



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
July 10, 2019

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Vice Chairperson Ted Spaseff

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Winnie Heiss

OTHER – REORGANIZATION OF COMMISSION OFFICERS:

Nominations were opened for commission chairperson for a term of one year. Commissioner Kirk Real moved and Commissioner Ben Delarosa seconded the motion to nominate Ted Spaseff to serve as chairperson. Upon unanimous roll call vote, the motion was carried.

Nominations were opened for commission vice chairperson for a term of one year. Commissioner Dave Allen moved and Commissioner Kirk Real seconded the motion to nominate Ben Delarosa to serve as vice chairperson. Upon unanimous roll call vote, the motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of June 12, 2019. A motion was made by Commissioner Dave Allen and seconded by Vice Chairperson Ben Delarosa to approve the minutes from the meeting of June 12, 2019. The motion was carried by unanimous roll call vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Director Valarie Frost began her remarks by thanking Commissioner Dave Allen for his exceptional leadership in his role as chairperson for the department and for his support of the department's activities. She thanked him for his participation in the Budget Advisory Committee, for his council in the selection of a new concessionaire for the Lakewood Equestrian Center, and for being master of ceremonies for both the El Comienzo Luncheon and the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon.

Ms. Frost pointed out the full audience of RCS staff, who would be introduced later in the evening, and introduced City Manager Thaddeus McCormack. She then went on to note that there were no reports of injuries or damage resulting from the earthquakes on July 4 and 5. All city facilities were said to have been inspected for structural damage and checked for potential gas and/or water leaks. She assured the commission that staff across all city departments provided timely response following the earthquakes.

Ms. Frost announced that on Tuesday, June 25, at the City Council Study Session, the agenda topic was the California Prop 68 competitive grant opportunity. The City Council gave staff approval to apply for the maximum possible grant award of \$8.5 million to complete facility improvements at Bloomfield Park. The proposed renovation project includes a new school-aged playground, renovation of baseball diamond number two, ADA upgrades and interior renovations for the park office and the community building, a synthetic turf soccer field with a walking track, sports lighting and a restroom facility, parking lot improvements including additional lighting, a security fence along the Los Angeles County Flood Control, and a combination batting cage, driving range and bocce court facility.

On Tuesday, July 23, it was reported that RCS would lead another City Council Study Session where staff will present to the City Council a recommendation for a new concessionaire at the Lakewood Equestrian Center. It was said that staff would update the council on the selection process employed and introduce Joy Gould, the recommended operator to take over center operations beginning October 1. A meet and greet for boarders and subcontractors is scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, August 21 at Palms Park. Ms. Frost asked the commission to please RSVP to their secretary if interested in attending.

Ms. Frost concluded her announcements with a few important reminders for the commission. The LYS Awards Ceremony and Family Play Day was said to be taking place on Saturday, August 3. She informed the commission that if they plan to attend they would be assigned to a park to assist council with the distribution of the awards. Following the LYS Awards Ceremony is Family Play Day featuring games and activities. Next, Ms. Frost noted that it was the time of year where staff hosts the annual backpack drive, she mentioned that staff would appreciate the commissioners' assistance in donating a backpack and/or school supplies for a child in need. It was said that all donations would be collected at the Burns Community Center or City Hall by Thursday, August 8. She noted that the backpacks and school supplies would be donated to those in need at the Community Connect Event on Saturday, August 17 at the Burns Community Center. Ms. Frost then reported that the RCS Department was teaming with the Public Safety Department to host a National Night Out and Community Barbecue at Palms Park on Friday, August 8, from 6 to 9 p.m. The free event was said to feature inflatable attractions, hamburgers, hotdogs and chips, public safety vehicles on display, and games such as sack races against deputies and a tug-of-war with firefighters. Lastly, Ms. Frost reminded the commission that the annual facilities tour was scheduled for Wednesday, August 14. She asked that requests for site visits be directed to the commissions' secretary by Thursday, August 1, noting that the staff was currently working on the tour agenda.

Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided information regarding programming and upcoming events. On Sunday, July 14, the Lakewood High School Alumni Association will host its 20th Annual Alumni Picnic at Del Valle Park from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The estimated crowd of 1200 participants will make use of the picnic shelters along with the Lakewood Youth Center. Alumni are encouraged to attend the event, which will include food truck displays, a display of classic cars and motorcycles along Arbor Road, and a historical display related to the high school and the city. On Friday, July 19, the first of two movie nights will take place at Lakewood Center Mall in the

parking lot along Del Amo Blvd. The collaborative effort between the mall and the city replaced the Summer Fest event. It was said that while the Summer Fest event demonstrated some success, the committee felt that resources could be maximized with two movie nights to attract the community and demonstrate outreach at the mall. Check-in and pre-movie activities for kids will begin at 7 p.m. and the Transformers franchise movie *Bumblebee* will begin at 8:15 p.m. Food trucks will create a virtual amphitheater for movie attendees creating a neat experience. On Saturday, July 20, at Mayfair Pool the junior lifeguards will host their annual swim meet. Check-in and warm-ups will begin at 7:30 a.m. with the first event commencing at 8 a.m. Junior guards will compete against each other in typical swimming races and compete in lifeguarding skills tests to demonstrate their lifeguarding acumen. Awards for the champions will include keychains, goggles and swim caps. Over 60 junior guards are expected to attend. Finally, Mr. Bright reported that on Saturday, July 27, Teens in Lakewood Care (TLC) would again provide outreach and volunteer with a cleanup project at a Lakewood residence. The homeowner is bedridden and unable to clean up her yard. Volunteers will remove debris from the yard. The homeowner was referred to RCS from the Community Development Department and TLC efforts will help bring the home up to code. Twelve to fifteen teens are expected to volunteer for the project and Piazza McDonalds will once again provide lunch following the groups' hard work.

Commissioner Kirk Real congratulated staff on a successful LYS Opening Day ceremony. He mentioned that the decision to combine the ceremony with the Public Safety Expo was a great strategy. Next, he shared that he was able to attend a concert at Del Valle Park and noted that it was well attended and the crowd was very enthusiastic. He thanked staff for their hard work.

Commissioner Dave Allen expressed his thanks for the RCS administrative support staff stating that they are the glue that keeps the department together. He asked that staff pass on his sentiments to the clerical team.

Vice Chairperson Ben Delarosa shared that he too was able to attend the LYS Opening Day. He echoed Commissioner Real's comments stating that the event was a success. He mentioned staff did a great job of making adjustments and staging the event around the storm water capture project.

Chairperson Ted Spaseff concurred with his fellow commissioners' comments regarding LYS Opening Day. He noted that the parents were very excited and engaged and shared that it was neat to see their reactions throughout the event. He thanked Community Services Manager Chuck Martucci for enthusiastically announcing each team as they paraded across the field.

REPORTS:

1. RCS Department Annual Budget Report

Assistant Director, Kevin Bright, began his presentation of the Recreation and Community Services Department Annual Budget Report for fiscal year 2019-2020, noting that this report is an accumulation of information regarding all of the divisions within RCS, including the purpose of each division and some of the activities planned within each division.

Mr. Bright reported that at the June 11, City Council Meeting the revised second year of a

two-year budget was adopted by the city. Mr. Bright reported that the city remains in a structural deficit in which the city's expenditures are projected to outperform revenues in an increasing margin. Increasing costs to do business, the loss of funds taken by the state and the federal government, and flattening revenues such as those the city faces with diminishing sales taxes were listed as factors contributing to the issue. Mr. Bright reported that considering the conditions, staff across the city had identified \$2 million in savings for the 2018-19 budget, which helped to eliminate the deficit in the year prior. He mentioned that core goals during the budget reduction were set and geared toward a strict course of action which included maintaining core services and programs for residents, avoiding layoffs and maintaining hiring freezes where feasible, defer replacement of capital equipment where safe and appropriate, postpone general fund capital projects to future years where possible, and finally, searching for alternative funding sources such as grants to offset general fund spending. It was said that although a balanced budget was passed in June of 2018, a new shortfall was identified in excess of \$1.3 million in the 2019-20 fiscal year. Staff were once again tasked with maintaining core goals and eliminating the \$1.3 million deficit. Mr. Bright noted that several departments were instrumental in achieving the presentation of a balanced budget. He reported that RCS accounted for 23% of the city's entire \$49.5 million budget, coming in a close third behind the Public Works and Public Safety Departments respectively. RCS staff were able to identify reductions by analyzing trends from three prior fiscal years and in the end presented savings totaling just under \$140,000 in budget expenditures. Throughout the process and continuing through the execution of the budget as the city embarks on a new fiscal year, RCS will continue the course set for all staff throughout all departments. He noted that the department intends to maintain the tradition of responsible stewardship with public resources, employing best practices and prudent spending. Despite the tightening of collective department belts, the RCS department and staff will continue to provide programs, services and facilities that maintain and improve the quality of life for Lakewood residents.

Next Mr. Bright reported that the budget breakdown, by division and appropriations, was shown on the first page of the report. He noted that the total operating Recreation budget was \$12,939,866 with a revenue account projected at \$1,527,711. Several divisions were recognized to have had funds remaining at the conclusion of the previous three fiscal years. Across the board, part-time staffing costs were said to be the sole funds to be cut while supplies, contractual services and other expenses were recognized as necessary budget allocations. Four divisions were said to have been targeted, realizing a total savings of \$99,974 in part-time staffing costs. The four divisions with org. codes were said to be the RCS Administration 7000 division, 7070 and 7075 from the aquatics programs, 7350 from park programs, and 7600 from the park maintenance division. Mr. Bright added that \$40,000 was going to be eliminated from the budget in the area of utility spending based on trends from previous years. These utilities included electricity and water allocations at three park facilities.

To conclude, Mr. Bright reported that while some budgetary savings come from part-time staffing expenses, RCS staff is fully committed to continue to provide services and programs commensurate with the long time standard set by the department and the City of Lakewood.

Commissioner Real inquired as to whether or not the city had taken any steps towards moving to solar lighting for parks and sports fields. Mr. Bright informed him that the city had not looked into solar, however, a highly efficient energy system could be a possibility in the future. Ms. Frost noted that the city has moved to LED lighting for many sports fields. She mentioned that LED lighting also provides energy savings. She noted that technology is not available for solar powered sports field lighting since they do not produce the high illumination necessary.

Next, Ms. Frost asked the RCS managers—Alex Bauman, Nicole Duran, Michael Cracium, Nancy Hitt, Chuck Martucci, and Michael McDade—who were in the audience, to introduce themselves to the commission and explain their role in the department.

Mr. Bright continued with the budget report presentation; he explained to the commission that this year's theme was centered on the concept of change and was inspired by a quote by Benjamin Disraeli—a British politician of the Conservative Party who twice served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at the end of the 19th century. The quote was “*Change is inevitable, change is constant.*” Mr. Bright added that after hearing the budget report the commission was witness to one example of change that the department has experienced. He noted that while change can be uncomfortable and at times scary it is in fact inevitable. He added that the past year had been full of changes both in the RCS department and across the entire city, from personnel changes at every level of management, to dramatic additions and subtractions of events, staffing, programs, and budget. It was said that the RCS department has not only survived the changes, but has continued to thrive by providing recreation and community service to Lakewood residents. Mr. Bright mentioned staff's ability to be flexible, inventive and ingenious is what makes the department so successful in what it does for the community. From making changes to programs or a policy by directive, or proactively identifying an opportunity to improve upon an existing program, RCS staff have made many significant and successful changes.

Next, the RCS department supervisors—Kevin Arias, Caitlin Cariaso, Kelly Garnetti, Gay Givens, Jonathan Gorne, Sabrina Junkin, Janet Mondragon, Irving Montenegro, Veronica Ramirez, Joe Sheldon, and Joseph Vasquez—who were in the audience, presented slides and reported on successful program and/or policy changes that they have made which have benefitted Lakewood residents.

Vice Chairperson Delarosa stated that youth sports has changed in many ways throughout the years. He applauded staff for recognizing the need to reach out to children in the lower age divisions in order to pull them into the program early before losing them to other organizations. He congratulated staff on taking the chance, adding that the decision has proven to be a success.

Chairperson Spaseff echoed Vice Chairperson Delarosa's comments stating that adding a 4-5 year old division and changing the 8-9 year old division to coach-pitch was a great idea and a major boost for the LYS program.

The Commission received and filed the report.

2. Activities and Maintenance Report No. 2

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

The Commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Part-Time Employee of the Month, Jeff Casillas for the month of May 2019.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Ted Spaseff adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m. to Wednesday, August 14, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. in the Executive Board Room.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission