



# Bluff Park Neighborhood Association

April 8, 2018

Councilwoman Suzie Price  
Third Council District City of Long Beach  
333 West Ocean Boulevard, Floor 14  
Long Beach, California 90802

## **RE: Naming the Park at East 1st Street and Loma Avenue in Memory of John W. Parkin**

Dear Councilwoman Price:

The Bluff Park Neighborhood Association, on behalf of residents in the Bluff Park Historic District, asks that the small park in our neighborhood located at the corner of East 1st Street and Loma Avenue be named in memory of John W. Parkin.

John was an iconic, longtime active resident who led and helped with many projects in the Bluff Park Historic District. He lived from 1926 through 2015, with many of those years spent serving the city and neighborhood while living on East 1st Street. According to the *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, he is perhaps best known for being

“...a petroleum engineer who helped save Long Beach from sinking from oil drilling and turned oil into a major revenue producer for the city...”<sup>1</sup>

In the spirit of John’s civic-mindedness, his children are still actively involved in, and have great affinity for, the City of Long Beach – including one working as the city attorney, another working at the court house, and all of them collectively as donors to the BPNA’s worthy endeavors.

John was an avid supporter of the BPNA for over 33 years and served on the first board of directors in 1998, after its former entity, known as Beach Area Concerned Citizens, was reorganized and revived to the current association. John spearheaded beach clean-ups, tree plantings, and sidewalk repairs.<sup>2</sup> In 2004 he helped conceive a project to bring the historic East 1st Street lampposts to all of the neighborhood. Although it did not move beyond a concept at the time, his idea has been reinvigorated today as the association’s *Bluff Park Historic Lamppost Project*.<sup>3</sup>

The BPNA’s mission is to protect and promote the historic integrity of the Bluff Park Historic District, which runs from Ocean Boulevard to the south side of Broadway and from Junipero to Loma. The District was designated with historic landmark status 35 years ago and contains over 2,000 people who own, rent and live in a small nine-block area. Over its 45 year history, the association, with John’s help, has worked hard to maintain the historic character and charm of the neighborhood, its streets and dwellings, many of which represent significant architectural styles built between 1903 and 1949.

Having been recognized as the “father” of the *Historic Lamppost Project* and with his recent passing, renewed interest was sparked among his friends, family and fellow residents in the neighborhood remembering all that John contributed. In 2017, the BPNA convened a meeting with dozens of residents who strongly believe that John is one of the neighborhood’s seminal figures in its history, worthy of recognition and accolade by having his name placed in the park.

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In his self-penned article in the September 2010 edition of the *Neighborhood NewsLetter*, John wrote about his own efforts for the park:

“The landscape project at East 1st Street and Loma Avenue is scheduled to begin this month (August). The irregular shaped intersection was at one time a part of the old PE [Pacific Electric] right-of-way, long since abandoned. At the intersection there is a triangular shaped patch of pavement, approximately 30 feet on each of its sides, in the center of the intersection. It is this area that is scheduled for landscaping. Because of cost considerations there will be no irrigation system installed, which makes the project somewhat unique. After the city has completed the project, the neighborhood will have to step forward and nourish the planting until it is well established.”

Still with no irrigation system, the beautiful plantings have now matured. In fact, the park has continually been hand-watered regularly by residents living nearby, including by John, by his son, and today by one of our current board members. There has always been a small group of residents toiling for the park to thrive.

The BPNA board of directors, in representing the voice of the neighborhood residents, feel it is most befitting that John Parkin’s legacy be memorialized in the park – a park that meant so much to him and a park that embodies, to this day, the diligence, caring and service to which he dedicated his life for the neighborhood and the city.

Thank you for the consideration of this letter and for your help in moving this initiative forward.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Mallin, President

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.presstelegram.com/2015/12/23/john-parkin-petroleum-engineer-and-father-of-long-beach-attorney-dies-at-89/>, Accessed April 4, 2018

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/Bluff\\_Park\\_Neighborhood\\_Assoc\\_Beach\\_Area\\_Concerned\\_Citizens/info](http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/Bluff_Park_Neighborhood_Assoc_Beach_Area_Concerned_Citizens/info), Accessed April 4, 2018

<sup>3</sup> <http://bit.ly/2Hw2tOg>, Accessed April 4, 2018