Bandini and one of the wealthiest men in California. It was an arranged marriage merging great wealth and vast land holdings. The Stearns moved into Abel’s mansion in the Pueblo de Los Angeles. It was called El Palacio and was the grandest mansion in the Pueblo.

The commercial life of Los Angeles revolved around Abel Stearns. Understanding the importance of a port he established a stagecoach line from Los Angeles to San Pedro and built a large warehouse there called La Casa de San Pedro. By the 1860’s Stearns was considered the wealthiest man in California. Abel died suddenly in 1871 leaving Arcadia widowed and enormously wealthy.

In 1874 Arcadia married Col. Robert S. Baker who had recently purchased the Sepulveda Ranch property (some 36,000 acres for \$ 54,000). Baker and his business partner, Senator John Percival Jones, intended to establish the Port of Los Angeles on the Pacific Coast on the land known as Santa Monica. In 1875, having built a wharf and railroad, they auctioned off lots and founded the community of Santa Monica. The railroad failed but Santa Monica became a resort and the Bakers built a home on Ocean Avenue. Arcadia would remain in that home the rest of her life. Baker sold all his land holdings to his wife in 1877 and Arcadia and Senator Jones formed the Santa Monica Land and Water Company that developed most of West Los Angeles. Arcadia was widowed again when Baker died in 1894. Arcadia lived on until 1912 and became the great benefactress of Santa Monica. 2000 people attended her funeral at St. Vibiana’s Cathedral. When she died Arcadia left an Estate valued between 8 and 15 million dollars. She left no will and there was a famous court battle over her estate which was the largest ever probated in California.

Key facts

- 1888 Arcadia and Jones deeded extensive land to the U.S. Government to establish a National Home for Disabled Veterans—known today as the Veteran’ Administration.
- 1891 They donated Palisades Park to the City of Santa Monica.
- Near the turn of the century Arcadia donated land in Santa Monica Canyon to establish the nation’s first experimental forestry station managed by Abbott Kinney.

- Arcadia donated land to churches (Presbyterian and St. Augustine by the Sea), schools and clubs (Bay City Women's Club)

Arcadia was an astute businesswoman and a gracious hostess at her salons in her Ocean Avenue home. Arcadia never spoke English but conducted all business and social conversations in perfect Castillian Spanish. An interpreter was always present and during her first marriage it was often Abel Stearns.

Attachment D
Fourth Community Workshop Survey

A survey was distributed during the Design Development Community Workshop held on February 26th. 46 community members completed the survey at the workshop. The survey was then posted on-line for one month, linked to the project web page, included in e-blasts, periodically posted on the main City web and intranet pages, and included in Facebook ads. 121 surveys were completed. 91 participants filled out Question No. 4 on park names.

QUESTION NO. 4. PARK NAMES - Many names have been submitted for our new Civic Center parks. Which of the following most common suggestions are most appropriate (select up to three)?

PALISADES GARDEN PARK			
A. Arcadia Bandini Park		Q. Linda Vista	
B. Arcadia Bandini Wash		R. Ocean Garden Park	
C. Arcadia Park		S. Ocean Garden Walk	
D. Arcadia Wash		T. Palisades Garden	
E. Arroyo Garden Park		U. Palisades Garden Walk	
F. Arroyo Garden Walk		V. Ocean Arroyo Park	
G. Arroyo Gardens		W. Santa Monica Arroyo Park	
H. Arroyo Gardens Park		X. Santa Monica Center	
I. Arroyo Park		Y. Santa Monica Central Park	
J. Arroyo Walk		Z. Santa Monica Eden	
K. Arroyo Wash		AA. Santa Monica Garden Park	
L. Bandini Park		BB. Santa Monica Park	
M. Bayside Eden		CC. The Arroyo	
N. Canopy Park		DD. The Center	
O. Civic Ocean Park		EE. The Heart	
P. Civic Pacific Park			

QUESTION NO. 4 RESULTS FOR PALISADES GARDEN WALK

	# of votes
Civic Ocean Park	15
Arcadia Park	13
Palisades Garden Walk	13
Santa Monica Garden Park	13
Arroyo Park	12
Arroyo Gardens	12
Ocean Garden Walk	12
Santa Monica Central Park	12