



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

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Chairperson Ted Spaseff.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Ben Delarosa.

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Winnie Heiss

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Commissioner Kirk Real and seconded by Commissioner Dave Allen to approve the minutes from the meeting of September 11, 2019. The motion was approved.

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided information regarding programming and upcoming events. He reported that on Friday, October 11, staff will host the next Play at Palms event with a showing of Monsters, Inc. Pre-show family activities were said to begin at 6 p.m. with the movie commencing at 7 p.m. He noted that the November Play at Palms event would take place on Friday, November 8 also at 6 p.m. and would feature an inaugural Harvest Festival with plenty of autumn-themed attractions. On Monday, October 14, the annual Lakewood Education Foundation Golf Tournament will be held at Lakewood Country Club. Check-in begins at noon and the shotgun start is at 1 p.m. Banquet and raffles will take place following the round of golf and will begin right around 5 p.m. depending on the pace of play. Mr. Bright thanked the commission for sponsoring a tee sign and supporting the valued cause of raising money for Lakewood students. On Tuesday, October 15 it was reported that staff would host the 19th annual College Fair in the ballroom at The Centre. Mr. Bright mentioned that over 60 colleges would be on site with another 50-plus represented through pamphlets and handouts on the resource tables. The event was said to begin at 6 p.m. with over 500 high school students and parents expected to attend.

Mr. Bright continued by noting dates of other special events scheduled for the fall including the annual Lollipop Lane Craft Boutique that was said to take place on Saturday, October 19 at Mayfair Park. Mr. Bright noted that 106 crafters would fill three rooms and outdoor spaces selling their wares to anxious pre-holiday season shoppers. The event was said to run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with attendance in excess of 4,000. On Monday, October 21 at the Weingart Senior Center, the Free Benefits Information Fair will be offered for seniors. From 10 a.m. to noon, attendees will have an opportunity to meet with health organization representatives and pick up literature regarding available benefits. Around 100 attendees are expected to attend the event.

Moving forward, Mr. Bright notified the commission that on Tuesday, October 29, a Park Development Committee meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. in the Executive Board Room.

He noted that on the agenda were several reports covering the following:

1. Review of Prospective Tenant for Burns Community Center
2. Older Adult Volunteer of the Year Nomination Process
3. Lakewood Youth Sports Coaches Recognition Program
4. On Site Cooking for Private Rentals of Recreation Facilities
5. Facility Rental Insurance – Community Rooms
6. TGIS Catered Events at Monte Verde Park

To wrap up the month of October, it was said that the annual Halloween Carnivals would yet again be hosted at eight city parks. As always, each park will feature a unique, kid-friendly and current theme from popular culture. Four parks—Palms, Del Valle, San Martin and Bolivar—will host scary haunted houses, and every facility will depend highly on volunteers for haunted houses and game booths. Mayfair Park will once again adapt a major event to account for the water capture project, however, staff has developed a sure fire plan so all attendees can enjoy a safe, fun and spooky night. It was said that the carnivals would run from 6 to 8:30 pm, with a bevy of contests throughout the night and the highly anticipated costume contest happening at 7 p.m. at each park.

Commissioner Kirk Real inquired about the Lakewood Equestrian Center, sharing that a two-page article had been posted about the facility in the Long Beach Press Telegram. Director Valarie Frost informed him that the city had extended their contract with Sandi Mercer Stables for one year from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020. She mentioned a barn beautification day was scheduled for Sunday, October 13. It was said that city staff would provide an EDCO trash dumpster for waste and debris disposal. She stated the city would also provide Ms. Mercer with two trees and plants to be planted on the property. It was noted that Parks Superintendent Philip Lopez would be on site to support the group's efforts. Ms. Frost added that the City Manager Thaddeus McCormack and Deputy City Manager Paolo Beltran would host a roundtable with the users of the Lakewood Equestrian Center in the coming weeks. She noted that facility improvements scheduled at the LEC would include addressing issues with the hay barn, with tree maintenance, and with removal of dilapidated tack sheds.

Chairperson Spaseff congratulated staff on a job well done with the Special Olympics fundraiser, sharing that it was a lot of fun. He then commended Ms. Frost and Mr. Bright for doing a great job with the study session regarding the Burns Community Center.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that the Award of Valor event was scheduled for Wednesday, November 6 at 12 p.m. in the Weingart Ballroom at the Centre. She mentioned that four RCS employees would be recognized for their quick response in the community, in addition to three other staff members who would also be recognized for their actions. The commission was asked to confirm their attendance with their secretary.

2. CITY MANAGER'S BUDGET PRESENTATION:

Deputy City Manager Paolo Beltran presented slides and provided information on the City Manager's Budget Report. Mr. Beltran began by noting that the presentation would discuss how

state and federal funding takeaways are affecting the city and threatening the city's services and fiscal situation. A brief history was given about the city along with an explanation of the "Lakewood way." Mr. Beltran informed the commission that the city's budget situation is worsening. He presented a graph depicting the city's revenues and expenditures over the years. He noted that prior to the Great Recession in 2008, the city's revenues were consistently more than expenditures, causing a surplus. He mentioned the city was able to use that surplus to help maintain and replace city infrastructure without having to take on debt or looking for other revenue. However, as the Great Recession hit, the revenue/expenditure picture got muddled. Sales tax revenue dropped and the city did what it could at the time to stay balanced. The state's elimination of redevelopment agencies in 2011, to balance their own budget woes, further eroded Lakewood's situation, and over the last eight years, the combined \$30 million that the state and the federal government have taken from Lakewood were said to have had a major impact. Mr. Beltran pointed out that over \$2 million per year continues to be taken away, and at the same time, revenues are flattening due to online sales and increasing costs of doing business. This has resulted in a structural budget deficit that the city anticipates will increase from \$6 million to \$10 million, 10 years from now.

Mr. Beltran reported that the City Council has fought hard against these takeaways, even filing lawsuits when the redevelopment agencies went away. He noted that this problem is not unique to Lakewood, as other cities are seeing this too and most of them much worse because Lakewood has always been prudent and well managed. The most concerning thing, he mentioned, is that this is happening during a period of economic growth, record low unemployment and stock market highs. He asked the commission to ponder what could happen when the next recession hits.

Next, Director Valarie Frost reported that because of state takeaways and increased costs, the city has had to make cuts and delays to critical projects in the city to make ends meet. She noted that over \$2 million in cuts in the last budget cycle were necessary, including, initial cuts to the budget for Public Safety services. She mentioned that continuing to delay infrastructure repairs to buildings, parks and sidewalks poses a greater safety hazard, and will make repairs more costly to fix in the future.

Ms. Frost continued informing the commission that recently, state law has changed, allowing for the early release of prisoners and shortening of sentences. She noted that home break-ins and neighborhood property crime have been an increasing concern in the community since the new law went into effect. Unfortunately, Ms. Frost explained, Lakewood cannot expand local Sheriff's patrols to keep residents and neighborhoods safe because of a lack of local funds. Cuts have already been made to the budget for Public Safety services and future cuts to Sheriff's services may be necessary.

Ms. Frost then proceeded to mention how investing in the community remains the city's top priority. She stated that many of Lakewood's facilities, such as community centers and park buildings, are over 60 years old and in desperate need of repairs. Needed repairs were said to include leaking roofs, aging electrical systems, deteriorating park bathrooms, and accessibility for the disabled. She informed the commission that a facility needs assessment was conducted for each

facility and staff have determined that a total of \$31,267,913 was needed for facility infrastructure needs.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that the city has conducted a formal customer service satisfaction survey and has identified which services are deemed as those with the highest priority to residents. Results of the survey show that residents are interested in maintaining 911 emergency response, preventing property crimes such as thefts and burglaries, protecting the city's long-term financial stability, keeping parks and public areas safe and clean, protecting local drinking water sources, maintaining a strong Sheriff's presence, and keeping our streets well-maintained and free of potholes. The commission was then provided with a copy of the survey. It was said that staff would continue to update the community about the city's financial planning, including the effort to maintain the services residents so greatly value.

REPORTS:

1. Park Maintenance Fall/Winter Report

Environmental Resources Division Supervisor Mike Cracium displayed slides and provided information as noted in the written report. Mr. Cracium reported that during the fall and winter seasons, maintenance operations will shift focus to the support of Lakewood Tot Lot programs, after school programs at the parks, and Lakewood Youth Sports activities. Priority will be placed on play area maintenance at parks with Tot Lot and school age playgrounds. Daily playground service was said to include checking the condition of the play structures and hardware, removing any litter or debris, and returning displaced sand on walkways back into fall zones. Game court surfaces are pressure washed before and after Halloween carnivals to remove gum and candy. Aged plants are scheduled for replacement surrounding McCormick Pool and other areas at Bolivar Park and the current overhead spraying irrigation will be converted to a water conserving drip system. Wood chip bark will be refreshed in planters along the entire length of the ½-mile trail between Mae Boyar Park and Candlewood Street. Additionally, the horseshoe pits at Del Valle Park will be replaced with new frames and backboards made of pressure treated wood and composite material and the sand in the pits will be replaced with clay to provide traction when the horseshoes land.

Mr. Cracium then reported that staff would soon be implementing new technology provided by Rainbird. He explained that the new equipment would have the capability of detecting leaks and setting watering schedules according to weather. It was said that this equipment could be controlled remotely from a cell phone. He mentioned the benefit of the new system was being able to detect and repair leaks immediately, as the system notifies staff of areas where high levels of water are flowing through the flow sensor.

Chairperson Spaseff shared that he enjoyed touring the ERD facilities during the annual commission tour. He mentioned it gave the commission great insight as to what goes on at the maintenance yard.

The Commission received and filed the report.

2. Adaptive Recreation and Special Olympics Annual Report

Community Services Supervisor Joseph Vasquez displayed slides and provided information regarding the Adaptive Recreation Program as noted in the written report. Mr. Vasquez reported that the City of Lakewood has proudly served the intellectually and physically disabled population through the Adaptive Recreation Program since 1981. He mentioned that currently there are 19 active participants. The Adaptive Recreation Program takes place at Bloomfield Park with participants meeting every Tuesday, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Recreation staff plan, implement, and supervise weekly activities for the drop-in participants. Mr. Vasquez mentioned a calendar is provided for each participant detailing upcoming activities and events. Activities were said to include arts and crafts, athletics, life skills workshops, special events, and small trips to local businesses. In addition to weekly programming, Bloomfield Park staff facilitate at least one special event each month for participants. It was noted that the current calendar includes two new events: Cosmic Bowling at Cal Bowl in April, and a Friendsgiving Thanksgiving Dinner scheduled for November. Cosmic Bowling was said to have sold out with 25 participants in attendance. Friendsgiving will feature a potluck style dinner, bringing the group together just before the holiday season. In addition to these events, the program continues to host additional programs including dances, movie nights, a talent show, a summer pool party, and an end of summer luau.

Next, Mr. Vasquez provided information on the Lakewood Special Olympics Program as noted in the written report. He reported that the Special Olympics Program began in 1992 and noted that currently there are 95 active participants competing in six different sports. Basketball and bocce are offered during the spring season, bowling is offered in the summer, and softball, soccer and golf during the fall. It was said that the city provides plenty of opportunity for the athletes to be recognized including the Lakewood Hall of Fame Awards Banquet. In September, Lakewood city staff organized its annual LAMP/LCEA Special Olympics Fundraiser raising over \$6,200, to purchase new equipment for teams. The athletes enjoyed dinner and sports competition against city staff and were formally recognized by the Lakewood City Council for their continued achievements in athletics.

Chairperson Spaseff thanked staff for both the Adaptive Recreation and the Special Olympics programs and mentioned what a tremendous impact these programs have on not only the participant but also their families as well.

Commissioner Real shared his pleasure in seeing that Mr. Vasquez shares the same commitment and enthusiasm for these programs as founder, Community Services Manager Chuck Martucci.

The Commission received and filed the report.

3. Activity ZONE Annual Report

Community Services Supervisor Irving Montenegro Jr. reviewed the schedule, activities, and statistics of the after-school Activity ZONE program as printed in the written report. Mr. Montenegro reported that the Activity Zone program is a free program offered to school-age

children and pre-teens at eight city parks offering indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities with assisted homework direction for all attendees. The program is designed to provide recreation activities after school and during school vacation periods. During the school year, the program is offered Monday through Friday, from 3 to 5 p.m., with a flexible schedule to accommodate early dismissal days and holidays. During the summer months and vacation periods, programs are offered from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The program emphasizes physical activity and free play as a way to enhance self-esteem, exercise, and overall wellness. Mr. Montenegro mentioned an activity schedule is produced for the fall, winter vacation period, spring, spring vacation period, and summer vacation period. The commission was informed that included in their agenda packet for their review were all the Activity Zone flyers provided throughout the year. The flyers were said to highlight daily activities offered at city parks and special events that may be of interest to children and families.

Mr. Montenegro concluded his report by stating that the Activity Zone provides families with the opportunity to have children attend a safe, flexible and recreational program after school. Working families can rest easy knowing that Lakewood Recreation and Community Services staff supervise and engage with participants in a positive manner, assisting with homework and conducting fun and interactive activities.

Chairperson Spaseff commented that the statistics were very impressive. He applauded staff for providing children with a safe place to go after school and for providing such great security to the parents.

Commissioner Real commended staff for accommodating the various school district schedules so that the program is available when the children need it.

The Commission received and filed the report.

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 September 2019 and a listing of upcoming activities for November 2019.

The Commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letters to Alexis Hagman and Elias Martinez, Part-Time Co-Employees of the Month for August 2019

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to be brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Ted Spaseff adjourned the meeting at 6:54 p.m. to November 13, 2019 at 6 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission