



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
October 13, 2021

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Chairperson Kirk Real.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Stacy Valdez.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Chairperson Kirk Real
Vice Chairperson Dave Allen
Commissioner Veronica Lucio
Commissioner Ted Spaseff
Commissioner Stacy Valdez

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of September 8, 2021. A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Dave Allen and seconded by Commissioner Ted Spaseff to approve the minutes from the meeting of September 8, 2021. The motion was carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Director Valarie Frost began her announcements by expressing her appreciation to the commission for their attendance at the inaugural Fest-of-All event on Saturday, October 9. She shared that the RCS staff, along with all city departments, worked very hard host this community event for Lakewood residents and members of the greater community. The event featured music, food and crafts representing multiple cultures and was overwhelmingly appreciated by those who attended. Ms. Frost also expressed thanks to the commissioners who were able to either participate or volunteer at the Lakewood Education Foundation Golf Tournament Fundraiser on Monday October 11.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that on Friday, October 8 a Fun-Tastic Family Night would be held at The Centre featuring Kiddle Karri's Halloween Show; a musical puppet show featuring original music and interactive dancing. She shared that on Saturday October 16, Lollipop Lane would once again return to Mayfair Park with nearly 120 vendors selling holiday decor, handcrafted goods, jewelry, unique gifts and much more. It was said that in organizing the event, city staff was mindful of COVID-19 preventative measures and as such all indoor spaces will be monitored to maintain low capacity levels and masks will be required.

Next, Ms. Frost shared that the LYS flag football, volleytennis and volleyball season was set to begin games on Saturday, October 23 with an 8-game schedule, concluding on Saturday, December 11.

It was said that Project Shepherd registration would take place beginning November 3 through November 17 at both the Burns Community Center and Palms Park. Registration is accepted by appointment, of which staff will begin scheduling on Monday, October 18.

Ms. Frost asked the commission to keep watch for a special invite to attend the 2021 Award of Valor Luncheon. She shared that the event was scheduled for Wednesday, November 10 at The Centre. The commission was reminded that at this event the city proudly honors the bravery, devotion to duty and community service of deputy sheriffs, firefighters, paramedics and to residents for acts of heroism and extraordinary public safety service.

With regard to capital improvement projects, Ms. Frost provided an update on a few facility projects. The Mayfair Park stormwater capture project was said to be near completion. She mentioned that it was the department's hope to open the park by month's end. It was said that staff was working through a few needed revisions and planned to meet with the contractor to confirm scheduling. At Rynerson Park, the Public Works department, along with the conservation Corp of Long Beach were said to have been working on a restroom improvement project to install a new roof, new bathroom fixtures, and new bathroom partitions with mindfulness of ADA accessibility. The team of staff working on the project expects to be completed with the most southerly restroom at the park in approximately three weeks. It was said that they would then move on to necessary renovations to the restroom located in the center of the park. In addition, the two picnic shelters for the park were said to have been ordered and are expected to be received and installed before the spring season of 2022.

Ms. Frost mentioned that the commission might have noticed the improvement project at San Martin Park was well underway. She shared that the two older picnic shelters were demolished along with the play equipment in the tot lot playground. It was said that the project was presently on schedule with hopes to be completed and ready for the public's use in late spring of 2022.

Ms. Frost concluded her announcements with personnel updates. First, she informed the commission that Community Services Supervisor Irving Montenegro Jr. has accepted a position with the city of Los Alamitos. Beginning in the month of November, he will serve as their Development Services Manager, overseeing facility projects, code enforcement, and zoning. His last official day of work is Halloween, October 31. It was said that staff wishes Irving all the best as he ventures off into this new leadership role. Finally, Ms. Frost shared that Park Maintenance Worker Dan Dunavant begins retirement on Thursday October 14. She shared that Dan has been an employee with the city since 1986, and has served a 35-year career with the city. She shared that Dan would be missed by the department and mentioned that staff wish him all the best in retirement.

Ms. Frost confirmed for Vice Chairperson Allen that both Irving and Dan's positions would be filled by in-house candidates.

Commissioner Spaseff shared that he was able to attend several city events including the Patriot Day Flag Lowering Ceremony, the recent Lakewood Celebrates, the Lakewood Education Foundation Golf Tournament, the inaugural Fest-of-All, Lakewood's Day of Service, the Public Safety Expo and the College Fair. He thanked staff for all of their hard work and congratulated them for a job well done at every event.

Ms. Frost confirmed for Commissioner Spaseff that the Special Events Calendar would be included in the commission's agenda packets moving forward.

Commissioner Veronica Lucio shared that she too was able to attend several recent city events. She mentioned it was great to see such organization and thanked staff for a job well done.

Chairperson Real stated that promotions from within were amazing and he was glad to see that both Irving's and Dan's positions would be filled in-house.

REPORTS:

1. Park Maintenance Annual Report

Environmental Resources Division Supervisor Michael Cracium displayed slides and provided the commission with an update on park maintenance activities for 2021. Mr. Cracium informed the commission that the park maintenance branch was one of the largest in the city. He listed the many responsibilities of park maintenance staff as noted in the written report. Mr. Cracium reported that the light equipment operator was a unique position, which plays an important role in the Environmental Resources Division. Job duties of the light equipment operator were shared with the commission as detailed in the written report.

Finally, Mr. Cracium shared information regarding irrigation maintenance. It was said that responsibilities stretch from resolving hydraulic issues that prevent sprinkler heads from popping up, to repairing mainline breaks and leaks, and repairing and updating electrical wiring needed to maintain communication from the schedule clock to the water controller.

Chairperson Real thanked Mr. Cracium for his report. He mentioned that the complexity and extent of the behind-the-scenes work that the Environmental Resources Division does never ceases to amaze him. He shared his appreciation for the photos in the slideshow and for the opportunity to learn the names of the employees depicted in them.

Vice Chairperson Allen shared that he was amazed at how the parks looked over the summer. He thanked Mike and his staff for all of their hard work.

The commission received and filed the annual report on park maintenance.

2. Adaptive Recreation and Special Olympics Annual Report

Community Services Supervisor Joseph Vasquez displayed slides and provided information on the Adaptive Recreation and Special Olympics programs during 2021. The commission was reminded that both programs were shut down during 2020. Mr. Vasquez informed the commission that since March of 2020 and throughout 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic created a need for staff to adapt and determine ways to revise program offerings. Information was provided to the commission regarding both programs offerings as noted in the written report.

Mr. Vasquez reported that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and for the safety of program participants, the original 2021 activity schedules for the Adaptive Recreation and Special Olympics programs were put on hold. Despite limitations, it was said that program staff have been responsive, and continue to develop and create new opportunities for the participants. Mr. Vasquez provided details to the commission regarding the many programs and activities developed as noted in the written report. Photos were displayed for the commission of Adaptive Recreation program participants enjoying ZOOM activities, doing arts and crafts, playing outdoor games, and on a field trip to the Lakewood Equestrian Center. Photos were also shared of Special Olympics participants participating in ZOOM workouts as well as in-person bocce skills training.

Mr. Vasquez concluded his report by informing the commission that city staff raised over \$3,000 during a recent Special Olympics Fundraiser.

Commissioner Spaseff thanked staff for the Adaptive Recreation and Special Olympics programs. He mentioned that the programs provide parents of participants with freedom and security.

The commission received and filed the annual report on Adaptive Recreation and Special Olympics.

3. Activity ZONE and Park Alternative Learning Sites Review

Community Services Manager Alex Bauman provided information regarding the Activity ZONE program and Park Alternative Learning Sites (PALS) as noted in the written report. Mr. Bauman informed the commission that due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Activity Zone continued to be suspended for the entire 2020-2021 school year. As children remained in school without in-person classes, it was said that Lakewood continued to offer a distance learning program called Park Alternative Learning Sites (PALS) offered at three locations including Mayfair and Boyar Parks and the Lakewood Youth Center. Information regarding the program's offerings were shared with the commission as noted in the written report.

Mr. Bauman reported that even as the option to return to in-person learning was offered in spring 2021, the PALS program remained in operation and maintained the same registration.

It was said that the Activity Zone was able to return in summer 2021 with supervised, structured, recreational activities and social experience which had been critically absent during the school year. Attendance for the 2020-21 school year was provided to the commission within the written report.

Commissioner Valdez mentioned that she understands how hard it is to run an after-school program during a pandemic and commended staff for a job well done.

Commissioner Veronica Lucio echoed Commissioner Valdez's sentiments and mentioned that her children appreciated having somewhere to go after school. She shared her appreciation for staff providing a safe and fun place for children to enjoy one another.

The commission received and filed the report on Activity ZONE and Park Alternative Learning Sites.

4. Activities and Maintenance Report No. 4

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

The Commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letters to Jessica Robledo and Roland Preciado - Part-Time Co-Employees of the Month for August 2021.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Kirk Real adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m. to Wednesday, November 10, 2021, at 6 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission