



County of Orange

County Executive Office

September 10, 2019

Honorable Kirk H. Nakamura
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: Response to Grand Jury Report, "Home At Last: Honoring Our Veterans
With a Veterans Cemetery in Orange County"

Dear Judge Nakamura:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 933, please find the County of Orange response to the subject report as approved by the Board of Supervisors. The respondents are the Orange County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive Office.

If you have any questions, please contact Lala Oca Ragen of the County Executive Office at 714-834-7219.

Sincerely,

Frank Kim
County Executive Officer

Enclosure

cc: Orange County Grand Jury
Lala Oca Ragen, Assistant Deputy Chief Operating Officer, County Executive Office



**Responses to Findings and Recommendations
2018-19 Grand Jury Report:**

“Home At Last: Honoring Our Veterans With A Veterans Cemetery In Orange County”

SUMMARY RESPONSE STATEMENT:

On June 25, 2019, the Grand Jury released a report entitled “Home At Last: Honoring Our Veterans With a Veterans Cemetery in Orange County.” This report directed certain responses to findings and recommendations to the Orange County Board of Supervisors. The responses are set forth below:

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES:

F1. There is private and public sector significant interest in, and support for, establishing a veterans cemetery in Orange County.

Response: Agrees with the finding. The County of Orange (County) supports the establishment of a veterans’ cemetery in Orange County. As such, the Orange County Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously voted to transfer a fee interest in 283 acres of property (known as Mountain Park, on Gypsum Canyon Road) to the Orange County Cemetery District via quitclaim deed, not assignment, for the purposes of the development of a veterans’ cemetery. The property was transferred to the Orange County Cemetery District (OCCD) on April 2, 2019, with the covenant that the property be used as a cemetery and that half of all internments be for veterans.

F5. Site development cost estimates and site valuations identified to date vary widely.

Response: Disagrees partially with the finding. It is the County’s understanding that identified site development cost estimates and site valuations do vary widely. However, with regard to Gypsum Canyon (91/241) identified as a potential veterans’ cemetery site on pages 8 and 26 of the Grand Jury report, it is important to note that on April 2, 2019, the County actually transferred (did not assign) the Gypsum Canyon property to Orange County Cemetery District (OCCD) via a quitclaim deed, to develop a veterans’ cemetery. The County does not have the authority to ‘charge’ OCCD to do something as the OCCD is a separate public entity over which the County does not have control. Thus, the OCCD property identified as Gypsum Canyon as a potential site for the

veterans' cemetery is no longer owned by the County and the County does not have first-hand knowledge of the estimates for OCCD's future site development.

F6. Completion of the veterans cemetery project will require multiple sources of funding; some funding has been available in the past.

Response: Disagrees partially with the finding. The County transferred the Mountain Park property to the Orange County Cemetery District at no cost on April 2, 2019. The County does not have knowledge of the funding available for a veterans' cemetery project. However, the County's contribution toward establishing a veterans' cemetery in Orange County was the dedication of the property.

F8. The City of Irvine and OCCD, at their City of Anaheim site, could both be interested in developing a veterans cemetery at their respective properties. The State and CalVet, however, will support only one veterans cemetery in Orange County.

Response: Disagrees partially with the finding. The County is not aware of whether Orange County could support more than one veterans' cemetery. The County transferred the Mountain Park property to the Orange County Cemetery District for the purpose of developing a veterans' cemetery, which can serve as a site for a veterans' cemetery.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES:

R3. By December 31, 2019, in the event that both the City of Irvine and OCCD seek to pursue a veterans cemetery, the Grand Jury recommends that a joint City of Irvine and OCCD Veterans Cemetery Selection Committee be established that includes a representative of the Board of Supervisors to determine which of the respective sites will be endorsed. (F1, F5, F6, F8)

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. If such a selection committee is established, and the Board is invited to participate, the Board will consider designating a Board representative to serve on the committee.