

**CITY OF LAKEWOOD  
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION  
MEETING OF JULY 6, 2023  
MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Lakewood Planning and Environment Commission was called to order by Chairperson Baca at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Stuckey led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:** Chairperson Baca  
Vice Chairperson Ung  
Commissioner Samaniego  
Commissioner Stuckey  
Commissioner Cole

**Also present:** Abel Avalos, Director of Community Development  
Patrick McGuckian, Assistant Director of Community Development  
Paul Kuykendall, Senior Planner  
Ivy Tsai, City Attorney  
Cindy Kojaku, Administrative Secretary

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

There being no objections, Chairperson Baca ordered the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 4, 2023, approved as submitted.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**Director Avalos made the following announcements:**

- Remodel and construction of Public Works and Community Development Department and how service will be provided during the 3-month period.
- Project Shepherd Backpack Drive for kids.
- Lakewood Celebrates on July 11, 2022, transition of leadership.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:****1. 2023 LMC UPDATE ORDINANCE.**

Assistant Director McGuckian presented the staff report and exhibits which recommended approval of the 2023 LMC Update Ordinance. These documents are on file with the Community Development Department. Assistant Director McGuckian explained that the proposed ordinance has been recently revised to remove sections regarding Abatement and Administrative Citation procedures, and these will be included in a future ordinance. In addition, Assistant Director McGuckian needs to make one correction to Section 25 of the ordinance creating Section 9320 K2. Child Safety Visual Corridor is to be within one-half mile of a school, park, or library. Please include this change in any motion to accept the ordinance as presented. Patrick asked if there are any questions of staff.

**Chairperson Baca opened the public hearing.**

Resident Diana Simmer spoke objected to the Ordinance classifying honeybees as a nuisance. She is a beekeeper and who is a member of the Long Beach Bee Keeping Association and of BASC (Beekeeping Association of Southern California). She states that there is a difference between managed bees and feral bees and that many local cities have legalized backyard beekeeping. Bees can be rescued and placed in a managed facility. If bees do not survive, as a community and as a world, we will not survive. Bees are more of a service for us rather than a nuisance.

Commissioner Ung asked Diana Simmer if she is proposing to change the terminology to include managed bees and exclude feral bees He asked to be educated about the difference between the two. Diana Simmer that she purchases calm gentle queens that control the hives. She re-queens her hives so they have the genetic components of gentle bees. If she has a feral hive, she exterminates the whole colony. All beekeeping is controlled by the Department of Agriculture who do regular inspections of the bees.

Commissioner Ung asked if there is a certification to become an official beekeeper. Diana Simmer stated you do not have to have a certain certificate to be a beekeeper. Some people are Master beekeepers, and they go to school for that. UC Davis and UC Irvine have programs. Two southern California universities have huge beekeeping programs--University of Riverside and Cal State Pomona.

Chairperson Baca complimented Diana Simmer's knowledge of bees.

Commissioner Cole asked Diana if she is concerned that if the Ordinance is approved, that she and her property will be in violation of the Ordinance. Diana stated she does not keep bees on her Lakewood property, but that she would like to because she needs the pollination for her fruit trees—she is objecting to the term of bees, particularly honeybees, as being a nuisance.

Chairperson Baca explained the Planning and Environment Commission needs to take into consideration the entire City and do what is best for the community, and its decision will need to be based on a lot of input and will let staff address any issues.

Attorney Tsai recommended we hear from anyone else who would like to speak and make public comment and then ask staff to address any questions.

Natalia Komar, a Lakewood resident, spoke and stated that she objects to bees being included with wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets as a nuisance as it sends the wrong message to the public to be afraid of honeybees. Natalia says people need to be educated on honeybees. Lakewood Beautiful would not be possible without bees. She opposes bees being included as a nuisance with the other insects. She is willing to be a liaison to help draft a beekeeping ordinance. She did hear something about 10 or more bees being a nuisance, which at any point in time if you have flowers in your garden would trigger that, so she does not know how that logistically works. One bush in her yard has 20 bees at a time.

Chairperson Baca asked if there are any other speakers.

Resident Diana Simmer requested to speak again and asked about the validity of the statement of protecting the community at large, but she implores staff and Commission to check with the surrounding communities to see if they have had any incidents with honeybees.

**There being no one else wishing to be heard on the matter, Chairperson Baca closed the public hearing and asked the Commission, if there was any discussion or a motion.**

Commissioner Samaniego stated he has a question of staff, and he asked Patrick if the bees are producing honey, is that considered a nuisance and is that also going to be part of this ban?

Assistant Director McGuckian stated that we are not introducing a new definition of bees as a public nuisance as that exists in the Code but that we are adding hornets, yellow jackets, and wasps.

Commissioner Samaniego stated he would not want to vote against beekeeping, as far as producing honey and selling at a small market. Assistant Director McGuckian stated currently that it is, and it would continue to be defined as a nuisance.

Director Avalos explained the issue before us is not whether bees are a nuisance. The only change is to add wasps, yellow jackets, and hornets. The issues brought up tonight are valid, and they have merit, and we all know the value of bees. If the public would like to pursue this properly in the future, they need to request that the City Council consider changing the definition of bees and backyard beekeeping from being a nuisance to being an allowed land use.

Assistant Director McGuckian stated that the ordinance does allow for the removal and relocation of honeybees to an approved location by professional beekeepers. He also stated that the Commission could encourage the City Council to authorize a study. As far as the number of 10 bees, it is a measurable standard, it could be 20 or 50. It is a number that a code enforcement officer can go onsite, define a violation, and an enforcement action can be taken.

City Attorney Tsai stated this is one small section of this comprehensive code revision, so depending on where the Commission is on this, someone could move and take an action to adopt staff's recommendation or add that they would like the Council to consider allowing beekeeping in the City, depending on how this Commission feels. Whatever is decided tonight will be forwarded as a recommendation to the City Council. It does not mean you throw the whole thing out on this one issue.

Director Avalos clarified that staff is not asking you to take action to add bees as a nuisance, as the code already does that, we are asking to include wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets.

Commissioner Samaniego questioned with the managed bee conditions if the homeowner of the property were trying to create an area where they could produce honey or produce a product to sell at a small market, could we exclude that from being considered a nuisance?

Assistant Director McGuckian said if we were going to approach that as a topic, we would consult experts and then propose to allow it in certain zone districts under certain criteria. We would have to define what is a managed beehive versus a feral beehive, what "manage" means, what constraints are reasonable, and what happens if that gets out of control.

City Attorney Tsai clarified what is before the Commission is a recommendation to the City Council on this Ordinance. The issue of allowing beekeeping is a separate issue that would constitute a change in the City's current laws and that would require some policy direction from the City Council. The issue before the Commission is do you want to make a recommendation to City Council on the beekeeping issue and ask them to consider allowing beekeeping and secondly do you want to adopt the staff's recommendation and invite the public to attend the Council Meeting and present their comments to the Council for consideration.

Chairperson Baca agreed and said we are recommending to the City Council to look at the whole ordinance package and approve the whole package as sent to City Council. The City Council can make different adaptations at that time.

Assistant Director McGuckian suggested that beekeeping could be a separate study and ordinance that is brought back to the PEC and then forward to the Council for review.

City Attorney Tsai stated it begins with policy direction from the City Council if they want to make that change and would require a Study because it is a change to the City's current ordinance and would require expertise and study. The question before the PEC tonight is are you comfortable with moving forward staff's recommendation and would you like to add that the PEC recommends that the City Council consider beekeeping.

**There being no further discussion of staff, Chairperson Baca asked, if there was a motion.**

**Commissioner Cole moved and Commissioner Ung seconded approval of staff recommendation to approve the 2023 LMC Update Ordinance as revised and its related categorical exemption and to ask the City Council to consider allowing beekeeping in Lakewood.**

**AYES: COMMISSIONERS: Cole, Stuckey, Samaniego, Ung and Baca**  
**NOES: COMMISSIONERS: None**  
**ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: None**  
**ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS: None**

Chairperson Baca announced that the Motion has passed.

**REPORTS:**

**1. Conditional Use Permit No. 990, 11747 Carson Street**

Senior Planner, Paul Kuykendall, presented the staff report, which recommended that a public hearing be scheduled to consider a modification of Conditional Use Permit 990 for a convenience store and gas station to remove alcohol sales. These documents are on file with the Community Development Department.

A public hearing will be scheduled for August 3, 2023, so that the PEC may consider modifying the conditions of approval for Conditional Use Permit No. 990.

**Chairperson Baca asked if there are any questions for staff. There were no questions for staff.**

**Chairperson Baca stated the Commission receives and files staff's recommendation.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

**STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Next Meeting will be August 3, 2023.

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Secretary