



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
January 9, 2019

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6:00 p.m. by Chairperson Dave Allen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Winnie Heiss.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Chairperson Dave Allen
Vice Chairperson Ted Spaseff
Commissioner Ben Delarosa
Commissioner Winnie Heiss
Commissioner Kirk Real

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of December 12, 2018. A motion was made by Commissioner Kirk Real and seconded by Commissioner Ted Spaseff. Minutes were approved as submitted with Commissioner Winnie Heiss abstaining.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Assistant Director Kevin Bright offered apologies on behalf of Director Valarie Frost who was unable to make the commission meeting, as her attendance was required at the Capital Improvement Project Subcommittee Meeting that was taking place at the same time. Mr. Bright then provided information regarding programming and upcoming events. The Lakewood Youth Sports (LYS) basketball season was said to be kicking off on Saturday, January 12, at city parks. Barring rain, there will be a full slate of games. New for 2019 is a co-ed 3-on-3 league for the 14 to 17 year old age group. Mr. Bright informed the commission that this age classification had been seeing waning numbers, thus staff developed a new format that was said to be faster paced and more appropriate for the age group. The league will take place exclusively at Del Valle Park on Wednesday nights. It was said that the staff at the Lakewood Youth Center had created a slate of programming that will work in tandem with the league in a cross promotional opportunity for the age group. Mr. Bright expressed kudos to staff for coming up with a new opportunity for the teenage group.

He then announced that on Thursday, January 17, at 6 p.m. in the Executive Board Room, staff would host the Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame Board of Electors Meeting. It was said that this was a very exciting time of year where staff waits to see the next class of athletes who will be inducted into the Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame, which will take place on Monday, February 25, in the Ballroom at The Centre. Next, Mr. Bright announced that on Friday, January 25, through Sunday, January 27, staff will host a Community Emergency Response Training at the Weingart Senior Center. It was said that there were currently 25 people registered for the class, led by Los Angeles County Fire Department crews and facilitated by Lakewood's Emergency Manager, Chuck Martucci. Attendees will learn what they can do to be key members of the community, assisting first responders in the case of an emergency. On Sunday, January 27, city council members will be present to assist in handing out graduation certificates to all who complete the class. On

Wednesday, February 6, the annual State of the City luncheon will be held in the Weingart Ballroom at The Centre at 12 noon. Mr. Bright directed the commission that they should inform their secretary if they wish to attend. He then provided one final save-the-date, stating that on Saturday, April 6, staff will host the annual Lakewood Youth Sports Volunteer Coaches Barbeque. The event was said to take place beginning at the Lakewood Youth Center at 4 p.m. after which buses will head to Angel Stadium for a ballgame against the Texas Rangers. The commission was informed that as the date nears, they would have the opportunity to R.S.V.P. with their secretary.

Mr. Bright continued stating that over the next several months the Public Works Department would be tackling several restroom upgrades at many park facilities. The upgrades are primarily going to address ADA accessibility at the following parks, Biscailuz, Bolivar, San Martin, Del Valle, Mayfair and the Lakewood Youth Center. Some of the retrofits will be contracted out, while a crew of Lakewood Public Works staff will complete the others. The first in-house crew will begin at the Youth Center, while the first contracted restroom project will happen at Biscailuz Park. The City has secured a loan in the amount of \$750,000 to tackle these projects from the California JPIA. Mr. Bright noted that all parks undergoing these retrofits will see the use of accessible portable restrooms at the facility for the duration of the construction projects. It was said that currently start dates are not available, however, staff wanted to make the commission aware of the coming projects at the parks.

Mr. Bright concluded his report by announcing that on Monday, January 14, the RCS Department will welcome the newest Community Services Supervisor, Veronica Ramirez, who will supervise Bolivar and Biscailuz Parks, as well as the Aquatics Program at Mayfair and McCormick Pools. Veronica was said to have been previously employed with the City of Buena Park where she was employed as a Senior Community Services Coordinator.

Parks Superintendent Philip Lopez then provided an update on Rynerson Park. He informed the commission that the two picnic shelters had been removed and that one of the two concrete pads had been replaced. Picnic benches were said to have been ordered for that area. He went on to state that the new restroom facility had been installed and concrete had been poured around the perimeter. After the restroom facility opens for use, the contractor will remove the fencing and set it up at the next restroom facility scheduled to be demolished. Mr. Lopez explained that although the rain caused some delays in construction, the project was moving along great.

Next, an update was provided on the Lakewood Equestrian Center. On Wednesday, January 30, beginning at 6 p.m., RCS management will host a user's roundtable discussion at Mae Boyar Park to discuss user satisfaction at the Lakewood Equestrian Center. Current users, including boarders, trainers and others who frequent the various amenities at the facility have been invited to share their thoughts. Participants will be queried regarding their satisfaction and perceptions about the state of the facility, their experiences with the concessionaire and opinions regarding facility improvements. A user survey was said to be available online and in printed format. A flyer was sent to users, taken from the concessionaire's mailing records, and has been posted around the equestrian center to ensure good attendance at the event. The commission was asked to inform to their secretary if they wish to attend the roundtable.

Commissioner Kirk Real shared that he would be attending the Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame Board of Electors Meeting taking place on Thursday, January 17, on behalf of the commission.

Mr. Lopez provided an update on Bolivar Park for Commissioner Winnie Heiss, clarifying for her that there was in fact water in the water capture tank at the park. He informed her that staff was currently running potable water through the backup system for irrigation purposes. The Water Department was said to be working with the County Health Department to get the filtration system to meet regulations. Mr. Bright noted that the secondary benefit to the storm capture basin was the filtration of runoff water. He mentioned that while the health department regulations have prevented staff from irrigating with the recycled water, it has at least been captured, thus preventing polluted water from running off into the ocean.

REPORTS:

1. Spring Programs and Catalog Preview

Program Coordinator Catherine Schad reported on aspects of the Spring 2019 Recreation Catalog, and provided information regarding programs and events scheduled for the spring. The 2019 Spring Recreation Catalog was said to feature photos depicting springtime in Lakewood, including the marquee spring event, the Pan Am Fiesta. Central to the theme of the cover is a group of fun-loving children, reminding us all of a fundamental goal of the Recreation and Community Services Department, creating lasting memories for the children in our community. Ms. Schad reported that the new catalogs were delivered to Lakewood homes on Friday, December 14. Registration for recreation classes opened for residents upon receipt of the catalog, while non-resident registration opened on Monday, January 7. Most classes and activities will begin the week of Monday, February 4.

Lakewood's Pan Am Fiesta was said to be taking place on Thursday, May 9, through Sunday, May 12. Along with the traditional quality of entertainment, amusement rides, food booths and craft vendors, special evening concerts will be offered on both Friday, May 10 and Saturday, May 11. FUN-Tastic Family Nights continue to be a popular and affordable family activity, offering a tasty meal with engaging entertainment. Four events were said to be scheduled for this spring. On Friday, March 1, Paramount Pet Entertainment will introduce participants to slithery friends, Mad Science will take place on Friday, March 29 and the Mahana Dance Company, made famous on the hit TV show, Lip Sync Battle, will bring their authentic Polynesian dance show to the Centre for a luau on Friday, April 26. The last spring FUN-Tastic Family Night will take place on Friday, June 7, featuring Animal Magic with John Abrams. On Saturday, March 30, Mother-Son Mayhem will return to Monte Verde Park, and on Friday, April 5, Daddy-Daughter Date Night will take place in the Weingart Ballroom at The Centre.

Ms. Schad went on to report on park programming, stating that spring vacation activities will be offered at city parks during spring recess from school, taking place April 20 – 26. During the spring vacation break, recreation staff will organize all the familiar spring programs including barbecue lunches and a variety of spring activities such as egg decorating, making candy baskets, an egg hunt for preschool and elementary school children, and a visit from the Easter Bunny on Saturday, April 20.

Ms. Schad then reported on the various travel trips scheduled for the spring. The first trip will take riders to see baseball's third oldest stadium, Dodger Stadium, on Saturday, February 16. On Sunday, March 17, participants will get to see the Tony Award-Winning musical Cats, then on Saturday, April 6, participants will visit one of California's most unique and beautiful destinations, the Reagan Library. Concluding the travel series on Sunday, May 5, will be a trip to the Carlsbad Village Fair, the largest one-day street fair in the nation. All trips leave from the Burns Community Center.

Next, updates were provided regarding Lakewood's Older Adult and Active+ Programming as stated in the written report. Walking Club, Tech Talk, and Pickleball continue to meet frequently, while stretch classes, Step Aerobics, two Yoga classes, Chair Volleyball and Brain Games have all been added. Also this spring, an American Association for Retired Persons Smart Driver Course will be offered in both February and May, and a Women's Health Series will be offered in conjunction with Lakewood Regional Medical Center Wednesdays in February. This spring, grandparents are welcome to bring grandchildren and great-grandchildren to the annual Easter Eggstravaganza on Thursday, April 18, at the Weingart Senior Center, where they can celebrate the holiday together dying eggs and visiting with the Easter Bunny.

Vice Chairperson Ted Spaseff commented stating that staff does an outstanding job putting together such a fantastic catalog every year.

The Commission received and filed the report.

2. Teen Programs Annual Report

Community Services Supervisor Joe Vasquez provided information on activities and programs offered at the the Teen Resource Center, as noted in the written report. Mr. Vasquez reported that the TRC is open Monday through Friday from 3 to 6 p.m. this season and occasionally on Saturday for special events. The program was said to offer homework assistance, career and college research assistance and other social opportunities such as gaming tournaments, air hockey and a reading nook. Overall, last year the TRC saw about 2,100 students in attendance with an average of 8 to 10 students daily.

Super Saturday nights were said to take place once a month and include an array of events such as gaming tournaments, movie nights, air hockey tournaments and athletic competitions such as a 3-on-3 basketball tournament, a 5-on-5 dodgeball tournament and a 5-on-5 flag football tournament. Mr. Vasquez reported that the most popular event is the 3-on-3 basketball tournament. This year there were a total of 14 teams in attendance, with about 52 participants.

Next, Community Services Supervisor Kelly Garnetti provided information on activities and programs offered at the Lakewood Youth Center. In 2018 the Youth Center continued to offer daily drop-in programs for the teens throughout the week from 3 to 7 p.m. during the school year, and from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. during the summer months. Fusion Fridays continued offering teens a variety of themed nights such as gaming tournaments and movie nights. Going into 2019, it was said that staff would be introducing Foodie Fridays as part of the

Fusion Friday lineup as teens seem to enjoy any food related activities. In 2018, the Summer Adventure Series was offered and teens went out to explore hikes, go kayaking and test their skills at archery. The program was said to have been well attended and will be offered again this summer.

Moving forward, Ms. Garnetti informed the commission that the game room at the Youth Center has stayed up-to-date with the latest game systems to keep teens entertained, and saw the addition of a PlayStation Virtual Reality Gaming System this past year. On average, there were 20-30 teens daily at the Youth Center making use of the game room and participating in the special events offered.

The Lakewood Teen Action Committee (LTAC) was reported to have completed its second year in May 2018 with 20 members participating. Those members were said to have a combined total of 565 volunteer hours. Teens participated by volunteering for Volunteer Day, the Teens in Lakewood Care Program, and Project Shepherd. LTAC members also attended monthly committee meetings as well as both the popular Rocktober event, offered by the Southern California Teen Coalition, and the career builder workshop. LTAC continues to grow with membership for the current school year at 26 participants. It was reported that at the beginning of the year, staff actively sought participation from the ABC Unified School District, and successfully acquired seven new members from Artesia High School. Ms. Garnetti reported that in July and October of 2018, 16 teens participated in the Teens in Lakewood Care Program. In July, teens assisted with a front and back yard clean up and in October, teens helped to clear out a backyard filling a large dumpster all the way to the top.

Next, it was reported that the 18th Annual College Fair was held in October 2018 at The Centre. The event was said to have attracted 450 students and parents, and gave 74 colleges the opportunity to promote their programs. Two presentations were offered to provide information about reducing out-of-state tuition costs as well as effective strategies for transitioning to college. New this past year, the presentations were said to have been held downstairs in the Maple Room, giving the colleges much needed extra space to spread out upstairs in the ballroom. Ms. Garnetti reported that four \$250 scholarships were awarded, two from the Lakewood Teen Action Committee and two from Speaker Anthony Rendon's office.

Commissioner Kirk Real expressed his delight that staff was able to reach out successfully to Artesia High School.

The Commission received and filed the report.

3. Project Shepherd Program Recap

Community Services Supervisor Caitlin Cariaso displayed slides and provided an update on the Project Shepherd Program as noted in the written report. Ms. Cariaso reported that this past year was Project Shepherd's 46th year of assisting Lakewood residents who are unemployed, low-income or on public assistance. She began by providing statistics regarding the number of families that registered for the Holiday Assistance Program. Registration for the Holiday Assistance Program ran from Monday, November 5 to Sunday, November 18 at

both the Burns Community Center and Palms Park. Palms Park was said to have registered 85 families, while the Burns Community Center registered 216 families. In 2017 Project Shepherd had 340 families register for holiday assistance. This past year only 301 families registered for the program, for an 11% decrease in registration. Ms. Cariaso then displayed a graph showing the registration numbers over the years and pointed out that in 2010 a total of 548 families were assisted by the program. She noted that this year the program had the lowest registration count in the last 10 years, and mentioned that staff was pleased to see that more families were getting on their feet.

The ABC, Bellflower and Long Beach school districts, and parochial schools in Lakewood assisted Project Shepherd with food collection this year beginning in early December. Schools were encouraged to participate in the holiday dinner food drive and to donate a complete holiday meal, including a \$10 grocery store gift card. For every complete meal donated, each school received an opportunity ticket for a chance to win a \$500 visa gift card for their school. Ms. Cariaso reported that Gompers Elementary School was the winner of this year's holiday dinner food drive, with 67 complete meals donated to the program. A total of 17 local schools were said to have participated and collected a total of 818 boxes.

Next, it was reported that the Boy Scouts of America collected hundreds of boxes of food at their annual Scouting for Food project on Saturday, November 10, at Mayfair Park. Lakewood Regional Medical Center conducted a Cereal Drive this past June, collecting over a thousand boxes of cereal for the program. Ms. Cariaso then reported that this year Project Shepherd was able to obtain 85 turkeys for the program; 40 turkeys were donated from Golden State Water and 45 were donated from two other nonprofit agencies, Caring Connections and the Rocio Guillen Foundation.

Next, Ms. Cariaso provided updates on the Teddy Bear Tree Program. She reminded the commission that the program allows residents to pick a specific gift request and purchase the gift the child desires to receive. This popular gift donation program was said to have been marketed at the Lakewood Center Mall on the weekend of December 1. Bears were reported to have been available at a variety of Lakewood businesses in the community as well as at City Hall. In 2018, 555 children received a gift through this holiday program. In addition to the Teddy Bear Tree gifts, there were also 40 scooters and helmets given out to children.

It was reported that Project Shepherd receives numerous monetary donations as the holiday program approaches. A large amount was said to be received from residents through the request that is mailed yearly with the city's utility bill, Lakewood Briefs. This was said to be the fifth year that Project Shepherd has offered a sponsorship program to raise funds. Through sponsorships and grants, Project Shepherd was able to raise a total of \$38, 213.

Volunteers were said to play a major role in the success of the Project Shepherd campaign by assisting in the warehouse with can sorting, distribution, preparation and helping recipients load their cars. In 2018, 208 adult volunteers contributed 588 hours of service and 193 teens volunteered for a total of 266 hours of service. Volunteers assisted in delivering 69 meals to families without transportation. This includes two senior apartment complexes and individual family homes.

Ms. Cariaso then provided a brief overview of the year-round extension program. She reported that in the past couple years staff has seen an overall decrease in extension services. In 2017, 149 families were served, while in 2018, only 110 families were given assistance. Assistance was said to primarily consist of emergency food and utility bill payments. It was explained that a family would typically be given two to three boxes of food and a small grocery store gift card. Utility bill assistance is typically only available one time and for a maximum of \$100. Other types of assistance include clothing, diapers, personal care products and bus tokens.

Ms. Cariaso concluded her report with an update on the Backpack Assistance Program. In August, staff was said to have distributed 275 backpacks filled with school supplies for school aged children and teens.

Chairperson Dave Allen expressed that it is always very heartwarming to see the community come together every year to make this program successful.

Commissioner Winnie Heiss expressed what a pleasure it is for her to assist with the delivery to the homes each year stating that it is the highlight of her Christmas vacation. She mentioned how wonderful it is to see Community Services Manager Nancy Hitt and her family there assisting every year.

The Commission received and filed the report.

4. Activities and Maintenance Report No. 7

A written report and discussion of the Recreation and Community Services Department Programs, Services and Maintenance Activities for the month December 2018 and a listing of upcoming activities for February 2019.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Employee of the Month – Mike Quijada, November 2018

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to be brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Dave Allen adjourned the meeting at 6:41 p.m. to February 13, 2019 at 6 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission