



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
January 8, 2020

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Ben Delarosa.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Winnie Heiss.

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

ABSENT: Chairperson Ted Spaseff

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Director Valarie Frost began her remarks by sharing that longtime RCS employee, Brad Johnson, has retired after working for the department for 41 years. A modest celebratory event was said to be scheduled for February. Ms. Frost regretfully announced that RCS employee Marcos Ibarra had recently lost his wife due to an unexpected illness. Next, she informed the commission of a few calendar items; on Wednesday, January 22 the State of the City Public Address will take place at 12 p.m. in the Weingart Ballroom at The Centre, and on Tuesday, January 28, prior to the City Council meeting, the Public Works department will unveil the new historical display located on the hallway walls on the north end of City Hall. The display was said to include photos of past and present council members. A small reception, to honor said council members, will take place after the unveiling. On Monday, February 10, the Legends of Lakewood reception will take place at 6 p.m. in the Weingart Ballroom at The Centre. Former Lakewood City Manager Howard Chambers, Lakewood Historian Emeritus Donald Waldie, and all of the Lakewood civic organizations that have supported the community since 1954, will be recognized. Lastly, Ms. Frost announced that the CPRS conference would be hosted in the City of Long Beach on Tuesday, March 10 through Friday, March 13. City of Lakewood staff have volunteered to support the conference in exchange for free training session time.

Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided information regarding programming and upcoming events. Mr. Bright reported that the city had secured a temporary partnership with the Long Beach City College softball team. It was said that their field and practice facilities on campus were undergoing a major renovation and they will be displaced for two to three years. A permit was said to have been developed for Lisa Fernandez Field at Mayfair Park for their upcoming seasons. Mr. Bright mentioned that the Lisa Fernandez field had reopened on Monday, January 6 thanks to the Storm Water Capture Project contractor and to the city's ERD crew, who worked very hard to make the field not only aesthetically pleasing, but also playable and sustainable. Mr. Bright

mentioned that the softball team would be on hand daily for practices and games from noon to 6 p.m., barring any road games where they would not be present. It was said that staff was glad to have the field used regularly and happy to support the Viking program.

Mr. Bright informed the commission of an error on the Special Activities Calendar provided in the agenda packet. He noted that on the calendar the Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame Board of Electors meeting was scheduled for Thursday, January 16. He confirmed that the 2020 Hall of Fame selections would in fact be made on Thursday, January 9 beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Executive Board Room. It was said that Piazza Family McDonald's Restaurants will graciously cater the event and the full class of inductees for calendar year 2019 will be selected. Mr. Bright pointed out one note of interest for the year, a new member, Dustin Plunkett, was added to the Board of Electors. Dustin's history as a Lakewood Special Olympian, a past Hall of Fame inductee, a one-time RCS recreation leader and current Special Olympics International Global Messenger are all attributes that were said to qualify him for the role and make him a great addition to the Board. The 2020 Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame Sports Banquet is scheduled for Monday, February 24 in the Weingart Ballroom at The Centre at 6 p.m.

Next, Mr. Bright announced that on Friday, January 10 staff would host the first Play at Palms event of 2020. The movie night under the stars will feature Disney's live action version of Dumbo. Pre-viewing crafts and family fun begin at 6 p.m. with the movie beginning at 7 p.m. On Saturday, January 25, the LYS Basketball season will commence at city parks. The season will conclude the LYS year with the third and final season offering the new adjusted age classifications. It was said that the 4-5 year old division had represented success all year in boosting numbers. Like the two previous sports seasons, staff saw an increase with 759 participants registered in the current season, up from 633 in 2019 for an almost 20% increase. Mr. Bright pointed out that the season was pushed back three weeks from previous years in an attempt to avoid the hectic holiday season for parents and coaches. The revised scheduling allowed staff to better recruit volunteer coaches, provide for better attendance of players at pre-season meetings and practices and gave staff an opportunity to hit the ground running.

Finally, Mr. Bright informed the commission that beginning Friday, January 24 through Sunday, January 26, staff will host a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training at the Weingart Senior Center. The class was said to have reached capacity with 40 registered to attend. The event will be led by Los Angeles County Fire Department personnel, and facilitated by Lakewood's Emergency Manager, Chuck Martucci. Attendees will learn what they can do to be key members of their community, assisting first responders following a disaster.

Parks Superintendent Philip Lopez provided updates regarding Lisa Fernandez Field at Mayfair Park. Mr. Lopez informed the commission that the contractor had completed their portion of the work and staff was currently working to prepare the field for play. He noted that final touches were being conducted around Long Beach City College's practices and mentioned staff's plans to put in bullpens including a pitcher's mound and home plate with a cutout for the catcher. It was said that the field would be laser-leveled on Thursday, January 23 beginning at 8 a.m. The commission was invited to observe.

Commissioner Kirk Real shared that he had recently driven by the Lisa Fernandez Field and was in awe at the beauty of it. He mentioned it was up to par with Lakewood standards and shared that he would attend to witness the laser leveling.

Ms. Frost confirmed for Vice Chairperson Delarosa that staff did not anticipate any issues pertaining to field maintenance. She noted that the city was charging Long Beach City College for the additional cost to maintain the field during the time their permit is in effect.

REPORTS:

1. Spring Programs and Catalog Preview

Community Services Manager Nancy Hitt reported on aspects of the Spring 2020 Recreation Catalog. Ms. Hitt reported that the new catalogs were delivered to Lakewood homes on Friday, December 13. The cover was said to feature a group of Lakewood teens welcoming in the spring season and inviting their peers to participate in the many activities scheduled at the Lakewood Youth Center and Teen Resource Center at Bloomfield Park. Registration for recreation classes opened for residents upon receipt of the catalog, while non-resident registration opened on Monday, January 6. Most classes and activities will begin the week of Monday, February 3.

Next, Ms. Hitt provided information regarding programs and events scheduled for the spring. She announced that the Pan Am Fiesta would take place Thursday, May 7 through Sunday, May 10. She noted that the Mayfair Storm Water Capture project was expected to conclude prior to the event allowing the event to proceed with its traditional layout. It was said that special evening concerts would be offered on both Friday, May 8 and Saturday, May 9, along with the traditional quality of entertainment, amusement rides, food booths, and craft vendors. Four FUN-tastic Family Nights will take place in the spring: the first on Friday, February 21 featuring Dino Encounters, the second on Friday, March 27 featuring The Amazing Dave, the third on Friday, April 24 featuring Ranger Jack, and the fourth on Friday, June 19 featuring Street Beat. Mother-Son Date Night will return to the Lakewood Youth Center on Saturday, March 28 and Daddy-Daughter Date Night returns to the spring schedule on Friday, April 3 for its 30th rendition. Ms. Hitt reported that spring vacation activities such as egg decorating, making candy baskets, an egg hunt for preschool and elementary school children, and a visit from the Easter Bunny, would be offered at city parks during spring recess from school during the week of April 13-17. It was said that one travel trip per month would be offered from February through May with the first trip taking place on Sunday, February 16 to see a performance of *The Last Ship*. On Saturday, March 21, participants will have an opportunity to travel on the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway to the pristine wilderness of San Jacinto State Park, and then on Thursday, April 9 participants can view the energetic and captivating Cirque du Soleil show, *Volta*. Concluding this travel series on Friday, May 15 will be a trip to the Segerstrom Center in Costa Mesa for a viewing of the Broadway show *Les Misérables*.

Ms. Hitt reported that the Burns Community Center's Active+ Programming was still going strong. Walking Club, Tech Talk, Pickleball, stretch classes, Yoga, and step aerobics continue

to meet frequently, while a quilters group, Bunco Party, and a Trivia Night have all been added. It was said that several new educational seminars were on the spring agenda. Ms. Hitt discussed the variety of classes, which help to keep the older adults of the community fit and healthy at the Weingart Senior Center. She noted that the fitness room provides stationary bikes, treadmills, and weights, and is open for daily use. Additionally, she mentioned that recreation staff leads and conducts fitness classes including chair exercise, mat exercise, cardio salsa, low impact aerobics and stretching. Artistic programming was said to incorporate such courses as Chinese brush painting, plastic canvas needlepoint, crochet, knitting, arts and crafts, and much more. It was reported that Iacoboni on the Move, a monthly mobile library service, continues to provide books and movies to check out. Finally, Ms. Hitt informed the commission that the annual Easter Eggstravaganza would take place on Thursday, April 9 at the Weingart Senior Center. She mentioned that grandparents were welcome to bring grandchildren and great-grandchildren out to celebrate the holiday together dying eggs and visiting with the Easter Bunny.

The Commission received and filed the report.

2. Teen Programs Annual Report

Community Services Supervisor Kelly Garnetti provided information on activities and programs offered at the Teen Resource Center and the Lakewood Youth Center, as noted in the written report. Ms. Garnetti reported that the Teen Resource Center and the Lakewood Youth Center continue to provide teens in Lakewood with a safe place to hang out and socialize with friends. The Teen Resource Center at Bloomfield Park continued to offer daily drop-in activities and monthly special events in 2019. Program attendance remained consistent with just over 2,000 participants throughout the year. The Teen Resource Center also offered homework assistance, as well as use of the center's computers and reading alcove. Teens also enjoyed the gaming consoles and access to the snack bar.

Activities and programs coordinated at the Youth Center were said to include daily drop-in hours for the game room, the Summer Teen Adventure Series, Fusion Friday special events, and the Lakewood Teen Action Committee (LTAC). Ms. Garnetti mentioned that over the past year the Youth Center has seen 6,000 teens participate in its daily programs and special events. She stated that in May of 2019, LTAC completed its third year of service giving teens in Lakewood an opportunity to get involved in the community. She noted that in the past year, 21 participants volunteered over 350 hours of service to the community. It was said that in May, those teens were recognized at the LTAC annual awards banquet and Anthony Sanchez received the Volunteer of the Year Award for his devoted service. As the group moves into 2020, the committee remains strong with 22 members, including nine new middle school participants this year.

Ms. Garnetti shared that the Youth Center serves as the hub for monitoring all teen volunteer participation in the city. She reported that in 2019, over 265 teens volunteered at various city facilities and events, totaling over 940 hours of community service. In July, 10 teens participated in the Teens in Lakewood Care Program, assisting a resident with a much-needed

home cleanup, and in December, 114 teens performed community service at the Project Shepherd Warehouse, totaling 198 hours. Finally, Ms. Garnetti reported that in October, the 19th annual College Fair took place at The Centre. She mentioned that the event attracted over 400 high school students and their parents and 71 colleges and universities had the opportunity to promote their programs. California Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon’s office hosted a booth and provided one \$250 scholarship in addition to the two \$250 scholarships provided by the Lakewood Teen Action Committee.

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 2019 was Project Shepherd’s 47th year of assisting Lakewood residents who are unemployed, low income, or on public assistance. Registration for the 2019 holiday assistance program began on November 4 and continued through November 17 at the Burns Community Center and Palms Park. A total of 308 Lakewood families registered and received assistance. Palms Park registered 105 families, while the Burns Community Center registered 203 families. Ms. Cariaso displayed a graph reflecting registration summaries for the past 10 years. She noted that in 2018 Project Shepherd had 301 families had registered for the program compared to 308 families in 2019, which was said to reflect a 2% increase. She pointed out that the program’s peak was in 2010 with 548 families assisted and the lowest was 2018 with 301 families assisted.

Ms. Cariaso reported that the city’s three school districts, and private schools, comprised the many schools that assisted Project Shepherd with food collections during the year beginning in late November and early December. It was said that schools were encouraged to participate in the Holiday Dinner Food Drive and donate a holiday meal including a \$10 grocery 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 announced that MacArthur Elementary School was the winner of the 2019 Holiday Dinner Food Drive. She added that in December, sixteen local schools participated in collecting over 641 boxes food.

Next, Ms. Cariaso shared that The Boy Scouts of America, Long Beach Area Council held their annual Scouting for Food project on Saturday, November 9 at Mayfair Park. The drive generated hundreds of boxes of food items that were used for distribution during the holiday program. Additionally, in 2019 Project Shepherd received 65 turkeys for the program, with Golden State Water donating 40 turkeys and an additional 25 turkeys donated by Caring Connections. Participants were also given gift bags and bows from a donation made by Big Lots.

The Teddy Bear Tree Program allows residents to pick a specific child recipient of their choice and purchase the gift that the child desires to receive. The popular gift donation program is marketed to local residents at the Lakewood Center Mall the weekend of November 30 and

December 1. It was said that the display of teddy bears were also available at several Lakewood facilities and a variety of businesses in the community. Ms. Cariaso reported that 561 children received a gift through the holiday program in 2019. She mentioned that in addition to the teddy bear tree gift, there were 46 scooters and helmets that were given to children in the program. It was said that Project Shepherd receives numerous monetary donations as the holiday program approaches. A large amount of it is received from residents through the request that is mailed with the city's utility bill. Ms. Cariaso noted that 2019 was the sixth year the program offered sponsorship opportunities to raise funds for the program. Through sponsorships, Project Shepherd raised \$25,575 for 2019.

Ms. Cariaso informed the commission that volunteers play a major role in the success of the program. Volunteers assist in the warehouse with can sorting, distribution, preparation, and helping recipients load their cars. She reported that 144 adult volunteers contributed 380 hours of service and 114 teen volunteers contributed 198 hours of service. She noted that the program continues to provide home delivery service to the elderly, the disabled, and families with no transportation. In 2019 it was said that volunteers delivered 74 meals to families all over Lakewood.

Ms. Cariaso stated that through the Project Shepherd Extension Assistance Program, Lakewood residents in need are given assistance throughout the year with emergency food, grocery store gift cards and utility assistance. Help was said to primarily consist of emergency food and utility bill assistance. Other types of assistance in 2019 included clothing, diapers, personal care products and bus tokens.

Lastly, Ms. Cariaso shared 2019 was the eighth year that Project Shepherd conducted a backpack program. In August staff distributed 305 backpacks for school-age children and teens in 2019. She mentioned that recipients are always grateful to start the school year prepared and ready with new school supplies.

Ms. Cariaso clarified for Commissioner Real that there are two places families can go to get assistance with food, if they reside in the zip code 90715 they go to Palms Park, and if they reside in 90712 or 90713, they would go to the Burns Community Center.

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 2019 and a listing of upcoming activities for February 2020.

The Commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Employee of the Month – Katherine Pantoja – November 2019

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to be brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Vice Chairperson Ben Delarosa adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m. to February 12, 2020 at 6 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission