



MINUTES  
Recreation and Community Services Commission  
Adjourned Regular Meeting  
July 14, 2021

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MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Kirk Real.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Chairperson Winnie Heiss.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Chairperson Winnie Heiss  
Vice Chairperson Kirk Real  
Commissioner Dave Allen  
Commissioner Stacy Valdez

ABSENT: Commissioner Ted Spaseff

OTHER – REORGANIZATION OF COMMISSION OFFICERS:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of June 9, 2021. A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Allen and seconded by Commissioner Heiss to approve the minutes from the meeting of June 9, 2021. Upon unanimous roll call vote, the motion was carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Commissioner Winnie Heiss announced that she would be retiring from the RCS Commission at the conclusion of the meeting. She expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve on such a wonderful commission since 2012. The commission expressed their appreciation to Commissioner Heiss for her service and membership. Ms. Frost shared a slideshow containing photos of Commissioner Heiss at several Lakewood events over the years and provided the commission with a background on her tenure with the commission. Vice Mayor Steve Croft thanked Commissioner Heiss for her service and presented her with a plaque.

Ms. Frost began her announcements by informing the commission that the department had hosted its first summer concert in the park on Thursday, July 8. She noted that there were five more concerts scheduled and invited the commission to enjoy the music under the canopy of trees at Del Valle Park on Thursday nights from 6:30 to 8 p.m. It was said that the current week's concert would feature Country Nation. A Hard Day's Night—a tribute to the Beatles—will perform on July 22 and the final concert of the season will be on August 12 and feature Knyght Ryder, a popular 80s band.

Ms. Frost announced that on Saturday, July 17 and Sunday, July 18, the Rotary Club of Lakewood would work with city staff and Lakewood Center Mall staff to collect backpack and school supplies for the annual Project Shepherd backpack distribution program. It was said that Rotarians would be at the mall from 12 to 5 p.m. each day inviting the public to donate to this very special program. Staff anticipates helping up to 300 Lakewood students for the school year. Registration is ongoing through the month of July at the Burns Community Center and backpacks are scheduled to be distributed the second week of August.

Next, Ms. Frost reported on a few more exciting events including the Save a Life event schedule for Saturday, July 24 from 9 to 11 a.m. at Mayfair Pool. Free swim lessons for kids, water safety and CPR demonstrations, and life jacket fittings, will all be offered to help keep children safe around swimming pools. The event is free and adults who attend will receive a free water watcher card and whistle.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that Movie Nights at the Park were back on for the summer. She shared that on July 10, *Toy Story 4* was showcased at San Martin Park. Two additional movies were said to be scheduled for the summer including *Cool Runnings*, which will be featured at Lakewood Center on July 31, and Disney's *Raya and the Last Dragon*, which will be shown at Palms Park on August 14.

Next, Ms. Frost reported that the Lakewood Youth Sports (LYS) baseball, softball and t-ball season was well underway and would conclude on Friday, August 6. On Saturday, August 7, staff will host a closing day ceremony and family play day at Palms Park. All LYS athletes, coaches and supporters are welcome to the park to enjoy a day of outdoor fun, inclusive of picnic games, inflatable attractions and food trucks for all appetites. It was said that these events would follow an awards presentation, highlighting the achievements and sportsmanship of all the sports teams.

Ms. Frost noted that she had previously mentioned to the commission that the Lakewood Equestrian Center and Open Space master plan would be presented to the City Council on Tuesday, July 27. She informed the commission that the presentation had been moved to Tuesday, August 24. It was said that the commissions' attendance, although always welcomed at council study sessions and meetings, was particularly appreciated at this meeting given the subject matter.

Ms. Frost announced that the Weingart Senior Center was open and nearly back in full swing. She shared that the billiards room and card room were open, along with fitness classes in the activity room and the fitness room, with treadmills, bikes and free weights. She mentioned that the fitness classes had up to 50 participants in each class since opening back up in mid-June. It was said that the Human Services Association would provide frozen lunches for the older population to take home for the week and expects to begin in person lunches on Friday, October 1. Ms. Frost shared that Crazy Karaoke would begin again at the senior center on Friday, July 16 from 1 to 5 p.m. She shared that the program was a popular activity prior to the pandemic and many Lakewood seniors were excited to see the program return to the activity schedule.

The Commission was informed that the Special Olympics of Southern California had authorized limited in-person activities beginning Tuesday, July 6. Ms. Frost shared that Lakewood Olympians had begun participating in physical fitness activities and were beginning to practice bocce. It was said that team Lakewood had a large bocce program intact and would focus on the fun lawn bowling game as they ease back into team sports.

Ms. Frost asked the Commission to save the dates of Saturday, September 11, for the Patriot Day ceremony, and Saturday, September 25, for the Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Expo. She informed the commission that the current year would serve as the 20th year that residents have gathered to remember the tragic events of September 11, 2001. To further recognize Patriot Day, Ms. Frost shared that the city was also organizing a special day of service where volunteers can work on projects to help their neighbors in need of exterior home fix up projects. At the Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Expo, the public will be invited to the Civic Center to view live demonstrations by Los Angeles County fire and sheriff's department and then participate in hands-on exhibits and educational workshops. She noted that additional details regarding both events would be forthcoming.

Vice Chairperson Allen shared that he was happy to have attended the LYS Opening Night first pitch event at San Martin Park. He mentioned it was nice to see youth sports back in full swing and stated it was very exciting and fun to watch.

## REPORTS:

### 1. **RCS Department Annual Budget Report**

Assistant Director Kevin Bright thanked Commissioner Heiss for her service over the last nine years on the commission. He shared that it has been a pleasure to work with her and stated that the department has without doubt benefited from her service on the commission and will miss her greatly.

Mr. Bright began his presentation of the Recreation and Community Services Department Annual Budget Report for fiscal year 2021-2022, by informing the commission that an updated version of the budget document report was at their seats. Mr. Bright noted that the report was an accumulation of information prepared by all levels of management within the department, with each manager playing a role in the development, planning, monitoring and execution of the budget. Mr. Bright informed the commission that the Lakewood City Council officially adopted the city's second year of a two-year budget at the June 8 regular meeting. At the previous meeting of the commission, he shared that he had reported on the citywide budget study session and council adoption of the budget as presented by City Manager Thaddeus McCormack and Finance and Administrative Services Department Director Jose Gomez. Mr. Bright announced that he would further elaborate on the Recreation and Community Services Department budget specifically.

Mr. Bright reported that the current year's operating budget for the RCS department totals \$15,210,799, with revenues expected at \$1,127,344. He noted that although the budget was

approved as a two-year document in 2020; as is typical the council directs staff to revisit the budget submitted at the start of the new fiscal year. He pointed out that several factors change over the course of every year, and mentioned that a revisiting of the budget was in fact necessary. It was said that remaining fiscally conservative and responsible were of paramount importance to Lakewood residents, City Council and across all levels of city staff. Mr. Bright noted that submitting a budget document as accurate and detailed as possible was imperative.

Mr. Bright mentioned that, as always, the revision to the second year of the department budget was an effort in planning and projecting the needs for each division, with input from every management level staff member. Remaining conservative in both spending allocations, as well as with revenue projections was imperative. The budget review process began in March of this year and each manager was tasked with reviewing each budget line for accuracy and recommending amendments where changed conditions were identified.

Mr. Bright shared that staff were now quite adept at sharpening their pencils to get to the most accurate projections, despite the many unknowns. He shared that staff had operated through a vast ocean of known unknowns in the process to come up with a reliable budget. The resulting product for the current fiscal year was said to be a budget that was not dramatically different in any one division from the version submitted in 2020. It was said that in comparison to the budget submitted in June 2020 for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the department requested increases of \$223,808.

Mr. Bright reported that among the single most impactful increase to the budget was the creation of a two-person team of Maintenance Trainees who will begin patrolling streets and alleyways to help alleviate the blight of illegal dumping. The creation of these two part-time positions totals \$75,760 in the Parkways and Medians Maintenance division. While \$62,067 is allocated for purchase of a truck to support this service.

Additionally, it was said that the creation of a multicultural event tentatively scheduled for early October added \$101,420 to the budget in contractual services, supplies and staffing costs in the Social and Cultural Programs line. Mr. Bright stated that these two significant additions accounted for almost all of the budget changes from the original adopted two-year document. He shared that other incremental changes exist across all budget lines, but either through cuts associated with efficiency measures, or increases to account for anticipated changes to areas such as utility costs, noting that that the two trends by and large have cancelled each other out.

With regard to revenues, Mr. Bright informed the commission that staff had remained highly conservative in this area. He mentioned that although COVID-19 effects were minimizing, the depth of the effects on programs with regard to revenues remained highly uncertain. At

the time of budget development, Mr. Bright shared that staff were unable to predict openings for contract classes and facility reservations—specifically at The Centre—which were said to be the two single highest revenue sources. He mentioned that as of July 1, facility reservations were once again made available to Lakewood residents, and noted that it was conceivable, if not likely that the department would outperform its projection of \$1.27 million for the current fiscal year.

Mr. Bright shared his excitement that The Centre was quickly returning to full operations since the reinstatement of facility permits.

To conclude, Mr. Bright stated that RCS staff, across all lines of management understand their role in care of public funds and resources. He mentioned that from budget development, to the execution and spending of the funds budgeted through the end of each fiscal year, staff remain conservative and in line with the policy set forth by City Council and as expected by the residents. He noted that the department team would continue to manage each budget line with diligence.

Moving forward, Mr. Bright announced that the second portion of the annual budget report, where the commission gets to annually reacquaint themselves with the entire RCS management team, would begin. The RCS department supervisors—Kevin Arias, Lorraine Delarosa, Kelly Garnetti, Jonathan Gorne, Jessica Johnson, Veronica Ramirez, Joe Sheldon, and Joseph Vasquez, and interim Supervisor Catherine Schad—who were in the audience—presented slides and shared their experiences and what they learned during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine.

Chairperson Real thanked staff for their presentations and shared that the current meeting was one he most looked forward to attending. He mentioned that throughout the year he was continuously amazed by staff's ability to adapt and be flexible. He thanked staff for all of their hard work and dedication.

Vice Chairperson Allen echoed Chairperson Real's sentiments. He mentioned that Lakewood's RCS Department contained the most quintessential staff in the state. He requested that a current organizational chart be sent to the commission.

Commissioner Stacy Valdez thanked staff for their presentations. She complimented staff on their ability to mobilize quickly and efficiently despite the obstacles created by the pandemic.

Commissioner Heiss congratulated staff on a wonderful job. She mentioned that staff's efforts were what made Lakewood such a great place to live. She expressed thanks for the hard work and dedication of all staff.

The commission received and filed the RCS Department Annual Budget Report.

**2. Activities and Maintenance Report No. 1**

A written report and discussion of the Recreation and Community Services Department Programs, Services and Maintenance Activities for the month June 2021 and a listing of upcoming activities for August 2021.

The commission received and filed the report.

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

1. Letter to Part-Time Employee of the Month – Madison Lane – May 2021.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Director Valarie Frost notified the commission that the annual tour would take place at the August 11 meeting. She shared that the commission would tour the Lakewood Equestrian Center, Palms Park, San Martin Park, Paramount Boulevard, and Biscailuz Park. She noted that dinner would be provided at 5:30 p.m. in the Executive Board Room and the tour would begin at 6 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to be brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Kirk Real adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m. to August 11, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Executive Board Room.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary  
Recreation and Community Services Commission