



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
March 8, 2023

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Anitza Valles.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of February 8, 2023. A motion was made by Commissioner Dave Allen and seconded by Commissioner Veronica Lucio to approve the minutes from the meeting of February 8, 2023. The motion was carried with a unanimous roll call vote with Vice Chairperson Stacy Valdez abstaining.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided information regarding programming and upcoming events. Mr. Bright announced that the Play at Palms event scheduled for Friday, March 10 was canceled due to rain in the forecast. It was said that on Saturday, March 11 the Earth Walk event would take place at Monte Verde Park. The commission was informed that the event would be moved indoors if it rains. Mr. Bright shared that the next Lakewood Volunteer Day would take place on Saturday, April 15. The commission was asked to inform their secretary if they would like to attend. Finally, Mr. Bright reported that the Lakewood Youth Sports Coaches Recognition Barbeque would take place on Saturday, April 22 at the Youth Center, followed by a trip to Angels' Stadium to see the Angels' game. The commission was asked to RSVP with their secretary if interested in attending.

Parks Superintendent Abel Andrade reported that on Thursday, March 16, four new concrete benches were installed at the Homerun Dog Park.

Director Valarie Frost began her announcements by informing the commission that a Park Development Committee Meeting was scheduled for Monday, March 13 at 5:45 p.m. in the Executive Board Room. Ms. Frost shared that on the agenda was the Development of a Parks, Recreation and Community Services Master Plan. She asked that the commission RSVP to their secretary if interested in attending. The commission was asked to elect one member to serve on the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Master Plan Development Committee. Vice Chairperson Stacy Valdez nominated Chairperson Ted Spaseff; Commissioner Dave Allen seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a unanimous roll call vote.

Chairperson Spaseff commended staff for doing a fantastic job at the Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame. He thanked the commission for their attendance.

REPORTS:

1. Volunteer Program Annual Report

Community Services Manager Nancy Hitt displayed slides and provided information regarding Lakewood's Volunteer Program. Ms. Hitt reminded the commission that April is recognized as National Volunteer Month and the Recreation and Community Services Department shows appreciation for the hard work of Lakewood's volunteers by offering several events to both celebrate and encourage volunteerism. Ms. Hitt noted that many of the department's programs would not be possible without the assistance of volunteers. Events to recognize the efforts of volunteers during the month of April were said to include the annual Lakewood Volunteer Day recognition luncheon, the Lakewood Youth Sports Coaches Barbeque recognition event, and the Older Adult Volunteer Recognition Luncheon. Details regarding each event were provided as noted in the written report.

Ms. Hitt reported on the total number of service hours contributed by volunteers of the Lakewood Youth Sports program, Lakewood Meals on Wheels, Burns Community Center, Weingart Senior Center, the Tax Program, Lakewood Volunteer Day, Teens in Lakewood Care, Halloween Carnivals, and Project Shepherd in 2022 as noted in the written report.

Commissioner Lucio thanked staff for providing several opportunities for volunteerism in Lakewood.

Chairperson Spaseff stated that it was great to see the many ways that staff recognize volunteers.

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

2. The Centre Operations Annual Report

Community Services Supervisor Lorraine Delarosa displayed slides and provided information regarding The Centre operations in 2022. Ms. Delarosa reported that The Centre is Lakewood's premier event and conference venue. She noted that the facility has a reputation for high-quality catering, meeting rooms, and recreational experiences for adults, children, families, business and commerce and community organizations. It was said that in 2022, approximately 867 catered and non-catered events and recreation classes were held at The Centre.

Ms. Delarosa provided the commission with information regarding city-led events and programs offered at The Centre, such as FUN-Tastic Family Nights, Daddy/Daughter Date Night, department-sponsored dance recitals, and several recreation classes, as noted in the written report. Other annual events that are hosted at The Centre were said to include the Patriot Day Ceremony, the Tree Lighting event, and the Mother's Day Brunch. Details regarding each event were provided by Ms. Delarosa.

The commission was reminded that in July of 2010, the City of Lakewood entered into an agreement with Thank Goodness It's Sofia Catering Services, Inc. (TGIS). In July of 2016 the agreement was renewed for a second time and in June of 2021, the agreement was

extended for another five-year term. It was said that the partnership has proven mutually beneficial to both the city and TGIS and continues to serve residents and clients with the highest level of food, beverage and customer service.

Lastly, Ms. Delarosa provided details regarding the many facility improvements completed at The Centre in 2022 as noted in the written report.

Commissioner Allen recommended that the commission visit The Centre and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during the Facility Tour in August.

Commissioner Lucio commended staff for all of their hard work in making The Centre an attractive and desirable event venue. She mentioned that it is always beautifully decorated and the events are nicely done.

Chairperson Spaseff echoed Commissioner Allen's request to visit The Centre during the August Commission Facilities Tour. He mentioned that it was nice to see the revenues increasing to pre-pandemic levels. He noted that the food was delicious at the recent Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame event and stated that TGIS staff did a great job with the presentation and set up. Ms. Frost confirmed for Chairperson Spaseff that activity is increasing at Monte Verde Park, sharing that TGIS was nearly booked at Monte Verde in 2023.

The commission received and filed the annual report on The Centre operations.

3. Vandalism Annual Report

Community Services Supervisor Bree Tavera provided a summary of vandalism statistics on city facilities in 2022. A three-year comparison of statistics related to vandalism of Recreation and Community Services facilities was included with the written report. Ms. Tavera reviewed the various types of vandalism, number of incidents at each facility, and the cost associated with each loss. In 2022, there were 67 incidents totaling an estimated \$68,404 in direct damage or loss to the city. This represents an increase of 21 incidents from 2021's total of 46. It was said that this quantification of loss was the highest of a three-year trend going back to 2020.

Ms. Tavera reported that in 2022, the department returned to a full slate of activities, events and programs, and parks and community centers experienced attendance more commensurate to 2019 than the prior two years. It was said that these increases in attendance and activity directly correlate to increased injuries, disagreements, accidents and even vandalism and crime.

Ms. Tavera informed the commission that several recreation facilities saw individual increases when compared to 2021 statistics. Specifically, Mayfair Park saw a measured increase in damage due to theft. It was said that this could be attributed to a single incident in which a park utility vehicle was stolen from the maintenance shed overnight, acquiring \$20,000 in estimated loss. Overall, there was a substantial increase in theft across the city,

with ten total incidents, compared to zero incidents in 2021. Ms. Tavera noted that crime rates have increased in general as the pandemic has ended; she reminded the commission that recreation facilities are not immune to societal trends. Graffiti remains the department's single most frequent classification of vandalism with a total of 39, which was equal to the previous year.

It was said that as 2022 came to a close, security measures such as camera surveillance at Rynerson Park were able to achieve successful apprehension of graffiti vandals by law enforcement. Additionally, Ms. Tavera shared that contracted security patrols roam the city in the late evening to early morning hours, providing added supervision of neighborhoods and parks. She noted that together with the help of the Public Works and Public Safety Departments, RCS continues to increase security measures to protect facilities and patrons.

4. RCS Part-Time Staff Recruitment Annual Report

Community Transportation Supervisor Jessica Johnson displayed slides and provided information on the department's process for recruiting part-time DASH Transit employees as noted in the written report. Ms. Johnson reminded the commission that DASH Transit operates as a free, advanced reservation, curb-to-curb transportation service for eligible senior and disabled residents of Lakewood. With customers in mind, DASH looks to recruit individuals with great customer service skills and a willingness to work with the population served. Ms. Johnson shared that DASH has developed a successful recruitment program for its employees. She noted that new drivers are hired to operate accessible vans requiring only a class C license. It was said that during this time, drivers are expected to become familiar with routes, improve personal driving skills, and learn proper customer service standards. Once this introductory training is completed, drivers are invited to gain further in-house training to prepare for obtaining a class B commercial license, which would then allow them to operate any vehicle within the DASH fleet.

Ms. Johnson reported that during their introductory training period, new drivers are shadowed by an experienced DASH driver, and evaluated at the conclusion of every shift. A final evaluation is conducted by the Community Transportation Supervisor, prior to becoming an independent driver. In order to ensure high standards in work performance, the supervisor conducts yearly performance evaluations of each employee, and assigns additional training when needed. There are 11 part-time employees working in DASH including drivers and dispatchers, along with one full-time dispatcher.

Vice Chairperson Stacy Valdez commended staff for their successful recruitment processes during a time when many businesses are struggling to hire. She informed staff that the Lakewood Family YMCA could post the city's part-time job openings using a new system they acquired, if desired. Ms. Frost stated that staff would be in contact.

Ms. Frost praised Ms. Johnson for successfully training staff on the new technology in the new DASH vans.

Chairperson Spaseff said that the city's DASH vehicle fleet was amazing and always well

maintained. He noted that there were lots of forms required with the DASH program and commended Ms. Johnson and her staff for continuously doing a great job handling the program.

5. Commission Newsletter No. 9

A written report of the Recreation and Community Services Department programs, events, services and maintenance activities for the month of February and a listing of upcoming activities for April 2023.

The Commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Cynthia Valencia, Employee of the Month for January 2023.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Spaseff adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m. to Wednesday, April 12, at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission