

From: bob tom

Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 8:53 PM

Subject: a letter from blair beekman-2. Tuesday April 17, 2018. _____ The Park Ranger issues.

Dear city of San Jose city council,

I wanted to add, about the Park Ranger issue.

It seems the park rangers, can use some sort of, mental health/sensitivity training,

the same as SJPD, but to maybe work from, a different place.

They seem they aren't connected to the everyday public enough, in their ideas or intentions.

The PSFSS meeting, that was referred to often today, by councilperson Peralez, also had an agenda item, about Project Hope.

Park Rangers, should learn how to be, a part of a process like this, more.

And, as an occasional drop in, to say hi, with community lectures, to Project Hope neighborhood groups.

And, to homeless community meetings, as well.

I have noticed them at community functions. But how to create, a more cognitive idea, for the community, they do not intend to do harm.

They need to learn some ideas of policing, but there is a balance, needed in learning, so they do not have to really be like police.

Maybe reading, a u.s. national park service ranger manual, can offer some clues, and some help.

The Park Ranger job, should be thought of, in terms of 1980's ideas, of bicycle police, and community service officers.

The Park Ranger program, was developed in the late 1980's I would guess.

I think Parks and Rec. director, Angel Rios, has a good idea, how to continue to develop, a mellow purpose, for the the future of Park Ranger.

Director Rios, seems he has a few things in place. I hope you can continue the work in what it takes, to build a better morale, for the Park Ranger dept.

A thank you, for the thoughtful approach, Director Rios, and others, of San Jose, city govt., is taking on this issue.

sincerely,

blair beekman

From: Bill Rankin

Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 2:20 PM

To: The Office of Mayor Sam Liccardo; District1; Sergio Jiminez; District3; District4; District5; Davis, Dev; Nguyen, Tam; District8; District9; District 10; City Clerk

Subject: April 17 Council, item 5.1/Support for rangers

Dear Mayor Liccardo and SJ Council Members,

I'm writing in regard to item 5.1 on the council agenda for April 17.

As a trail advocate and neighborhood leader, I am writing to support the rangers and ranger program in San Jose. With the increase in homeless activities in our parks, on our trails, and in riparian corridors, it is getting much harder for rangers to do their jobs. And it is much more dangerous for the rangers now as ever before.

I support an increase in police presence to help the rangers. I also support arming the rangers with tasers and firearms. We, the citizens, ask a lot of our rangers as they watch over our parks and streams and they deserve the tools they need to keep themselves safe and the citizenry safe.

Please give them the tools and support that they need.

Bill Rankin
District 6

From: Jackie Steffano

Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 3:05 PM

To: City Clerk; District1; mayorsemail@sanjoseca.gov; District2; District3; District4; District5; District 6; District7; District8; District9; District 10; Webmaster Manager; Sykes, Dave

Subject: City council 5.1 Park Rangers

Bosses? Beancounters? Legislators? City Council? Mr Mayor?

This is for you.

If you want to honor your Rangers, don't wait till after they get killed or hurt, and then call them heroes, and name things after them, so you get a photo op by a road sign, or a building.

Buy them Tazers. Give them firearms. Buy them tourniquets. Send them to training.

Fix the brakes, and replace the tires.

Find them help after critical incidents.

That's how you honor lives.

Then, the monument means something.

There are days when I'm really tempted to ask if anyone's ever said, when they handed over a folded flag,

"I could have done something to help, but I decided it would take too much time, cost too much and it was too much work to find the money."

That's harsh, I know, but it's the truth.

From: Jessica Friedman
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 11:18 AM
To: City Clerk; district5@sanjoseca.goc
Subject: Park rangers

To My City Council, Mr. Mayor, and City Clerk,

Thank you all for everything you do to help our community here in beautiful San Jose.

My name is Jessica Friedman, and I was a park ranger with the city of San Jose. I was hired in 2015 and went through academy that January of 2015. I had previously worked as a park interpreter (not of languages; park interpreters create family programs like campfire programs, junior ranger programs and sometimes are in charge of docents, as I was) and in outdoor education for 10 years. I knew San Jose rangers were generalist rangers, and was looking forward to working on natural resources, and interpretation. I had worked for California State Parks, but found connecting inner city families to their parks to be especially rewarding.

I grew up in East San Jose going to Alum Rock Park, Overfelt Gardens and Lake Cunningham throughout my childhood. I have countless memories of going to those parks with my family and friends. I was very excited to give back to my community as a ranger.

But after attending a law enforcement academy and going through field training I found that a lot of work I was doing was law enforcement with homeless encampments. I never wanted a firearm, and had never been trained with them until I attended academy. I still do not own a firearm. However, I did take my training to heart. While in academy I asked my instructors what I should do if I was clearing homeless camps without a firearm. Each instructor said the same thing: they would not go into homeless encampments without a firearm.

During my time as a law enforcement ranger at Kelley Park, I had a few encounters that left me a little shaken. I will tell you about one that still bothers me. While clearing one camp, a man brandished a chef knife and hammer at me. I followed protocol and was lucky that he put them down when I asked him to. I still think about that day and am grateful nothing happened to me. I cannot imagine what it would feel like to be stabbed with that knife or beaten with that hammer.

Every encampment I went to, we found weapons. I knew the homeless used them to protect themselves from each other. One woman showed me the cuts on her palms from holding a knife at night because she was so frightened her ex would come and kill her. She refused my help, in case you were wondering.

While working for the city I became pregnant with my son, who is now one. I will not be returning to work as a park ranger with the city because I know what I would need to do and how potentially dangerous it is. I know my supervisors and managers have said "If you feel a situation is unsafe, do not enter into it." I appreciate being supported by our management this way, but it isn't that simple. I would not have entered the area where the man with the knife and hammer were, if I knew he was there. We were about ten feet apart from each other. If he wanted to hurt me, it would have happened in seconds. I cannot control another person, and I was lucky he did not want to hurt me. I knew the risks and didn't mind them until I became pregnant with my son.

We know what we are doing can be potentially dangerous. However, I think clearing homeless encampments is not a typical or predictable type of danger. We use the word "homeless" but the type of people we are working with are not people living out of their cars, working and trying to find a house in our economy. They are severely mentally ill, often substance abusers who need medication and likely help from counselors for all the trauma they have experienced. Most of the time, they listen to us and do not want to create any problems with us. However, if they are using illegal drugs like meth or are drunk they can become unpredictable and dangerous.

I feel like there are many options for how to make the situation safer for peace officer rangers in the field who are required to clear homeless camps. We could keep hiring SJPD to come out with us, but we all know that SJPD is very busy. It also does not seem very cost effective.

I am writing this letter to try to give you my insight into a complex issue, as I know you understand it to be. I wish I had the answer. I just know that what we are doing now is not safe. I want to make sure my coworkers can go home safe.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I know it is a long email, but I have left out a lot of environmental ramblings I wanted to add about how much I treasure our natural resources here in San Jose and want to protect them for future generations.

Jessica Friedman

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Martin

Sent: Friday, April 13, 2018 5:44 PM

To: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Sam Liccardo <TheOfficeofMayorSamLiccardo@sanjoseca.gov>

Subject: Park ranger program

Esteemed Mayor and City Council,

I am of the opinion that the Park Rangers have been poorly managed for a long time. The program obviously has dedicated staff, as is evidenced by their dealing with the criminals in the underbelly of San Jose. They rarely get “kudos” in the Mercury News or on any local news station, but those 10-20 men and women work long hours, putting their life on the line, doing thankless hard dirty work, for some folks who sit in suits in City Hall who don’t appreciate them (I’m speaking of their leaders, not City council).

I follow San Jose City Politics and City Council meetings regularly and as a matter of principle, I believe it is everyone’s duty as a tax payer and citizen to be aware of what is going on. You all have a tough job with millions of critics, but you do it well and I believe you are fair. I don’t believe this is the case of Mr. Rios, whose pre planned responses in the latest public safety meeting are typical of an unscrupulous politician who is concerned only about his outward appearance and climbing some political ladder. Instead of addressing any of the serious concerns brought forth by the park maintenance worker, ranger, Union rep, and Councilmember Peralez, Mr. Rios seemed much more focused on praising himself for all of his “dedication” to the rangers he claims to care so deeply for. If that is the case, why has he spent his whole tenure ignoring their desperate pleas for police safety equipment? This may work for him while speaking to uneducated or inexperienced parks workers, but if I saw through this facade, I know Mr. Mayor and you City Councilmembers did too. I’d love to hear more rangers speak publically but there’s no doubt that they would be “spanked” behind the scenes for speaking out against their leadership.

My best guess is that Mr. Rios will continue to try and drag on this process as long as humanly possible, allowing the rangers to continue to risk their lives, while he sits securely behind a large desk in the safety of City Hall. I’m sure it is a political point against him if the rangers were to be reassigned to SJPd, which is why he is trying to hold on so tightly, but he surely is not a qualified person to direct officers of the law. I urge you all to seriously consider the repercussions of keeping trained enforcement officers under the inept leadership of Mr. Rios. Parks in San Jose are the worst I have ever seen in my 20 years here. St. James Park, the Guadalupe River Park and most smaller parks all around San Jose have become hotbeds of criminal activity where no law following citizen would ever choose to spend time. Gang members, drug dealers, prostitutes, and the homeless are the only ones in these parks. Even bare bones maintenance is ignored, Trash is everywhere with cans frequently overflowing, graffiti is rampant, basketball courts are not maintained, trees and shrubs are not trimmed, parks everywhere are just eyesores. Even in the gem Alum Rock Park, grass goes weeks without being mowed, trails are regularly closed because of maintenance of hazards, poison oak has taken over large sections of otherwise okay trails, and people are taking notice. Mr. Rios very obviously can’t even manage simple maintenance of his parks, why would we continue to allow him to have control of the valuable rangers? Give them to SJPd

where they can be overseen by competent knowledgeable sworn personnel who know what they're doing.

Surely, one of these rangers will get gravely injured or die and Mr. Rios will simply throw up and his hands and declare "I never could have known!"

From:**Sent:** Sunday, April 15, 2018 9:56 AM**To:** City Clerk**Subject:** San Jose Park Rangers

Dear City Clerk Toni Taber,

Let me briefly introduce myself, I'm Matt Cerkel, the president of the Park Rangers Association of California. Having worked in the park ranger profession since 1991, most of that time as a peace officer park ranger, I'm a strong supporter of the park ranger profession, peace officer authority for rangers and supporter of armed peace officer park rangers. I have served in various capacities in the parks, as a uniformed seasonal park ranger aide with no enforcement authority, as a public officer park ranger, as a unarmed peace officer park ranger and as an armed peace officer park ranger. In my 27 year career I can say I felt the safest and most effective when I was working as an armed peace officer ranger.

My career has also taught me that arming peace officer park rangers is a tough issue. As stated earlier, I'm supportive of peace officer powers for rangers and supplying them the necessary equipment to perform law enforcement duties safely, this would include firearms. I also understand politics being politics and the firearms issue for rangers is commonly a "third rail" of park politics that is often avoided. I hope the City of San Jose has the courage to seriously consider this issue, given the ongoing dangers your rangers face. I've heard some within the City have suggested transferring park rangers into the police department. I'm generally opposed to this idea, because in the long-term park ranger programs that are transferred into traditional police departments often don't survive, both Roseville and Oakland park ranger programs were eventually lost after they become part of their cities' police departments. In the case of Oakland there is now no dedicated patrol of their parks, with the exception of a volunteer patrol program. The City would be better served looking at agencies like Sacramento County Regional Parks, which is an armed POST affiliated park ranger program and deals with many of the same issues your rangers deal with.

Being a park ranger has many similarities to being a police officer, but it has many differences too. From my perspective, based on nearly three decades of experience, the best park rangers are those that understand their law enforcement powers are only one of tools on their duty belt. The City of San Jose park ranger program is a multi-purpose park ranger program. Besides providing law enforcement services your park rangers provide EMS, wildland firefighting, search and rescue, natural resource management and park interpretation/education services in the parks and for the visitors. These services would likely be lost if the ranger program was merged into the police department. The citizens of San Jose helped save the City's park ranger program during the Great Recession because they saw the value of the rangers' multi-purpose mission.

If the City of San Jose is looking at the possibility of arming it's rangers it should consider establishing a Chief Park Ranger position to oversee the program, perhaps contracting out that position to a Lieutenant or Captain from the Police Department. This would be a better option

that than placing the ranger program into the police department. The chief ranger could put together the needed policies and procedures to transition the rangers to armed status, while your supervising park rangers bring the chief up to speed on the other aspects of the ranger program and handle the day to day management of the ranger program.

The Park Rangers Association of California can also help the City of San Jose by providing contacts with park ranger agencies that deal with similar issues and by providing the City with a list of armed park ranger agencies.

Let me know what we can do to help.

Sincerely,

Matt Cerkel
President,
Park Rangers Association of California

From: mats List

Sent: Saturday, April 14, 2018 11:14 PM

To: City Clerk

Subject: Park Ranger safety statement for April 17th Council meeting

Honorable Council Members, Mayor and City Manager,

I am a resident of San Jose whose family often visits parks for recreation, relaxation, and enjoyment. I am also a Peace Officer Park Ranger who has seen firsthand the dangers that are present on the job. I will be unable to attend the City Council meeting on Tuesday April 17th. Therefore, I am writing to lend my support to providing Peace Officer Park Rangers with the appropriate safety tools to conduct themselves in a safe and efficient manner while protecting the people and natural resources of the City of San Jose. By appropriate safety tools, I am referring to the same safety tools provided to the San Jose Police Department. Peace Officer Park Rangers should be equipped with firearms and Tasers. It is important to note that Peace Officer Park Rangers employed by the City of San Jose are sworn Law Enforcement Officers who receive very similar training to the San Jose Police Department at the National Park Service Seasonal Law Enforcement Academy. After reviewing the memo provided by PRNS on the council website, I have some concerns. The notion that 6 months are needed in order to come to a determination for a course of action is unreasonable. Why is a tiered approach not being undertaken? Improved O.C (oleoresin capsicum) spray delivery and Tasers along with body worn cameras could be provided immediately while the logistics of firearms are worked out. These safety concerns have been provided to management for over two years with no action taken to date for any meaningful change. I personally have been in several altercation where I could have been seriously injured or killed. My fellow Park Rangers and I are in harm's way every single day. With the exception of ignoring all crime, there is no way to do this job in a safe manner. Not carrying the standard, and publicly expected, safety tools makes a dangerous job only more so.

The situation at hand also raises several questions. Why is the safety of Park Rangers who are sworn law enforcement Officers not as important as the other professionals who provide for public safety? Would you ask your Police Officers to conduct their law enforcement duties without the safety equipment they are provided? Would you expect your fire fighters to fight fires without the appropriate safety equipment? Arson Investigators from the San Jose Fire Department are armed and they do not conduct nearly the level of law enforcement activities as Park Rangers do. These are very simple questions to which the answer is no. Rarely a day goes by where I am not asked, by Police Officers I interact with, where is your firearm? I attempt to laugh it off but they are deadly serious. I have been told on several occasions that we do a very similar job and the fact we are not armed is ridiculous. Peace Officer Park Rangers do the same type of work as San Jose Police Patrol Officers except we do it in our parks and public lands. We make arrests, write citations, and interact with dangerous suspects who are often under the influence of illicit substances, book evidence, write crime reports, request warrants be issued, respond to down persons, and the list goes on.

Why are Peace Officer Park Rangers asked to do their job without the appropriate safety equipment? This may appear to be an odd question simply because it is assumed that Law Enforcement Officers are provided with the proper safety tools. In the City of San Jose, the Peace Officer Park Rangers, who are Sworn Law Enforcement Officers are not. I need to understand why the lives of my fellow Park Rangers and I are not as important as the other professionals who provide for public safety in San Jose. The idea that a Park Ranger can simply call for a Police Officer to respond is dangerously ignorant of the reality of Law Enforcement. If a contact, any contact, goes bad it is too late. The average gunfight last 3 seconds or less. In the event a criminal decides to shoot at or stab a Park Ranger, it will be over before any radio call for aid would be sent. That is why law enforcement Officers are provided with safety tools including firearms. It is not for the everyday occurrence, it is to be prepared for what may happen while on the job. The same can be said of our bullet resistance vests which we are required to wear. Why would we be required to wear such an item if there was no risk of a Park Ranger being shot?

There is no law enforcement lite, it needs to be done correctly per our training which includes the safe and appropriate uses of firearms, batons, O.C spray and Tasers or it should not be done at all. That is the only way to mitigate the risks of the dangerous encounters that occur on a daily basis. The notion that anyone can “halfway” law enforcement and expect to be safe or effective is naive and dangerous at best. With the current situation, Park Rangers are not being utilized to their full capacity to help keep the public and our parks safe. The people of this City deserve clean and safe parks and trail systems. It makes little sense to tie the hands of the Park Rangers when there is, and will continue to be a need for our law enforcement services. I can say with confidence that the Peace Officer Park Rangers of San Jose want to provide for the safety of the public and our natural resources, we simply need to be equipped and allowed to do so. We also all want to go home to our families at the end of every shift. The safety of our Park Rangers should be a priority and not seen as an inconvenience or burden. It is not PRNS management, City Council or anyone else whose life is at risk every day just by doing their job. Peace Officer Park Rangers, like their public safety peers in the Police and Fire departments face a different reality. The Park Rangers to date have been largely ignored for reasons I do not understand. The people of San Jose deserve better, Park Rangers deserve better, my wife and children deserve better. I ask that this Council do what is right and take action to ensure that the Peace Officer Park Rangers are provided with the proper safety equipment to better protect the public, our natural resources and themselves.

Respectfully,

Mathew Mendriski

From: Jocko Nguyen
Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2018 1:02 PM
To: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>
Subject: Rangers

For the next counsel meeting I have some comments about the Park Rangers.

They are very nice and care about our parks and the people in the neighborhood. I live in Rock Springs neighborhood and I feel very unsafe walking around because of drugs and homeless guys and prostitutes. They do a good job of doing things to help and are very nice to me and my children.

They should have guns to help protect me and my neighbors and the people in the parks. It is very dangerous and the homeless can be very dangerous people. There are gangs that hang out in parks by my house and it is unsafe that they enforce laws and how do they protect themselves? What if someone points a gun at them or tries to stab them? They can call Police but I know how long it takes for Police to come I have called them before and sometimes it takes very long. When things are dangerous you don't have all the time that you need and must be able to fight back.

I hope you give them to the police department and let them have guns like Police. Thank you

J. Nguyen

March 29, 2018

San Jose City Council
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San José, CA 95113

Dear City Council,

This letter is written in regards to the issue of San Jose Peace Officer Rangers being armed and is on behalf of a number of San Jose Peace Officer Park Rangers whose names are included at the bottom.

The Ranger program was created in 1972 in response to an increase of violent crime occurring in parks and to supplement the law enforcement presence of the San Jose Police Department (SJPD) on park lands. Over the 45-year history of the Ranger program, there has been a continuing evolution in the type and mix of work that Rangers perform. Previously, law enforcement was a secondary role for Rangers. More recently, law enforcement has become a primary responsibility for many Rangers and especially those Rangers who are assigned to areas heavily impacted by transients and homeless encampments. This change has largely been driven by the large influx of transients who have taken over large areas of park lands closed to the public.

This increased emphasis on law enforcement is demonstrated by two significant developments in the Ranger program. Rangers originally went through training consisting of two parts of a California POST modular academy which was the same level of training given to SJPD reserve officers. This training changed several years ago when the City began sending Ranger trainees to the National Park Service's Law Enforcement Academy at Santa Rosa Junior College. This enhanced level of law enforcement training involves a 17-week, full-time training program taught by law enforcement Rangers, as well as officers and deputies from neighboring departments. This academy change, which was specific to the work of a Park Ranger, emphasized scenario-based training and highlighted the importance of staying safe in a role where backup was often far away. The other significant development was the City's creation in 2013 of the Watershed Protection Team (a specialized unit budgeted to have four Rangers), partially funded through a contract with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, whose sole purpose is enforcing laws and protecting the environment along San Jose creeks.

The combination of these two developments illustrates the significant change that has taken place over time in the law enforcement duties and responsibilities of Rangers. Rangers are expected to perform significant law enforcement duties and are provided with the level of training commensurate with those responsibilities. Unfortunately, Rangers now find themselves in a situation where they are not provided with the law enforcement tools necessary to safely fulfill the role in which they find themselves. Notwithstanding the fact that Park Rangers statistically are one of the most assaulted of any category of law enforcement officer, the City's failure to provide Rangers without the appropriate defensive tools to protect themselves leaves them dangerously vulnerable.

Aside from the dangers regularly encountered by Rangers who are members of the Watershed Protection Team, Rangers assigned to Regional Parks or Downtown face similar dangers. Land that borders Alum Rock Park has been home to several Marijuana Grow Operations. In one instance, when local law enforcement raided the grow site, a suspect guarding the site escaped into the park which was open and hosting a children's summer camp. The unarmed Rangers on duty at the time (who responded from other parks) were

unable to respond in an appropriate manner to deal with a possibly armed suspect and were left feeling helpless and ineffective in protecting the park. Approximately one year ago, a Ranger at Kelley Park did a welfare check on a man who had been passed out in the same spot for several hours. When the Ranger approached the man to check if he needed medical care, the man produced a box cutter, lunged at the Ranger, and threatened to cut his throat. SJPD responded with over a dozen officers, including officers armed with rifles, a K9 unit, a helicopter, and several sergeants and lieutenants. Several other parks, including Regional Parks and smaller Neighborhood Parks, are known hangouts for gang members. Because of the known risks of contacting this demographic, Rangers are either at high risk for violence or are compelled to ignore the public safety issues associated with these groups. Aside from the "higher risk" groups, Regional Park Rangers also handle non-violent crimes on a daily basis which itself comes with an inherent risk of contacting unknown persons. Vehicle thefts and break-ins, vandalism, smoking, alcohol, illegal drug use, dogs off-leash, trespassing, and arguments over picnic sites are daily occurrences for Rangers. While on the surface many of these situations do not present the same dangers as other contacts, they nevertheless present an inherent risk that should not be minimized. For the same reason an officer in a low crime area of town is provided with a firearm for self-defense, Rangers in all parks and on all Ranger teams should be afforded the same basic protection.

Rangers are highly trained and undergo a complete Peace Officer background check, fingerprinting, a psychological test, a medical examination, and a polygraph examination. Upon hiring, they are sent to a 700-hour National Park Service academy in Santa Rosa, and then complete PC 832, a 40-hour California specific laws of arrest course. In addition to the law enforcement training, Rangers complete a 60-hour emergency medical responder course, a 40-hour wildland fire training course, an 8-hour hazardous materials course, and 40-hour California mandated "Critical Incident Training". Rangers then must successfully complete a 12-week field training program, where they are evaluated daily by a field training officer, before being sent to a regional park or specialized team. In the first two years of employment, Rangers are typically given additional park specific training such as low angle rope rescue, emergency vehicle boat operation, emergency vehicle four-wheel drive/all-terrain vehicle operation, bicycle patrol, search and rescue, dealing with dangerous animals, and radio operations.

The City currently has five full-time sworn field level Rangers, one part-time sworn field level Ranger, four Senior Rangers, one Supervising Ranger, and one Ranger in field training for a total of twelve Peace Officer Park Rangers. We have one Ranger enrolled in the NPS Academy who is slated to graduate in May.

With seven regional parks, 53+ miles of trail, over 200 neighborhood parks, and more than 12 miles of creeks, Rangers are severely understaffed and lack the appropriate law enforcement tools to do their job safely. Due to this inadequate staffing and lack of basic safety equipment, Rangers must frequently rely on SJPD for additional support. While SJPD provides Rangers with the support they have available, the unfortunate reality is that SJPD is already stretched thin across the City and often does not have the resources to both handle their calls and also to provide assistance to Rangers. In addition, because Rangers work in parks, creeks, and other park lands, they are often in areas not easily accessible by SJPD vehicles and are sometimes fifteen minutes or more away from the nearest SJPD officer.

In the past several years, Rangers have been assaulted, have had physical altercations with suspects, have had three separate incidents with aggressive dog attacks, regularly encounter armed suspects, have found hundreds of weapons in homeless encampments, and routinely deal with the possession and use of

methamphetamine and crack cocaine. In one instance, two Rangers had a physical encounter with a suspect that lasted over ten minutes before SJPD arrived and deployed a taser to subdue the suspect. In another case, a Ranger in a Regional Park observed two men walking in to a closed area of the park; one of the men was holding a long gun. Recently, Rangers found a loaded Glock .45 in an occupied homeless encampment.

These encounters are just a small illustration of the dangerous environment in which Rangers routinely operate. Rangers have similar encounters on a regular basis. The inescapable conclusion is that Rangers work under unacceptably dangerous safety conditions that not only put their personal safety in jeopardy, but also seriously compromise their ability to proactively protect the general public visiting City parks and the natural resources found in these parks. As a result, the Ranger program finds itself unable to satisfy its core mission: "To provide a safe, enjoyable park experience by protecting and educating the public; by providing recreational opportunities; and by protecting, preserving and enhancing the natural and cultural resources of the City's parks, trails, and open spaces." Additionally, Rangers are unable to meet the 21st century law enforcement challenges that they encounter daily in the City's park system.

It is our belief that Rangers should be provided with the appropriate law enforcement tools (i.e. Tasers and firearms) to carry out their law enforcement responsibilities safely and effectively. After Rangers most recently found a loaded firearm in an occupied homeless encampment, their management has instructed them not to enter any homeless encampment without the assistance of SJPD or California Fish and Wildlife Wardens. The sole difference between these types of law enforcement officers is that Rangers are unarmed, and SJPD and Fish and Wildlife Wardens are armed. The clear message that this directive sends is that to safely perform the duties of a Ranger, which includes patrolling parks and creeks where homeless encampments are located, you must be armed. The solution previously offered by management was to occasionally provide several secondary employment SJPD officers who then escorted Rangers along the creeks. This "solution" would entail a large commitment of budgetary resources if implemented on the scale necessary to be effective and carries with it the underlying questionable assumption that sufficient SJPD resources would even be available. It, therefore, strikes us as an enormous waste of limited City financial resources when Rangers are perfectly capable of performing this law enforcement function at a much lower cost if provided with proper safety equipment.

Currently, Rangers are the only Peace Officers employed by the City who are unarmed. SJPD Arson Investigators and all SJPD sworn officers are armed. Rangers have brought the issue of additional safety equipment to management on numerous occasions, even going to their union, who asked for a meet and confer. Over one year after the meet and confer and almost two years after these safety issues were first raised, there have been no changes. Management simply repeats the mantra that Rangers should just walk away from any situation where they feel unsafe. This perspective evidences a fundamental ignorance of basic law enforcement practices. Every contact that a law enforcement officer has with a member of the public is potentially dangerous and walking away is usually not an option once the actual danger presents itself. Management's solution would essentially eviscerate any law enforcement role for Rangers.

The current Ranger force is well-educated, experienced, consists of individuals who became a Ranger because of a conscious dedication to its mission, and is committed to a career in land/resource protection. The demand for positive change from Rangers is palpable. While morale is generally still positive, it is nevertheless disheartening for Rangers to be treated in such a dismissive manner by their management. The Rangers are nonetheless committed to pursuing change in the most professional manner possible. They seek

collaborative and constructive dialog with City management. They also seek some basic acknowledgement that their concerns are legitimate and that management is prepared to be responsive to these concerns.

A number of assets characterize the law enforcement function of Rangers, none more valuable than the quality of the Ranger staff and their commitment to protecting the public they serve, the environment, and the natural resources embodied in the City's park system. However, the value of these assets is negated by outdated departmental policies that undermine the current effectiveness and ongoing potential of the Rangers' law enforcement function. An effective law enforcement capacity is central to achieving the mission of the Rangers. This capacity does not exist today. Rather, we find a law enforcement function that is undervalued, under-resourced, and mismanaged.

Many Rangers have said that when the issue of arming them comes up, people have said, "If you want a gun, go be a cop." Comments like this leave Rangers frustrated by a fundamental misunderstanding of how Rangers perceive their role as law enforcement officers and a related desire to eliminate the perception that they somehow occupy a second-class status in the law enforcement hierarchy. This sense of professional marginalization is compounded by a belief among the Rangers that their management fails to understand or appreciate the connection between law enforcement and the core mission of the Ranger program.

Park Rangers occupy a unique role within the law enforcement community. Their duties and responsibilities go well beyond just law enforcement to include managing and protecting the natural resources embodied by parks in whatever form that may take. Nevertheless, exercising a law enforcement role is inherent in their larger mission. However, it is this larger mission and not just the law enforcement component of it that attracts individuals to the job. The core feeling of most Rangers is that being in a job which is not solely law enforcement is what attracted them to the job in the first place. They do not want to be police officers and do just law enforcement. They have a deep connection to the environment and have a strong desire to protect the parks, the public, and the natural resources. They also generally express their love for the variety of work. As one Park Ranger put it: "what other job could I have where I can point out the oldest Oak Tree in the park, then respond to a serious medical emergency, and arrest someone later in the day? I don't want to work as a police officer; it's the variety of being a Ranger that I love so much. That's what keeps me coming back day after day, it's a calling."

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully



Signatures included:

Angie Martinez

Blake Whisenhunt

Duncan Skinner

Lindsey Sones

Will Bick

William "Wes" Steen

Huy Mac

Mathew Mendriski

Roger Abe

Jane Lawson

I wanted to take this opportunity to submit comments to the Council with regards to Item 5.1 Park Ranger Program Annual Report on your April 17, 2018 agenda. I do not want to duplicate information that has already been submitted to you with respect to the program. Instead, I would like to share some behind the scenes information that bears on this issue and is unlikely to be provided to you either by Parks management or the Park Rangers themselves. As way of background, I am well-acquainted with one of the Park Rangers currently employed by the City so I am familiar with their perspective on the issues before you and can perhaps be more candid than they can be because of their concerns over potential retaliation. I also spent over thirty years working in local government here in California and am therefore familiar with the operations of local governments here in California.

I watched the tape of that portion of the Council's March 15th Public Safety Committee meeting regarding the Park Ranger Annual Report with great interest. The most striking part of the hearing on this item was what the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department clearly had no intention of sharing with the Committee as part of its presentation. There was no mention of the Park Rangers' law enforcement function in the oral presentation and the only reference in the Department's written report was an unrevealing statistical table that generically reported arrests, citations etc. There was absolutely no meaningful discussion by Parks management of the serious crime and public safety issues that exist in your parks. These issues were not even mentioned until a park maintenance worker and a park ranger raised them during the public comment period. Councilman Peralez then proceeded to hone in on these issues after the public comment period was concluded. The only reason these issues are now before the full Council is because of the efforts of Councilman Peralez and his understanding of how important these issues are to the City and the users of its park system.

What was especially telling about the Department's presentation was how similar it was to its annual report to the Committee the previous year. If you watch the tape of the 2017 Committee meeting, you hear the same sincere expressions of concern about Park Ranger staffing, retention and equipment issues, and how hard Department management is working to rectify them. Notwithstanding these public expressions of concern, there

has been little or nothing accomplished over the course of the last year. In fact, the long-standing concerns of the Park Rangers over their personal safety has gotten worse and remains unaddressed by Parks management. The lack of understanding or apparent real concern by Parks management over these concerns has seriously demoralized Park Ranger morale.

The issues currently before the Council regarding the Park Ranger Program are not new. They are only new to the Council because Parks management has allowed them to fester and remain unaddressed. I do not ascribe any bad motives to Parks management and I have no clear answer as to why they have failed to meaningfully address these issues. My suspicion is that it is simply a function of inertia, a desire to protect the Department's turf and the fact that there are no simple answers to what involve complicated policy issues. When these factors are present, the default response seems to be endless deferral hoping the matter will somehow resolve itself. Unfortunately, it is now front and center before the Council.

The Park Ranger Program was started at a time when the type of criminal activity within City parks was relatively minor and more of a nuisance factor. The concept was for Park Rangers to have their interpretative role supplemented with a level of law enforcement authority appropriate to deal with this lower level of criminal activity. They were given a higher level of law enforcement training and given peace officer status. However, over time the amount and seriousness of criminal activity in the City's parks increased and the law enforcement role of the Park Rangers began to supplant their interpretive role. A change was correspondingly made in their training so that new hires were sent to the National Park Service Ranger Training Academy at Santa Rosa Community College. It is functionally the same law enforcement training provided to police officers and deputy sheriffs.

The level and type of criminal activity within the City's park system is currently not that much different than in the rest of the City. The problem is that Parks management has not come to terms with this reality. They also seem unable to reconcile this reality with what they perceive as the traditional role of Park Rangers as interpretive guides first with only a secondary role as law enforcement officers. However, these roles have

reversed themselves and Parks management simply refuses to treat the Park Rangers as the highly trained and capable law enforcement officers that they have become. This disconnect has put the safety of the Park Rangers and park users at risk because Parks management refuses to provide them with the equipment to allow them to safely perform their job as law enforcement officers.

What I would like to do now is to provide the Council with a behind the scenes look at some of the issues that the Park Rangers have had to deal with over the last two years. As I indicated earlier, these issues are not new. The Park Rangers have made diligent efforts over the last two years to address these issues internally with Parks management. These efforts have been met mostly with intransigence and obfuscation. The circumstances described below illustrate the reason why the Park Rangers feel so frustrated and why they have no confidence in their management's ability to work with them in good faith to satisfactorily resolve their concerns. It is apparent that the only way these issues will be addressed from a meaningful policy perspective is for the Council to intervene and provide an appropriate policy resolution.

Compensation and Staffing

The Park Rangers recently received a 9.13% pay increase which was certainly appreciated. However, this pay increase must also be put into its proper context. It is interesting to note in this regard that sworn peace officer Park Rangers and non-sworn part-time Park Rangers receive the same hourly pay. The City, therefore, does not pay any premium to the peace officer Park Rangers to reflect their much higher level of training, their law enforcement responsibilities and the much more dangerous level of job responsibilities.

The March 2, 2018 Park Ranger Program Annual Report indicates that the enhanced salary is "set to approximately 100% of the market average." This statement is meaningless without identifying the market that is being surveyed. For example, is it a state-wide market and does it include both peace officer and non-peace officer park rangers? The appropriate comparable market should be peace officer park rangers in the South Bay which would consist of peace officer park rangers employed by the County of Santa Clara and the Mid-Peninsula Open Space District. The County

pays its sworn park rangers approximately 9% more (the County also provides safety retirement and subsidized housing) and Mid-Pen pays its sworn park rangers 6% more (Mid-Pen also provides subsidized housing) than the City currently pays its sworn Park Rangers. In addition to this continued pay discrepancy, the City's sworn Park Rangers perform significantly more law enforcement work than the rangers in these two other agencies and deal with much higher risk contacts in carrying out their law enforcement duties. The point is that if Parks management is serious about addressing its retention issues, it should be paying its sworn Park Rangers a truly comparable salary.

The salary for the City's sworn Park Rangers tops out at approximately \$77,000 per year. In contrast, the salary of the City's police officers tops out at approximately \$160,000. While no one is suggesting that the two positions are comparable or that park rangers should be paid the same as police officers, it does serve to illustrate the value received by the City from the law enforcement services provided by the sworn Park Rangers within the City's park system. It also illustrates how much more costly it is for the City to use SJPD to provide law enforcement services in the City's parks, than it is to use sworn Park Rangers who are trained for and capable of providing such services.

The Annual Report also goes on at great length to describe the Department's efforts to achieve and maintain adequate ranger staffing levels. These efforts included creating an additional supervising park ranger position and creating four new senior park ranger positions. What the report does not tell you is that nine field park ranger positions were eliminated in order to fund these five new positions and to pay for the 9.13% pay increase.

The Annual Report indicates that there are currently 19 sworn Park Ranger positions authorized in the Department's budget. If that figure is accurate, the organizational structure of the Park Ranger program should consist of 2 supervising rangers, 4 senior rangers and 13 rangers. The supervising and senior ranger positions are currently filled. However, of the 13 authorized full-time line ranger positions, there are only seven full-time and one part-time positions that are currently filled, with one additional person expected to graduate from the academy in May. If that trainee completes her

training, the Department will still have approximately 5 vacant full-time sworn Park Ranger positions. However, 4 of the currently employed sworn Park Rangers have announced their intention to retire near the end of the year and there are no additional people in the hiring and training pipeline. As a result, there will be approximately 9 vacant sworn park ranger positions by the end of the year. Despite the Department's rosy report of the progress made in hiring and retention for the Park Ranger Program, the reality shows no real progress in this regard or any plan to address a situation at the end of the year where the Park Ranger Program will have, at best, 4 full-time sworn line Park Rangers employed by it with approximately 9 such positions remaining vacant. I simply do not understand how Parks management can continue to represent to the Council that it is well on its way to solving its Park Ranger Program staffing shortages.

Equipment

The Annual Report provides a somewhat cryptic reference to acquiring additional equipment for the Park Ranger Program without providing any real specifics. I will not spend a lot of time on the issue of appropriate defensive tools since others will provide you with that type of information. However, I will note that I find it ironic that Park Rangers are required to wear protective vests while on duty which suggests that Parks management recognizes that the sworn Park Rangers face a significant threat of harm from deadly weapons. On the other hand, the same management steadfastly refuses to provide the protective vest wearing sworn Park Rangers with firearms, much less enhanced pepper spray and tasers. The rationale for refusing to authorize the enhanced pepper spray was that management was afraid it would make the Park Rangers more likely to use it. You do not refuse to provide needed defensive weapons because they might be used to protect an individual ranger. You provide the necessary equipment and make sure that there is appropriate training and accountability in its use.

The other major shortcoming with the equipment provided to the Park Ranger Program is with the vehicle fleet. It can best be described as old and dilapidated and there does not seem to be any particular urgency on the part of Parks management to address the issue. Lake Almaden has two late 90s vehicles which make regular trips back and forth between the auto

repair shop and the park. The vehicles assigned to the Park Rangers at Kelly Park are late 90s/early 2000s models with peeling paint and mechanical issues which leave them unfit to be used as emergency vehicles. Despite the condition of these vehicles, a 2014 Jeep Wrangler sits mostly unused since it is reserved for the use of the watershed and downtown teams when they need an extra vehicle (a handful of times a month) and otherwise cannot be used except with the authorization of the Supervising Park Ranger. This same Supervising Park Ranger is assigned a 2015/16 SUV. This vehicle situation is bad enough when vehicles are generally assigned to and used within specific park boundaries. It will get much worse once the Park Ranger Program shifts to the planned district patrolling model which will significantly increase the number of miles put on their vehicles. There is something wrong here with management priorities and an apparent inability to properly allocate the resources that are currently available.

A major subset of the vehicle issue is the lack of caged vehicles in which Park Rangers can transport arrestees to the County Jail. The current protocol is for the Park Rangers to request transport by a SJPD officer. The Park Ranger then waits until an officer is available, transfers custody to the officer, follows the officer to the County Jail, takes back custody of the prisoner and then books the prisoner. So you have a Park Ranger waiting around for an available officer, you have a \$160,000/year SJPD officer transporting the prisoner to the County Jail and then have the same officer driving back to his/her patrol area. This ridiculous procedure is not only a phenomenal waste of money but takes a patrol officer in an already short-handed department away from his or her normal patrol duties for however long it takes to drive to the location of the arrest, to the County Jail and then back to patrol. Although Park Rangers are fully trained and capable of performing this transport function. Parks management claims that such transport is not safe for the sworn Park Rangers because they are not armed. It is also not a cost issue. I am told that the County Jail has a program using inmate labor that will retrofit a vehicle with a cage for less than \$5,000. Besides the condition of the ranger vehicle fleet, there is a range of additional equipment that should be provided to the Park Ranger Program. Each ranger vehicle should be equipped with a computer and at least two more mobile fingerprint readers should be made available. The facility that the Park Rangers work out of is also totally inadequate. They should have a proper facility with secure parking, workstations and lockers.

I have always assumed that these various equipment shortcomings are a function of tight budgets. However, I have been told that the Department returned \$600,000 last fiscal year to the City General Fund that had been budgeted for the Park Ranger Program but was unexpended. I do not know the specifics of why the money was not spent. If it was budgeted for salaries but went unspent because the budgeted positions were unfilled, then someone did a poor job of preparing the budget and a good portion of the \$600,000 could have been budgeted to rectify the previously discussed equipment shortfalls. I do not claim that this \$600,000 was actually available but never used, only that it is a rumor floating around that the Council should look into further.

I have also been told that the Department was awarded a \$300,000 grant to use in part for the Park Ranger Program. I would be curious to know how Parks management intends to use this grant money. I have been told that the Department intends to use part of it to purchase two electric motorcycles. While that is a cool idea in a world of abundant fiscal resources, it seems a bit eccentric when there are so many other outstanding basic equipment needs for the Park Ranger Program. Maybe I am wrong about the grant money, but it is again at least worth some level of inquiry.

Labor Relations and Safety Issues

The City's sworn and non-sworn park rangers were historically assigned to a bargaining unit where the overwhelming number of employees were not peace officers. The sworn Park Rangers came to the point where they did not believe that their interests as peace officers were being adequately represented because their labor relations issues were simply different than the issues of the bulk of their bargaining unit. State labor law gives peace officers the legal right to be assigned to a bargaining unit consisting exclusively of peace officers. The sworn Park Rangers, therefore, requested that they be reassigned to an exclusive peace officer bargaining unit. City management acknowledged that the sworn Park Rangers had this legal right but nevertheless rejected the request on the grounds that it was "unduly burdensome." The sworn Park Ranger's proceeded to file an unfair labor charge with PERB and the City eventually acquiesced and placed them in their own bargaining unit.

During this same general timeframe, the sworn Park Rangers had begun raising numerous safety issues with Parks management, including the lack of proper defensive equipment. These issues were either rejected or ignored by Department management. After the City finally agreed to create a separate bargaining unit for the sworn Park Rangers, Parks management informed the sworn Park Rangers that there would be no further consideration of any of their various outstanding safety-related issues until a reclassification of the non-sworn Park Rangers could be completed. They were told that this process could take six months or longer.

The bargaining unit and safety issues were completely separate issues that had nothing to do with each other. The Department did not even try to explain any connection or why Department management did not have the capacity to do both simultaneously. Rightly or wrongly, the sworn Park Rangers perceived this excuse for continued deferral of their safety issues as retaliation for exercising their legal rights under State labor law. However, it is symptomatic of a much larger pattern of behavior by Parks management. Parks management puts on a public face expressing their utmost respect for the sworn Park Rangers and profound concern for their safety. However, behind the scenes they create one excuse after another to delay any efforts to meaningfully address the safety-related issues presented to them.

The first excuse was that they were working on the salary increase and did not have the management "bandwidth" to address any of the other issues raised by the sworn Park Rangers. These issues included a revised use of force and concealed weapon carry policies which have now both been pending for over a year and cannot be that difficult to address since they can start with existing SJPd policies and modify them as appropriate. The next excuse was that they had to finish the process of creating the new organizational structure. Now that this organizational revamp has been completed, the latest excuse is that management need to focus all of its attention on its new deployment model so that it has the appropriate structure in place to address the proper role of sworn Park Rangers going into the future.

I have no doubt that the next excuse will present itself when Parks management realizes that it is about to have 9 vacant sworn Park Ranger

positions with no prospect of filling them in the near future. The earliest that they could have any new hires out of the academy pipeline would be December of 2018. Assuming the current trainee graduates from the academy in May, the Department will have hired and put into the field a total of two new sworn Park Rangers since May of 2016. Given that track record, it will be a very long time before the 9 vacancies will be filled.

The existing sworn Park Rangers are not endlessly patient. They are highly trained and experienced and have other employment options. What are about to be 9 vacancies could easily turn into 13 vacancies at which point there is no viable Park Ranger Program. The sworn Park Rangers have raised a variety of concerns and expect those concerns to be addressed in a thoughtful and meaningful manner. They are tired of their concerns being either ignored, minimized or deferred to some unknown future date. It is also not a situation where these issues are being raised by a small group of malcontents. The letter to you submitted by the Park Peace Officers of San Jose was signed by all of the sworn Park Rangers employed by the City with the exception of the Supervising Park Ranger and two rangers who are retiring later this year. Had it not been for the persistence of the sworn Park Rangers themselves and the willingness of your Public Safety Committee to bring this matter before the full Council, I have no doubt that the issue would have continued to fester until the Park Ranger Program simply atrophied and died.

Summary

Despite hearing endless stories and complaints about the management of the Park Ranger Program, I have not been able to figure out a logical explanation for Park management's thought processes. It seems obvious and self-evident to me that if you have serious public safety issues and go to the trouble and expense of hiring park rangers, putting them through a rigorous law enforcement academy and giving them peace officer powers, you should equip them properly and let them go do the job for which they were trained. Parks management needs to stop with the nonsense that the sworn Park Rangers are never required to put themselves in any situation that is unsafe. The reality is that any contact involving potential criminal activity is inherently unsafe. If that is what Parks management really thinks, they should come clean and recommend that the sworn Park

Rangers be eliminated and their function taken over by SJPd at twice the cost. Department management simply cannot be allowed to continue the charade that the sworn Park Rangers can effectively perform their role as law enforcement officers with standard pepper spray and batons.

In the final analysis, I have come to the conclusion that the root of the problem is that Parks management just cannot overcome their idealized image of what a park ranger should be. I really think they see their sworn Park Rangers as mostly leading nature walks and handing out an occasional citation for littering or having a dog off-leash. While that image may have borne some resemblance to reality 30 years ago, it is not the current reality in your park system. Properly equipping sworn Park Rangers with firearms and tasers will not somehow make City parks less friendly and inviting to the general public. I would submit that the general public will embrace this change because of the enhanced level of safety and security that it will bring. The only element that will feel more unwelcome will be the criminal element confronted with a more effective and pro-active law enforcement presence.

I do have a concern with placing the Park Ranger Program within the SJPd organizational structure. There is always a danger with this type of structure that the mission of the program will become less park-centric and more focused on the larger mission of the SJPd. However, oversight and accountability are key issues. I do not see how the current Parks management can effectively oversee a law enforcement unit when they clearly do not understand what that unit's law enforcement function entails. It would be ideal to find a way to provide the necessary management and oversight within the Parks Department organization. It is obviously done in other organizations such as the National Park Service, the California State Park System and the County of Sacramento Parks Department. Maybe there is a way to adopt those models for San Jose.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to submit these comments for your consideration.

From: Patrick Williams
Sent: Tuesday, April 10, 2018 1:05 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: April 17 city council 5.1 18-428

This is in regard to April 17 city council meeting agenda 5.1 18-428, the park ranger program.

I spend a great deal of time in our parks and have spoken to 4 different park rangers over the last several years. All are professional, hard working, courteous, and seem to be sincere about wanting to make a difference and do good.

My father was a police officer so I grew up used to seeing a man in uniform with a gun on his belt and I was surprised when I realized they didn't have guns. Campus police and Even private security guards have guns, I don't really see what the big rigamaroll is about giving public safety officers guns.

In the case of any crime in the parks or a terrorist or shooter, these guys and gals would be first on scene and you'd bet I'd want them to be able to protect me and my family.

Also worth noting, the Jurassic Park Jeeps the city have them in are worthy of a laugh. If you give them guns, maybe give them a car they can be proud of too. I say Jurassic Park a) they're so old and b) they're probably older than the Jeeps they used in the first movie. I doubt the mayor or any other city employee would be caught dead in such a clunker.

I support SJP, SJFD and rangers. Let's get behind these guys and give them the support they need

Pat