



MINUTES  
Recreation and Community Services Commission  
Adjourned Regular Meeting  
March 9, 2022

---

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Chairperson Dave Allen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Veronica Lucio.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Vice Chairperson Dave Allen  
Commissioner Veronica Lucio  
Commissioner Robert Nelson  
Commissioner Ted Spaseff

ABSENT: Commissioner Stacy Valdez

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of February 9, 2022. A motion was made by Commissioner Robert Nelson and seconded by Commissioner Lucio to approve the minutes from the meeting of February 9, 2022. The motion was carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Chairperson Allen held a moment of silence in honor of DASH Dispatcher Michelle Cervantes' daughter Lexi Bella Luna.

Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided information regarding programming and upcoming events. Mr. Bright announced that Earth Walk was scheduled for Saturday, March 12 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Monte Verde Park and a portion of The Nature Trail. Vendors will offer hands-on learning stations aimed at benefitting the Earth and helping residents and young people think green, to lower carbon footprints. Staff will be on hand to offer a guided nature walk and children will be challenged to complete their "Passport to Planet Earth" by visiting each booth and interacting with presenters. The year's stuffed mascot is Sebastian the Sea Turtle.

Mr. Bright reported that new to the 2022 calendar were park-based activities, starting with Family Game Night on Friday, March 25 and Community Walks on Saturday, April 30. Offered at eight of the supervised parks, the new programs target community building through fun activities at each neighborhood's local park facility. Family Game Nights will open activity rooms and provide board games and snacks to encourage socializing with new friends. Game nights begin at 6 p.m. The Community Walks call residents to build relationships through fitness with neighbors and begin at 9 a.m.

Mr. Bright informed the commission that on Tuesday, March 15, a Park Development Committee Meeting would take place beginning at 6:30 p.m. He shared that on the agenda was the selection of playground design for Del Valle Park Tot Lot, Bloomfield Park School Age Playground, Biscailuz Park Tot Lot, and Boyar Tot Lot and School Age Playground. He explained that these playgrounds were funded through state and county tax measures as reported to the commission in May's Capital Improvement Program Annual Report. Also on the agenda, is an update on the mini-soccer pitch proposal for Palms Park. It was said that the meeting would update the committee on

the latest with the mini-pitch proposed by Lakewood resident and Los Angeles Galaxy soccer player Jalen Neal. The last agenda item was said to be an update on Capital Improvement Projects provided by Public Works Assistant Project Manager Samantha Chambers, with regard to the city's CIP as related to RCS facilities. The commission was asked to inform their secretary if they intend to be present.

Next, Mr. Bright shared that the California Park and Recreation Society, District 10 Awards & Installation Banquet would take place on Thursday, April 7, 2022 in Fountain Valley. It was said that the city would recognize Lakewood Center and Grocery Outlet for their contributions to the Lakewood Community as related to special events and the Project Shepherd Program respectively. Community Services Manager Chuck Martucci will be emceeding the event.

The 25<sup>th</sup> edition of Lakewood Volunteer Day was said to be taking place on Saturday, April 9 in standard fashion. Mr. Bright shared that to date, 15 sites and 15 volunteer groups were identified, but staff were still active in recruitment of both. It was said that volunteer crews would get started around 8 a.m. and finish work between 11 and noon. Afterwards, a thank you reception will be held at the Lakewood Youth Center with raffle prizes and lunch to help refresh tired bodies. The commission was asked to notify their secretary if they would like to visit any sites during the work day and/or attend the reception.

Mr. Bright reported that the annual Lakewood Youth Sports Coaches Recognition Dinner and Ballgame was all but officially canceled in its current state, as the Los Angeles Angels, along with the rest of Major League Baseball, have locked the players out. It was said that while staff still planned to recognize the valued volunteer coaches on Saturday, April 23, brainstorming was under way with regard to other opportunities to celebrate the coaches' contributions. The commission was asked to keep their calendars penciled for the date; however, a trip to Angel Stadium may not be on the docket.

Lastly, Mr. Bright informed the commission that part-time DASH Dispatcher, Michelle Cervantes, lost her young daughter to complications from COVID-19. Lexi Bella Luna had just turned nine years old and was recently laid to rest. It was said that her parents, siblings and extended family were completely devastated. The commission was informed that donations for Michelle's daughter Lexi were being collected via a *Go Fund Me* page. It was said that their secretary would provide the link via email.

## REPORTS:

### **1. Volunteer Program Update**

Community Services Manager Caitlin Cariaso displayed slides and provided information regarding the many ways that Lakewood's volunteers are celebrated during National Volunteer Month, which takes place in April. She mentioned that some of the programs in which community members volunteered were Lakewood Youth Sports (LYS), Lakewood Meals on Wheels, Lakewood Volunteer Day, the Tax Program, and Project Shepherd. Additionally, 25 adult volunteers regularly worked at the Weingart Senior Center providing class instruction in specialty classes. Details regarding said programs, the total number of

volunteer hours worked, and the number of families assisted were provided to the commission as noted in the written report.

Ms. Cariaso reported that the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Lakewood Volunteer Day would take place on Saturday, April 9; the Older Adult Volunteer Recognition Luncheon is scheduled for Wednesday, April 20; and the LYS Coaches Recognition Luncheon is set for Saturday, April 23.

Commissioner Robert Nelson commended the LYS volunteer coaches for their hard work and contribution to the youth. He shared that his children are in the LYS basketball program and mentioned that the coaches and referees are amazing.

Vice Chairperson Ted Spaseff mentioned that many of the city's amazing programs would not be possible without the support of volunteers. He noted that the superb organization of city staff running these programs, and the many events created to thank volunteers, were the reason volunteers continue to return each year.

Chairperson Allen stated that volunteers are very important and mentioned that they greatly assist the city in saving revenue. Mr. Bright confirmed for him that according to the most recent research from the Independent Sector, the estimated dollar value of volunteer time in California is \$33.61 per hour.

Commissioner Lucio shared her appreciation for staff and volunteers for all of their hard work.

The commission received and filed the report on volunteer program updates.

## **2. The Centre Operations Annual Report**

Community Services Supervisor Lorraine Delarosa displayed slides and provided information and statistics included in the written report regarding classes and events at The Centre in 2021. Ms. Delarosa reported that in the beginning of 2021, the facility continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2021, The Centre began booking clients again and slowly reopened its doors after large gatherings came to a complete halt in March 2020 due to the COVID-19. It was said that in 2021, all contract classes that typically took place in Maple Room were canceled and/or relocated to an outdoor setting. Forty-five (45) scheduled TGIS events were canceled, and several city events were either canceled or reimaged. Ms. Delarosa provided the commission with details regarding several programs and special events traditionally hosted at The Centre that were reimaged and offered in alternative formats as noted in the written report.

The commission was informed that the meeting and banquet rooms at The Centre were repurposed throughout the pandemic, the installation of patio string lights were added to enhance the Maple Room patio aesthetic and brighten the patio for evening events, and preliminary plans began on installing the Legends of Lakewood artwork, formally the

Pillars of Community monuments into The Centre lobby. Lastly, it was said that the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) would be moved to the Maple Room.

Commissioner Lucio shared that she and her young daughter attended the Reptile Show at FUN-Tastic Family Night at The Centre. She mentioned it was a fun and well organized event.

Ms. Delarosa confirmed for Vice Chairperson Spaseff that banquets were beginning to be scheduled at The Centre again as things are slowly getting back to normal.

The commission received and filed the annual report on The Centre operations.

### **3. Vandalism Annual Report**

Community Services Community Services Manager Alex Bauman provided a summary of vandalism statistics on city facilities in 2021. A three-year comparison of statistics related to vandalism of Recreation and Community Services facilities was included with the written report. Mr. Bauman reviewed the various types of vandalism, number of incidents at each facility, and the cost associated with each loss. In 2021, there were 46 incidents totaling an estimated \$23,494 in direct damage or loss to the city. This represents a decrease of 12 incidents from 2020's total of 58. It was said that this quantification of loss was the lowest of a five-year trend going back to 2017. Several recreation facilities saw individual increases when compared to 2020 statistics. Specifically, Palms Park saw a 336% increase in loss due to 16 incidents of graffiti. These 16 incidents accounted for 40% of the graffiti across the city in 2021. Mr. Bauman informed the commission that graffiti remains the department's single most frequent classification of vandalism with a total of 39 which was a 134% increase from the previous year.

Mr. Bauman confirmed for Commissioner Nelson that very rarely does it take more than one business day for graffiti to be removed.

Mr. Bauman confirmed for Chairperson Allen that the graffiti at city facilities was a mixture of gang-related and not gang-related incidents.

The commission received and filed the annual report on vandalism.

### **4. RCS Part-Time Staff Recruitment Annual Report**

Community Services Manager Alex Bauman provided information on the RCS part-time staff recruitment programs for recreation leaders, facility staff, lifeguard/swim instructors, sports officials, DASH Transit drivers, and Environmental Resources staff as noted in the written report. Mr. Bauman reported that at present time there were 238 part-time employees working within the department, 59 of which were hired in 2021. In comparison to 2020, the department saw a slight increase in new hires in 2021. This was largely due to a large turnover in part-time staff.

The commission was informed that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in an effort to protect the safety and well-being of residents, many programs and services offered by the department were either canceled or reduced in size. Mr. Bauman reported that staff were still required to recruit new part-time staff on an as needed basis throughout the year. It was said that recruitment and evaluation processes were altered to ensure safety measures were being met. This included virtual interviews, online trainings, and smaller group in-person trainings when necessary, with social distancing and face masks required at all times.

Commissioner Nelson gave kudos to the city's part-time program. He mentioned that his first job was as a part-time employee with Lakewood.

Vice Chairperson Spaseff mentioned that the two-year maintenance trainee program is one of the best there is. He described the program as invaluable and a great opportunity for all who apply.

Chairperson Allen inquired about the recruitment outlook. Mr. Bauman informed him that far more recruitments were needed in 2021 in comparison to past years as high levels of staff had promoted to other jobs.

The commission received and filed the annual report on RCS part-time staff recruitment.

##### **5. Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame Preview**

Community Services Manager Alex Bauman displayed slides and provided a preview of the Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame 2021 inductees. Mr. Bauman reported that on Thursday, March 31, 2022, the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame Banquet will be held at The Centre. He informed the commission that the Hall of Fame Board of Electors had convened February 3, 2022, to select the 2021 Athlete of the Year and honors for other athletes and coaches. It was said that awards would be presented for Performer of the Year in each sport, various Special Achievement awards, including Scholar Athlete of the Year, and the highlight of the event, the crowning of the Co-Athletes of the Year. The commission was provided with details regarding the 2021 Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame event as noted in the written report.

Mr. Bauman reported that the pandemic had altered the 2021 high school sports calendar, creating two distinct sports seasons of athletes to be recognized. Four (4) Athletes of the Year were selected at the annual Board of Electors meeting. It was said that the recipients selected for the Athlete of the Year recognition in 2021 sports season #1 were Arianna Jalomo of Saint Joseph High School and Kassandra Murguia of Artesia High School. For 2021, sports season #2, the Athletes of the Year are Nick Adimora of Mayfair High School and Laura Williams of Lakewood High School.

Mr. Bauman noted that in recognition of the 40<sup>th</sup> annual Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame program, a commemorative 40<sup>th</sup> year logo was commissioned and was showcased on all marketing materials.

The commission received and filed the report on Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame Preview.

**6. Activities and Maintenance Report No. 9**

A written report and discussion of the Recreation and Community Services Department Programs, Services and Maintenance Activities for the month of February and a listing of upcoming activities for April 2022.

The Commission received and filed the report.

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

1. Letter to Katherine Pantoja, Employee of the Month for January 2022.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

Maintenance Trainee Scott Moe introduced himself to the commission and shared his experience with the maintenance trainee program.

Commissioner Nelson asked that staff extend kudos for a job well done to part-time staff Everett, Zoe and Noel who assisted with the recent Movie Night Under the Stars event.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Allen adjourned the meeting in honor of DASH Dispatcher Michelle Cervantes' daughter Lexi Bella Luna at 7 p.m. to Wednesday, April 13, at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary  
Recreation and Community Services Commission