



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
November 9, 2022

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner David Allen.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Chairperson Ted Spaseff
Vice Chairperson Stacy Valdez
Commissioner Dave Allen
Commissioner Anitza Valles

ABSENT: Commissioner Veronica Lucio

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of September 14, 2022 and October 12, 2022. Due to lack of a quorum, the minutes of September 14, 2022 were tabled for approval at the meeting of December 14, 2022. A motion was made by to approve the minutes from the meeting of October 12, 2022. The motion was carried with a roll call vote with Commissioner Allen abstaining.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Director Valarie Frost began her remarks by thanking Commissioner Anitza Valles for her attendance at the RCS Commissioner Orientation. Next, she shared that Council Member Cassandra Chase would soon tour the Lakewood Equestrian Center. Finally, Ms. Frost informed the commission that the City Council meeting scheduled to take place on Tuesday, November 22 had been canceled due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

Parks Superintendent Abel Andrade reported that on Saturday, November 12 and Sunday, November 13, the Tree Huggers Club from Odyssey STEM Academy in Lakewood would volunteer their time on Phase III of The Nature Trail. Mr. Andrade explained that students from the Tree Huggers Club participate in community-oriented activities centered on promoting environmental consciousness. It was said that their goal is to nurture green spaces and encourage communities to spend more time outside in nature.

Mr. Andrade informed the commission that on November 2 the city was notified that beginning on December 1 Pony Time would no longer operate at the Lakewood Equestrian Center. It was said that the city was working to find a replacement concessionaire.

Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided the commission with information on programming and upcoming events. Mr. Bright reported that on Friday, November 4, city staff from every department participated in an emergency tabletop exercise. He shared that a group of 44 employees were presented with a fictional scenario involving a sinkhole at Studebaker Road and Del Amo Boulevard. The "emergency" required activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which took place in its new home, the Art Studio at the south end of The Centre. Staff from all departments contributed greatly and the simulation was said to be an excellent learning experience for all involved. Mr. Bright pointed out that Community Services Managers Chuck Martucci and Nancy Hitt, and Community Transportation Supervisor Jessica Johnson played key roles in the

planning, which was said to have taken place over the course of many months. Mr. Bright commended them on developing an outstanding exercise with the rest of their committee colleagues. He shared that the event challenged staff to understand the areas of responsibility for which they maintain a role in the EOC and to execute actions and make decisions that may be key in a major disaster. It was said that staff came to understand the nature of a rapidly changing environment and the need to work together as a cohesive unit, making the best use of the collective education, experience and resources that are exercised within day-to-day assignments.

Mr. Bright announced that registration for the Project Shepherd Holiday Program opened on November 2 and continues through November 16 at the Burns Community Center and Palms Park. He noted that late registrants could contact Burns to register. To date, it was said that staff have accepted 146 families.

Mr. Bright shared that on Saturday, November 12, the annual coed softball Turkey Tournament will be held at San Martin Park. He reminded the commission that the tournament proceeds serve as a fundraiser for Project Shepherd. To date five teams are registered with two additional teams offering verbal commitment. Mr. Bright informed the commission that backstop sponsor signs were available for \$100 per sign. He shared that the event was expected to raise upwards of \$3,500 for Project Shepherd.

Finally, Mr. Bright announced that on Saturday, November 19, the Lakewood Equestrian Center and the RCS Department would collaborate to show a movie under the stars. It was said that the event would feature the film *Spirit: The Stallion of Cimarron*. Gates open at 4:30 p.m. and the movie begins at 5:30. Mr. Bright mentioned that moviegoers were encouraged to visit the petting zoo and pony rides before the movie begins and a food truck will be on site.

Chairperson Spaseff shared that he attended the Senior Health Fair and said it was very organized and that it was great to see it back. He also commended staff for a job well done with the Lakewood Education Foundation Golf Tournament and Fundraiser. He shared that he also attended the Senior Halloween Luncheon and said it was a huge success and everyone seemed to be having a great time. He mentioned it was nice to see it back full swing.

REPORTS:

1. Aquatics Program Annual Report

Community Services Supervisor Veronica Ramirez displayed slides and provided information regarding the 2022 aquatics season as noted in the written report. Ms. Ramirez shared that in 2022, the summer aquatics season resumed to normal programming at Mayfair Pool and offered a limited schedule of programs at McCormick Pool. She noted that it was the first time Lakewood had offered city-led aquatics programming at McCormick Pool since the summer of 2019.

Ms. Ramirez reported that Mayfair Pool operated at full staffing capacity and re-established all standard levels of activity and programming. This included an overall increase in the quantity of classes available for youth and adult programs. The full slate of offerings included youth and adult swim lessons, recreation swim, adult exercise classes, lap swim,

the Save a Life event, Family Friday Nights, Junior Lifeguards, and private pool rentals. It was said that the 50+ lap swim and water aerobics classes were also offered solely out of Mayfair Pool for the second consecutive year.

Regarding staff recruitment and training, Ms. Ramirez reported that the recruitment process for the summer aquatics season began early in the calendar year in an attempt to secure a high volume of staff to manage and operate Mayfair and McCormick Pools. She shared that unlike years past, the marketing and outreach to promote job openings for aquatics personnel failed to produce a strong and diverse sampling of applicants in 2022. Ms. Ramirez noted that amid a low applicant pool and following all applicant skills testing, only eight candidates were eligible to be hired as a Lifeguard/Swim Instructor. It was said that notwithstanding, thirty-seven staff coordinated and implemented aquatic programs at McCormick and Mayfair Pools, and each completed the required certification and training mandated by the American Red Cross and City of Lakewood, respectively.

Ms. Ramirez provided details regarding program revenue as noted in a table within the written report.

Finally, Ms. Ramirez provided the commission with information regarding the Lakewood Family YMCA at McCormick Pool. She reported that the Lakewood Family YMCA had offered programming at McCormick Pool for the third consecutive year, beginning June 6 and continuing through September 2, on weekdays only. Youth swim lessons, adult exercise classes, lap swim, and recreation swim programs were said to have been conducted for YMCA members, as well as Lakewood residents. In addition, Lakewood city staff coordinated activities on Saturdays and Sundays, including swim lessons and recreation swim, beginning June 18 through September 4. Ms. Ramirez noted that as part of a continuous effort to provide increased availability of aquatics programming, the YMCA opened their daily recreation swim sessions to Lakewood residents and honored the City of Lakewood's recreation swim rates. Swim lesson scholarships were also made available to Lakewood residents during the first month of programming, which allowed 50 children to benefit from a no-cost, two-week-long session conducted by YMCA instructors.

Chairperson Spaseff thanked Ms. Ramirez and staff for a great summer. He mentioned that he enjoyed touring both pools during the annual Commission Facility Tour.

The commission received and filed the annual report on the Aquatics Program.

2. Incident and Injury Annual Report

Community Services Manager Joseph Vasquez 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. Vasquez reported that through October 2022, there were 222 incidents reported across all facilities for the year which reflects a 5% decrease compared to the previous year.

Mr. Vasquez reported that of all the facilities, Palms Park, Mayfair Park and San Martin Park have reported the highest volume of incidents in the past year. Concerning the types of incidents, it was said that vandalism, patron injuries, and gatekeeper calls by city staff were the department's most frequent classification of incident. The category "other" logged 37 incidents, which reflects a variety of types including animal control issues and program participant behavioral issues during staff led programming.

The commission was informed that a summary of the 2022 incident and injury reports and a three-year comparison of statistics, by facility and by type, was provided in their agenda packets.

Mr. Vasquez confirmed for Commissioner Anitza Valles that if an incident were to be reported at an unstaffed park, staff would go out and complete an incident report to keep on file. Ms. Frost added that for all incidents at parks, including graffiti, the sheriffs are called, photos are taken, and Public Safety is notified so that they can work with the sheriffs to document trends and solve issues.

The commission received and filed the annual report on Incident and Injury.

3. Lakewood Equestrian Center Operations Report

Parks Superintendent Abel Andrade displayed slides and provided information regarding the history of the Lakewood Equestrian Center (LEC) as noted in the written report. Mr. Andrade informed the commission that since November 1, 2020, SJ Equestrian, LLC has coordinated equestrian activities and boarding facilities for horses at the LEC as the caretaker and was currently under agreement with the city to continue managing the facility through October 31, 2023. It was said that the city provides the caretaker with a water truck, the potable water to fill the water truck, a water wagon for recycled water, recycled water, and a tractor to maintain the arenas and other areas throughout the LEC. Mr. Andrade informed the commission that SJ Equestrian had introduced numerous new activities and events to the LEC for current boarders and Lakewood residents, including Movie Night, Spring Fling in 2022, Glow in the Dark Pony Rides, Picnic and Painting with Ponies, a Fall Festival in 2021, and an Easter Scavenger Hunt during the pandemic. It was said that to market the facility's offerings, SJ Equestrian utilized online registrations and social media platforms to advertise horse lessons, camps, and shows, with several being fully booked and requiring waiting lists.

Mr. Andrade reported that since 2017, with approved funding, city staff initiated and completed several facility improvements. Details regarding facility improvements were provided by Mr. Andrade as noted in the written report.

The commission was reminded that additional facility improvements would soon be made using grant funding recently received from Speaker Anthony Rendon's office as well as

from Los Angeles County Measure A funds. It was said that the much hoped for funding would allow staff to complete the Carson Street Trail phase of the Lakewood Equestrian Center Master Plan. Mr. Andrade noted that the additional funds could further allow for the development of a manure management and containment system and conversion from potable to reclaimed water irrigation for dust management in training rings and along vehicle routes at the facility.

The commission was informed that the city's grant application for the design of a water capture project on the northeast corner of the LEC was being considered by the Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Area Committee. If provided, Mr. Andrade explained that the grant funding could lead to the development of an outdoor recreation event space above the planned water capture facility.

Commissioner Allen commented that the LEC looks great and mentioned that with \$3.9 million dollars in additional improvements, it will be a real gem.

Chairperson Spaseff said Sonya has done a great job at the LEC and has increased boarding by almost 50%. He shared that he was excited to see the improvements that will be made with the grant money.

Commissioner Valles shared her excitement for the improvements to the LEC and mentioned that the new trails will give the neighborhood better walkability and provide more trails for biking.

Ms. Frost informed Commissioner Valles that that for the safety of horses, the planned improvements did not permit access to the equestrian center from Rynerson Park.

The commission received and filed the report on Lakewood Equestrian Center Operations.

4. Holiday Recreation Programs and Events

Community Services Manager Nancy Hitt displayed slides and provided details regarding 2022 holiday recreation programs and events. Ms. Hitt announced that the city's 9th annual tree lighting ceremony and community gathering would take place on Friday, December 2 outside The Centre beginning at 4:30 p.m. with festivities wrapping up at 8 p.m. Information regarding the many holiday events planned for seniors were provided by Ms. Hitt. Details regarding the Senior Holiday Luncheon, the Grandparents, Grandchildren, and Great Grandchildren's Holiday Party, the Kristmas Karaoke Dance and Sing party, and the annual Ugly Sweater Party were provided as noted in the written report.

Next, Ms. Hitt provided the commission with details regarding events such as the Pathway's Light Up a Life event, the Drive-in Movie at the Mall, instructional classes unique to the holiday season, and planned holiday fun for Special Olympians and Adaptive Recreation Participants as noted in the written report.

Ms. Hitt reminded the commission that Lakewood Project Shepherd Holiday Warehouse

operations begin on Wednesday, December 7 with volunteers assisting with organization of food delivery and packing boxes of food for registered Lakewood families for distribution on Friday, December 16 and Saturday, December 17.

Holiday programs at local parks, as well as park hours of operations, were detailed by Ms. Hitt. It was said that holiday activities at city parks would be featured throughout the two weeks of school vacation from Monday, December 26 through Friday, January 6. The commission was informed that the Burns Community Center and Weingart Senior Center would be closed on Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24, as well as on New Year's Eve, Saturday, December 31, and Human Services Association would be closed and not serving lunch on Friday, December 23 and Monday, December 26 at Weingart Senior Center.

Chairperson Spaseff commended staff for doing a great job planning and preparing for the upcoming holiday programs and events. He recommended that the commission attend the Senior Holiday Luncheon.

The commission received and filed the report on Holiday Recreation Programs and Events.

5. 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 2022 and a listing of upcoming activities for December 2022.

The Commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Spaseff adjourned the meeting at 6:44 p.m. to Wednesday, December 14 at 5 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission