



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
November 18, 2020

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Chairperson Winnie Heiss.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Chairperson Winnie Heiss.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Chairperson Winnie Heiss (via Zoom)
Vice Chairperson Kirk Real
Commissioner Dave Allen
Commissioner Ted Spaseff
Commissioner Stacy Valdez

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of October 14, 2020. A motion was made by Commissioner Dave Allen and seconded by Vice Chairperson Kirk Real to approve the minutes from the meeting of October 14, 2020. The motion was carried by unanimous roll call vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Director Valarie Frost began her announcements by informing the commission that the agreement with SJ Equestrian, LLC to serve as the interim caretaker of the Lakewood Equestrian Center began on Sunday, November 1. Ms. Frost reported that city staff have been at the facility completing irrigation repairs, removing and trimming landscape and training the interim caretaker on how to operate the city-owned water truck and tractor. It was said that the Public Works department has also been onsite finishing the construction of the new hay barn, and assisting with improvements in the pony ride and petting zoo area. The Recreation and Community Services (RCS) Department will work with the Public Works Department to host a ribbon cutting for the hay barn. She informed the commission that an invitation would be sent to their attention once a date is set.

Ms. Frost noted that with the holidays soon approaching, staff has begun organizing events to help make the holidays merrier for residents. She shared that Project Shepherd registration ended on Wednesday, November 18, with 360 families registered for holiday assistance. It was said that staff would continue to accept registration as they come in, and no family needing assistance would be turned away.

Next, Ms. Frost announced that Zoom with Santa would be advertised between December 14 and 19. She informed the commission that Santa would spend 10 minutes on the line with children in the community. Calls will be scheduled by advance registration. Ms. Frost explained that Zoom with Santa was yet another fun way for residents to find the "Merry" during the holiday season.

Although details have yet to be finalized, Ms. Frost asked the commission to keep watch for information related to holiday caroling scheduled from city parks and spanning into the adjoining neighborhoods during the month of December.

Next, Ms. Frost reported that on Friday, November 20 the city, in conjunction with Los Angeles County Department of Public Health staff, would facilitate a Medical Point of Dispensing (MPOD) Flu Shot vaccination exercise at Mayfair Park. She mentioned that time slots are available between the hours of 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. She asked the commission to inform their secretary if interested in signing up for a flu shot.

The commission was informed that Thursday, November 19 would be the last day to get a raffle ticket or make a bid on silent auction items in support of the Lakewood Education Foundation. Ms. Frost asked the commission to contact Assistant Director Kevin Bright for more information.

Ms. Frost announced that congratulations were in order for Ana Maria Masoe, the RCS Department's new full-time Community Transportation Dispatcher. Ana has worked in the Recreation and Community Services Department for DASH Transit since 2002. In her 18 year career with the city Ana has gained a wealth of knowledge and experience and has been a key staff member. Ana will provide further stability and strength to the new full-time dispatching role, and will undoubtedly be a continued asset to the DASH Transit program. Ana will begin her new role the week of November 15.

Finally, Ms. Frost provided the commission with a reminder that City Hall is closed Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27 for the Thanksgiving holiday, and will be closed the week of December 24 –January 3, recognizing the Christmas holiday and New Year's Day.

Commissioner Dave Allen shared that he recently had the pleasure of attending the Weingart Senior Center Drive-Thru Halloween Goody Grab-n-Go event. He congratulated staff on a job well done. He mentioned that he also plans to attend the Weingart Senior Center's Gobble Goody Giveaway on Tuesday, November 24.

Commissioner Ted Spaseff mentioned that he had the opportunity to attend the Drive-Thru Pumpkin Patch & Halloween Treat Bag Distribution event. He said it was neat to see, very well attended and that he and his grandchildren had a great time. He thanked Community Services Manager Nicole Duran and staff for executing a fun and successful event.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that the city had collaborated with Lakewood Center, California State Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, Lakewood Family YMCA, Rotary Club of Lakewood and Lakewood Lion's Club to provide the goody bags for the Halloween event.

REPORTS:

1. Aquatics Program Annual Report

Community Services Supervisor Veronica Ramirez displayed slides and highlighted the various aquatics programs and events that took place in the past year, as noted in the written report. Ms. Ramirez reported that planning for the 2020 aquatics season had officially begun when invitations to return to work for the summer were sent out to aquatics personnel the first week of February. She mentioned that at the time, the majority of the staff had indicated that they intended to return for the summer, and job recruitments were posted in

an effort to fill vacancies. It was said that shortly after, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic began to set in and the recruitment process was brought to a halt. Additionally, six staff were said to have rescinded their intent to return, citing concerns regarding exposure to COVID-19. The lack of returning staff and the complexities of onboarding new aquatics personnel required that McCormick Pool remained closed, with Mayfair Pool remaining open for the summer.

Ms. Ramirez reported that a total of 30 staff participated in extensive instructional trainings and certification courses in preparation for the summer season. The initial training schedule was said to have been modified several times due to Public Health-implemented restrictions, as well as American Red Cross policies prohibiting the required certification courses from being conducted. When restrictions were eased, returning staff were notified and trainings commenced beginning June 27 through July 11. Trainings and certifications were said to include In-Water Testing, Swim Instructor School, Lifeguard Training, CPR for the Professional Rescuer, Title 22, Oxygen, Suctioning, and Bloodborne Pathogens.

Ms. Ramirez pointed out that all planning and training revolved around Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) issued guidelines, more specifically the protocols for reopening public swimming pools. When restrictions were eased and reopening procedures became available, it unfortunately meant that several programs could not be offered for the season. The commission was informed that a list of canceled programs was provided in the written report in their agenda packet. With the knowledge that the more popular programs and events would not make the list for the year, it was said that staff shifted their focus to modifying remaining activities to ensure that they could be offered safely. Ms. Ramirez displayed slides detailing the key modifications that were made for the summer. She noted that the modifications were just a few of the many steps taken to help provide peace of mind for both staff and participants. It was said that communication of the new steps and policies was done via online advertising, numerous phone calls to participants, and plenty of signage in and around the pool pavilion. She explained that the idea was to make the transition as easy as possible for participants and their families. She shared that staff was successful in doing so based on the feedback received from participants.

Next, a list of safety measures taken by staff was provided to the commission as noted in the written report. Safety measures were said to include health screenings and temperature checks prior to admittance to the pool pavilion. It was said that face masks were required at all times unless entering the water, and that once within the facility, the flow of traffic was altered to minimize, if not altogether eliminate, crowding and physical contact. Once participants were on the pool deck, signage guided them to their assigned area and provided instruction for storage of their personal items. A designated staff member was assigned to disinfect all high touch points throughout the day and any shared equipment was disinfected in between each use.

Ms. Ramirez reported that group swim lessons for youth and adults were offered for three

sessions, each lasting two weeks. Class capacity was said to have been reduced by at least 50% and approximately half of the classes required an adult guardian to enter the water with each participant—the reason for this modification was to help instructors maintain social distance, while providing a parent or guardian from the same household as the participant to be hands on with the participant who was not yet able to swim without assistance. This was said to be a substantial change to the program, yet was well received by participants and staff. Ms. Ramirez shared that youth and adult group swim lessons filled to 95% capacity, with 92% resident registration. Lap Swim, Aqua Zumba, and Water Aerobics, were all offered with limited enrollment. Each program filled to full capacity, with 86% resident registration. Ms. Ramirez provided the commission with attendance and revenue numbers as noted in a table within the written report.

Vice Chairperson Kirk Real spoke about the recent commission tour to the Mayfair Pool sharing that he was very impressed at the way staff had augmented the programs and facility to ensure the safety of both staff and participants. He thanked Ms. Ramirez and staff for their detailed planning and success in preserving the aquatics program during the pandemic.

Ms. Ramirez confirmed for Commissioner Allen that the tenure of the participants was overall positive. She shared that patrons were very cooperative and staff encountered few resistance.

Commissioner Spaseff echoed Vice Chairperson Real's comments regarding the fantastic job Ms. Ramirez and staff had done during the aquatics season. He mentioned that it appeared to be a tremendous amount of work for staff to augment the programs and facility. He stated that he appreciates the hard work and effort.

The Commission received and filed the report.

2. Incident and Injury Annual Report

Community Services Alex Bauman expanded on information on the department's incident and injury reporting process as noted in the written report. He reminded the commission that recreation staff completes a department incident and injury report form to record all incidents and injuries occurring on a city recreation facility. Management personnel, including the department director, review the reports for completeness and to identify potential trends. Statistical information, including type of incident and an estimate of loss to the city, is transferred into a spreadsheet allowing staff to recognize specific types of incidents and injuries occurring on a facility. Mr. Bauman reported that through October 2020, there were 208 incidents reported across all facilities for the year which reflects a 36.5% decrease compared to the previous year. In 2019, there were 328 incidents reported, which reflects a 25.5% increase from the amount reported in 2018. It was said that with COVID-19 restrictions starting in March 2020, there was a significant decrease in facility and program attendance as closures were in effect. This contributed to the significant decrease in the number of incidents across all facilities.

Mr. Bauman reported that of all the facilities, Palms Park, Bloomfield Park and Mayfair Park have reported the highest volume of incidents in the past year. In regards to the types of incidents, it was said that vandalism was the department's single most frequent classification of incident with graffiti being the most frequent type.

The commission was informed that a summary of the 2020 incident and injury reports and a three-year comparison of statistics, by facility and by type, was provided in their agenda packets.

Mr. Bauman pointed out that thorough reporting and recordkeeping provides numerous benefits to the city. Documenting and evaluating loss for each incident, when applicable, provides not only a yearly loss amount but can be used in cases when the city is able to seek reimbursement from the person involved. Records also help staff identify potential trends occurring across the city. Reviewing these records can reveal areas in which incidents are on the increase and allows staff to identify new approaches for possible prevention. It was said that comprehensive record keeping helps evaluate the progress of staff and if needed, provide any necessary training or changes to the administrative process.

Mr. Bauman confirmed for Vice Chairperson Real that the decrease in incidents and injuries was due to the fact that the parks have been closed due to COVID-19.

Mr. Bauman confirmed for Commissioner Allen that staff was still coordinating with the Sheriff's department on issues with graffiti. He noted that Sheriffs come out to the facility when graffiti is reported and provide a tag report which is included on the department's incident report form.

The Commission received and filed the report.

3. Activities and Maintenance Report No. 5

A written report and discussion of the Recreation and Community Services Department Programs, Services and Maintenance Activities for the month of October and a listing of upcoming activities for December 2020.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that Lakewood residents will be invited to tune into a live broadcast of the annual tree lighting ceremony on Friday, December 4. It was said that the community can join in virtually at 6:30 p.m. by tuning in to City TV channel 31 (Spectrum and Frontier), channel 99 (AT&T) or at www.lakewoodcity.org/CityTVlive. The 30-minute ceremony will include holiday songs by a choral group from Mayfair High School and a visit from Santa Claus with a special message for Lakewood children, and conclude with Lakewood City Council lighting up the 24-foot-tall tree in the Civic Center Plaza to ring in the joyous season.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that following the ceremony, at 7:30 p.m., three aerial

fireworks shows were set to be displayed simultaneously across the city so that as many residents as possible can view a top-notch, professional and safe fireworks show from their front yard or nearby.

The Commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Kaweesha Gamage, Employee of the Month for September 2020, and Farrah Martin, Employee of the Month for October 2020.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Winnie Heiss adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m. to Wednesday, December 9, 2020, at 6 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission