

COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMISSION

DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Community Service Commissioner

FROM: Martha Mendez, Public Safety Manager
Chris Escobedo, Community Resources Director

DATE: June 13, 2016

SUBJECT: La Quinta Park Ordinance

City of La Quinta and La Quinta Police Department are enhancing the safety of park visitors with the La Quinta Public Park and Recreational Areas Safety Ordinance, which becomes effective June 16, 2016.

As reported at the Community Service Commission's meeting on March 14, 2016 meeting, for about a year, city staff and police have received multiple complaints about alcohol/drug use and damage to public property. Although, La Quinta Police Officers enforce City Park rules, under the existing ordinance, offenders could only be expelled for one day. This was ineffective, as most violators are repeat-offenders. Therefore, after a year of attempting to decrease illegal activities, both City staff and La Quinta Police decided it was time to request modification of the existing ordinance to allow officers to expel repeat-offenders for up to a year. The intent of the ordinance is to let repeat-offenders know that there are consequences to bad behavior.

The new ordinance empowers city staff and police officers to issue expulsion notices in lieu of arresting or citing one-time and repeat offenders. Under the new ordinance:

- Peace officers may expel a repeat violator from the park or recreational area where the violation occurred for a period of up to one year.
- An expulsion notice so issued constitutes an administrative citation pursuant to the La Quinta Municipal Code, and may include a \$50 administrative fine for an initial violation and a \$100 administrative fine for each subsequent violation.
- Violators may contest any expulsion notice in accordance with the procedures provided in chapter 1.09 of the La Quinta Municipal Code.

As this new ordinance is about to become effective, City staff has met with the Desert Recreation District regarding the Francis Hack Park in La Quinta and Riverside County Regional Park staff, regarding Lake Cahuilla County Park, both within La Quinta jurisdiction. Both entities support this ordinance and have agreed to allow La Quinta Police to enforce it at their parks.

City staff and La Quinta Police will continue to do community outreach and staff will provide a quarterly report on the effectiveness of this new ordinance.