



MINUTES  
Recreation and Community Services Commission  
Adjourned Regular Meeting  
February 10, 2021

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MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Chairperson Winnie Heiss.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Chairperson Winnie Heiss.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Chairperson Winnie Heiss (via Zoom)  
Vice Chairperson Kirk Real (via Zoom)  
Commissioner Dave Allen (via Zoom)  
Commissioner Ted Spaseff (via Zoom)  
Commissioner Stacy Valdez (via Zoom)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of January 13, 2021. A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Kirk Real and seconded by Commissioner Dave Allen to approve the minutes from the meeting of January 13, 2021. The motion was carried with Chairperson Winnie Heiss and Commissioner Stacy Valdez abstaining.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Director Valarie Frost began her remarks by sharing that the RCS Department had recently welcomed Jessica Johnson, the department's newly hired Community Transportation Supervisor, to the team. She shared that Jessica formerly worked for Fehr & Peers, a transportation consultant that provides agencies with transportation solutions based on data-driven research, and has a wealth of education and experience in transportation. It was said that Jessica has a Bachelor's of Science degree in Physics, and Masters of Science in Transportation, from South Carolina State University. She moved to California in 2017 and resides in neighboring Orange County.

Ms. Frost announced that second interviews for the position of Community Services Supervisor, to take the helm at The Centre, were scheduled for Thursday, February 18. The department seeks to have the position filled by mid-March.

Next, Ms. Frost informed the commission that at a recent city council meeting a mid-year review of the city's budget was provided by the city manager and the director of administrative services. She shared that the city was well positioned financially and has set aside funds for infrastructure improvements. She explained that although RCS revenue fees were down by just over \$1 million—in part due to the cancellation of facility rentals, contract classes and other fee-based recreation programs and events at The Centre—the city has been able to maintain city programs and services amid the pandemic. It was said that the council communicated their appreciation for the passage of Measure L, federal grants funds via the CARES Act and Community Development Block Grants and most importantly the support and patience of the community.

Ms. Frost announced that at a recent council meeting several projects in the city's Capital Improvement Program were approved. Projects involving recreation facilities were said to include:

- Pillars of Community art piece to be erected in The Centre

- Abatement and demolition of dilapidated structures at the Lakewood Equestrian Center
- San Martin Park improvements including two new picnic shelters, a new tot lot playground and turf and irrigation improvements
- Replacement of the aged wrought iron fence surrounding Mayfair Pool
- New flooring throughout the Weingart Senior Center
- Repair of the exterior of the Bloomfield Park activity building
- Two new picnic shelters for Rynerson Park

Additionally, she shared that approval to develop Strategic Infrastructure Plans (SIP) for the Nixon Yard and Palms, Del Valle and Bolivar Parks were approved. She informed the commission that a Strategic Infrastructure Plan was a more comprehensive review of renovation, repair, or replacement of various structures throughout a facility. The plan will provide staff with an opportunity to make changes to these sites based on future recreational and community service needs. The plan will also support facility operation and maintenance and address accessibility for all users.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that the Community Promotions Committee recently met to seek council direction regarding city wide special events planned through June 30 of this year. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced community gatherings to be placed on hold for 11 months. Since the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic in March 2020; the city's special event calendar has been severely affected, with cancellations of over 70 major and minor community and family special events.

Ms. Frost stated that the city embarks on 2021 with the hope of widespread distribution of a vaccine to help combat the virus, thus, staff sought direction with regard to planning for community events scheduled through the remainder of Fiscal Year 21 (FY21). It was said that council direction was necessary in order to determine which events were recommended to be canceled, postponed, reimaged or offered virtually. Some events were tabled for further discussion in mid to late March.

With regard to the enforcement of the rules at Home Run Dog Park, Ms. Frost informed the commission that department staff completed a survey of 17 neighboring cities with dog parks, and consulted SEAACA – the Southeast Area Animal Control Authority. She share that when asked, “is your dog park divided by size?” 15 of 17 agencies said yes – small and large. Nine of 15 were unsupervised. Two of 15 used park rangers and one relies on law enforcement. Twelve of 15 agencies do not have an official governing body overseeing the maintenance, day-to-day operation, enforcement of rules, and budget oversight for the above. Huntington Beach, Laguna Beach and the City of Orange have a “friends of” group or association. Some of the common complaints received are feces, aggressive dogs, and neighbor complaints of dogs barking creating noise. Six of the 15 agencies said that small dogs in the large dog section and vice versa is the biggest complaint. The city of Yorba Linda, whose dog park is not separated by size, said that their biggest complaint was that they don't have a dog park separated by size. Ms. Frost mentioned that although SEAACA would not provide an endorsement of the city's signage, they did not have any recommended changes to the current presentation and indicated that the signs posted are similar

to what is displayed in other cities. Ms. Frost informed the commission that department staff will proceed with the design and purchase of permanent signs regarding the types of dogs recommended for each side of the dog park.

Moving forward, Ms. Frost announced that city hall was scheduled to open to the public beginning Monday, March 1. She added that the 2021 State of the City Address would be detailed in the eMagazine sent out on Friday, February 12. A web link to view a video package that includes remarks from the Mayor and Sheriff Captain Sprengel and the city's traditional Annual Report Video will also be part of the package.

Lastly, Ms. Frost announced that department staff would conduct six drive-in movies at Lakewood Center beginning with a scheduled movie on Saturday, March 20. She noted that two additional movies would be offered in April, one in the month of May and two in the month of June.

#### REPORTS:

##### **1. Emergency Management Annual Report**

Community Services Manager Chuck Martucci provided information regarding the many aspects of the city's emergency management program during 2019, as noted in the written report. Mr. Martucci began by informing the commission that due to the pandemic, 45 emergency programs were canceled in total. He informed the commission that the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was set up in Lakewood and activated at the lowest level, soft level three, and has remained activated throughout the pandemic at the lowest level.

Mr. Martucci shared that the annual National Preparedness Month was held virtually in 2020 for the very first time. He noted that virtual programs containing a link to the website were provided for residents. Residents were provided information on how to be prepared in case of emergency and how to remain safe throughout the pandemic. It was said that as part of National Preparedness Month, employees participated in a challenge. He informed the commission that all of the city's departments competed in an emergency preparedness challenge, and shared that the RCS department won the challenge.

Mr. Martucci stated that one of the biggest challenges throughout the pandemic has been the ability to offer CPR classes. He shared that seven classes were lost in total, resulting in 31 employees missing out on training. He noted that in the beginning of the pandemic, Red Cross had to shut down all of their operations. During that period, Red Cross gave cities 120-day extensions on their certificates. It was said that mid-summer, Red Cross announced that cities were allowed to return to giving classes in person at a reduced class size. As a result, staff developed a new docket of trainings and succeeded in getting all 31 employees trained and certified by October 2020. Mr. Martucci shared that employees also participated in the Great Shake Out earthquake drill during the month of October.

Next, Mr. Martucci announced that he was tasked with creating a new contingency plan to set up the EOC in The Centre Ballroom, Mayfair Park Activity Room, or the Burns Community

Center Activity Room, after it was determined that the Pan Am Room would not provide adequate space to house all five sections of the EOC. He informed the commission that staff has made those adjustments and are ready in the case of an emergency.

Lastly, Mr. Martucci displayed slides and reported that the City of Lakewood recently partnered with Los Angeles County Department of Public Health staff by facilitating a Medical Point of Dispensing (MPOD) Flu Shot vaccination exercise on Friday, November 20, at Mayfair Park. He shared that Mayfair Park was one of two sites identified and approved previously in a joint effort of the city and Public Health—with Palms Park being the second site. It was said that these exercises served as practice and preparation in the event the county requires cities to open their MPOD sites for the distribution of eventual COVID-19 vaccines. Lakewood staff was said to have assisted in onsite registration, parking control, appointment line supervision, and the observation and evaluation of the events. The RCS Department's intern, Jaqueline, took notes during the MPOD and provided a summary of the event. Mr. Martucci informed the commission that the event was a huge success.

Mr. Martucci confirmed for Commissioner Spaseff that the set up and activation of the EOC was surreal and nerve-wracking. He informed him that containers for all five sections of the EOC were in the room and ready to go.

The Commission received and filed the report.

## **2. Pest Management Program Annual Report**

Community Services Manager Michael McDade displayed slides and provided information regarding efforts made to control weeds, insects, and other pests throughout the city. Mr. McDade began by informing the commission that pest management in 2020 more tedious than in the past due COVID-19 pandemic restrictions affecting staff. He shared the new changes that occurred in 2020 including Mark Benavides becoming the city's new Certified Spray Applicator in July and changes to the pest management program. He informed the commission that a separation was made from the former partnership between the city and Target Specialty Products. He shared that Target Specialty Products had provided the necessary recommendations for the city during the past six years. He informed the commission that the city was now working with Agri-Turf Distributing, LLC. It was said that the city's recommendations would come from Agri-Turf moving forward. He shared some notable highlights regarding Agri-Turf with the commission.

Mr. McDade reported that gopher populations have drastically increased in Lakewood. He noted that gopher mounds were showing up in mass quantities throughout the city streets. He displayed photos to illustrate the damage caused by the gophers to the commission, and to display products used by staff to try to eradicate the gopher populations as much as possible. The commission was informed that new gopher traps were purchased and would be utilized in the near future.

Mr. McDade confirmed for Commissioner Allen that over the years the city's insect problem has seemingly decreased.

Commissioner Spaseff shared that he was glad to hear staff teamed up with Agri-Turf. He shared that he has many years of experience with them and mentioned that their customer service was impeccable.

Ms. Frost confirmed for Vice Chairperson Kirk Real that the Mayfair Park Storm Water Capture Project was expected to be completed by May 1.

The Commission received and filed the report.

**4. Activities and Maintenance Report No. 8**

A written report and discussion of the Recreation and Community Services Department Programs, Services and Maintenance Activities for the month January 2021 and a listing of upcoming activities for March 2021.

The Commission received and filed the report.

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

1. Letter to Employee of the Month – Anthony Perruccio – December 2020

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to be brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Winnie Heiss adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m. to March 10, 2021 at 6 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary  
Recreation and Community Services Commission