



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 22-484

MEETING DATE: 6/7/2022

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Sean Joyce, Interim City Manager

VIA: Chris Slama, Director of Community & Library Services

PREPARED BY: Chris Slama, Director of Community & Library Services

Subject:

Approve the naming of the City-operated beach recreational vehicle (RV) campground located at 20903 Pacific Coast Highway as the "Huntington Beach RV Campground" as recommended by the Community & Library Services Commission

Statement of Issue:

The Community and Library Services Department operates a recreational vehicle (RV) camping facility in the south beach parking lot, commonly known as the Sunset Vista RV Campground. The City will be launching a new campground reservation system and website on July 1, 2022. In conjunction with this launch, staff and the Community and Library Services Commission suggest renaming the campground to better reflect its beachside location.

Financial Impact:

Not applicable.

Recommended Action:

Approve the recommendation made by the Community and Library Services Commission to name the City-operated beach RV campground located at 20903 Pacific Coast Highway to the "Huntington Beach RV Campground."

Alternative Action(s):

Do not approve the recommended action and direct staff accordingly.

Analysis:

The beach camping facility, currently known as the "Sunset Vista RV Campground," is located at 20903 Pacific Coast Highway just south of the Marine Safety Training Center and directly across the street from Pacific City. The campground has 50 campsites and allows stays of up to 14 nights from October through May each year.

The City has been operating the RV campground since the mid-1970s. The campground was originally only for extended overnight camping. However, in the early 1980s, en route camping was added as an option for those looking for a quick overnight stay at the beach. During this transition, the name Sunset Vista RV Campground was introduced by City staff but the name was never formally approved by City Council. In early 2000, the campground was modernized during Phase II of the South Beach Improvement Project with the addition of pedestals for power and water at each campsite. This was also the first time the Sunset Vista RV Campground name was mentioned in any City Council action. En route camping ceased when construction began and only standard overnight camping remained. The popularity of the campground began to grow following the modernization and significantly increased with the 2013 introduction of online reservations.

The campground experiences 95% occupancy rates in the fall and spring months, with winter occupancy dipping below 90%. During the 2020/21 season, approximately 13% of campers were Huntington Beach residents with another 61% visiting from other areas of southern California and more than 14% from out of state. The average length of stay was three nights.

Although the campground is popular, staff has experienced that the Sunset Vista name is a source of confusion for many potential guests. Prospective visitors are often unaware that the campground is not only located within the Huntington Beach city limits but also owned and operated by the City of Huntington Beach. Additionally, the Sunset Vista name does not effectively link the campground to the Surf City identity and branding of our world famous beach.

Neighboring campgrounds have names that incorporate the location of the facility. For example, Bolsa Chica State Beach includes camping under the name of Bolsa Chica State Beach; the Newport Dunes RV Resort is located at Newport Dunes; and Doheny State Beach Campground is located at Doheny State Beach. These names eliminate confusion regarding the location of the campground and take advantage of the reputation of those particular areas.

A destination-based name, such as “Huntington Beach RV Campground”, will enhance customer service and on-line discoverability. Since advent of the internet, it has become increasingly important to optimize search engine results. This name change would allow for more accurate search results and provide easier access for individuals desiring to camp in Huntington Beach. Staff expects improved search engine optimization will drive more people to the camping website, thereby expanding the number of bookings, especially during the winter months.

The timing of the name change is especially pertinent. Renovations of the campground have been completed and a new, more user-friendly, online reservation system is anticipated to launch July 1, 2022. Campers who return in the fall of 2022 will enjoy a newly repaved surface, fresh paint, new power/water pedestals, and reconfigured campsites.

At the May 11, 2022 Community and Library Services Commission meeting, the Commission approved the recommendation to City Council to name the campground the “Huntington Beach RV Campground.”

Environmental Status:

Not applicable.

Strategic Plan Goal:

Community Engagement

Attachment(s):

None