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Agran delivers inaugural Great Park address

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Two years after the Lennar Corp. bought the El Toro base from the Navy and gave 1,347-acres of that land to the city for use as the future Great Park – Great Park Board Chairman Larry Agran delivered the park's first address.

The board's Vice-Chairman Michael Pinto introduced Agran, saying he is at the "forefront of the vision and passion and hard work" for the park.

About 200 people attended the first "State of the Great Park Address." The group applauded 21 times during Agran's speech – oftentimes interrupting his speech, such as when he was interrupted for applause after mentioning that most of the base's waste is being recycled rather than being put into landfills.

The speech on Thursday also earned several laughs that included: Agran's calling the park's next stage of planning "park-itecture," when Agran said Cal-Pac Engineering Co. workers were excused from being at the address because they were out working on the balloon, and when Agran asked the park designers to stand up and – when about a quarter of the 200 in attendance stood up – Agran said "I told you it takes a lot of people."

Agran's speech included on a short recap of the park's history, but the focus was explaining what is happening out at the base currently. He explained the transplanting of the base's 50-year-old trees, the recently-approved wildlife corridor, the golf course being renovated and other projects as told from the perspective of flying up in the now recently-opened orange balloon.

He took time to thank every person in attendance for contributions to the park. Agran also asked those in attendance to "vow – right here, right now, on this historic anniversary – to stay focused and steadfastly committed to the success of the Great Park."

But, overall Agran's speech was short and to the point that right now is a critical moment for creating the park.

"Our opportunity to create the Great Park comes not a moment too soon. In a world beset by horrific conflict and environmental degradation, and at a time seemingly bereft of beauty in the public realm, our Great Park seems to me to be the remarkable exception."

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