



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
April 12, 2023

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Veronica Lucio.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Chairperson Ted Spaseff
Commissioner Dave Allen
Commissioner Veronica Lucio
Commissioner Anita Valles

ABSENT: Vice Chairperson Stacy Valdez

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Director Valarie Frost began her announcements by thanking Commissioner Dave Allen for his attendance at the California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS) Conference.

Commissioner Allen shared that it was a great and informative conference and he was very impressed. He recommended that other commissioners attend a future conference.

Ms. Frost continued her announcements by reporting that the Lakewood Youth Sports (LYS) Coaches Recognition Dinner and Angels Game would take place on Saturday, April 22 at 4 p.m. at the Lakewood Youth Center. She noted that 265 coaches were invited to the event and that staff was still accepting reservations. She asked that the commission inform their secretary if interested in attending.

Next, Ms. Frost announced that the Older Adult Volunteer Luncheon would take place on Wednesday, April 26 at Monte Verde Park. The commission was asked to RSVP with their secretary if interested in attending.

The CPRS District 10 Awards and Installation Banquet was said to be taking place on Thursday, April 27 in Garden Grove. Ms. Frost stated that Community Services Manager Joseph Vasquez and Parks Superintendent Abel Andrade will be installed on the board, and two staff members would be recognized with awards. Additionally, two community volunteer groups were to be recognized for their service to Lakewood, Erick Freudenthaler with Lakewood Little League, and the Rotary Club of Lakewood.

Lastly, Ms. Frost asked the commission to save the date for the Shred Event taking place on Saturday, May 20 at City Hall; for the Memorial Day ceremony taking place on Monday, May 29

at Del Valle Park; and for the RCS Summer Kickoff taking place on Thursday, June 1 at Monte Verde Park.

Parks Superintendent Abel Andrade reported that in March, Environmental Resources Division (ERD) staff installed four new concrete bone-shaped benches at Home Run Dog Park. It was said that the benches were purchased using a generous donation of \$11,000 from Lakewood resident and dog park enthusiast Diane Markoff. Mr. Andrade informed the commission that in May, the remaining funds would be used towards a turf renovation project at Home Run Dog Park. Lastly, the commission was informed that after several months of delay due to unforeseen circumstances, ERD staff would continue a beautification project on Centralia Street near Studebaker Road. It was said that staff would introduce drought tolerant landscaping, including agave, aloe, and Palo Verde plants.

Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided information regarding programming and upcoming events. Mr. Bright shared that on Saturday, April 8, the annual Easter Bunny visit was held at Lakewood's eight staffed parks, along with an Easter egg hunt. It was said that parents and children were ecstatic for the great weather as the event had a record turnout. With over one-thousand children participating in the egg hunts, sitting with the bunny and getting to do some springtime crafts, it was said that parks were burgeoning with excitement. Mr. Bright reported that Palms and San Martin boasted the biggest crowds.

Next, Mr. Bright announced that on Monday, April 10 the department kicked off the inaugural Spring Break Day Camp at four park facilities. The four parks each sold out with the first version of this camp. It was said that kids would engage daily in supervised indoor and outdoor activities, giving parents some security this week while they may be at work or other have obligations. On Wednesday, April 12, the group took a fun trip to the Griffith Observatory, and all reports were that a great time was had by all. The success of the program will allow staff to plan for similar camps for the winter break period at the end of the year and likely expand in spring of 2024 to more parks to meet the needs of residents.

Lastly, Mr. Bright reported that on Friday, April 14 at Palms Park, the spring car show series at the Play at Palms event would kickoff. He shared that 41 cars were registered for the first of two car show events set for the spring. The event was to begin at 6 p.m. with cars popping their hoods, a food truck cooking up delights, vendors to attract event goers and family fun for the little ones. The second of the two car shows will happen on Friday, June 9.

Commissioner Anitza Valles shared that she resides next to Home Run Dog Park and shared that her children love the new bone shaped benches. She commented that the renovation along Studebaker Road was coming along nicely. Finally, she shared that her family greatly enjoyed the Easter festivities at Palms Park and the Earth Walk Event at Monte Verde Park. She mentioned that the Earth Walk event was a great mix of community organizations and crafts and was a great family event.

Chairperson Spaseff shared that he too took his grandchildren to the Earth Walk event and mentioned that they received several goodies from the event and had a wonderful time overall.

REPORTS:

1. Pan Am Fiesta Preview

Community Services Supervisor Brianna Tavera displayed slides and provided information regarding the 2023 Pan Am Fiesta as noted in the written report. Ms. Tavera reported that the Pan Am Fiesta would take place beginning Thursday, May 11 and conclude on Sunday, May 14. It was said that the 2023 Pan Am Fiesta would continue with special event elements, including amusement rides, food booths, a cultural mix of live entertainment, the Children’s Cultural Booth, a shoppers circle, and a display of Lakewood’s Pan American history. Details were provided regarding each element as noted in the written report.

Ms. Tavera reported that amusement rides and carnival attractions would once again open on Thursday, May 11 with a “Family Fun Night” of carnival games and rides from 5 to 9 p.m. It was said that this popular element features \$2 amusement rides and concession items for sale. The family-friendly celebration will continue Friday, May 12 from 5 to 10 p.m., Saturday, May 13 from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday, May 14 from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. The commission was informed that advanced purchase of promotional wristbands and ride tickets will go on sale beginning Monday, May 1 at Lakewood City Hall.

Lastly, Ms. Tavera informed the commission that a free shuttle will run from City Hall to Mayfair Park every 15 minutes beginning at 10 a.m. and ending at 9:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 13. Fiesta participants can park in the east parking lot of City Hall and get shuttle service to the main Pan Am Fiesta entrance on Clark Avenue.

The commission received and filed the report on the Pam Am Fiesta Preview.

2. Sports Programs Annual Report

Community Services Supervisor Jonathan Gorne provided an annual review of Lakewood sports programs during 2022/2023 as noted in the written report. Mr. Gorne reported that the LYS program was approaching its 67th year. The commission was reminded that an LYS sports year runs from June through March, encompassing three sports seasons; baseball, softball and T-ball in the summer, flag football, volleyball and volleytennis in the fall and basketball in the winter.

It was said that in the last sports year, 2,120 children participated as compared to the 1,922 participants from the 2021/2022 sports year, which was said to reflect a ten percent increase. Mr. Gorne noted that the program maintains strong participation from Lakewood residents, with 78% of total registrations by those living in the city in the 2022/2023 sports year. The commission was informed that a table detailing the participation numbers for the past three sports years of LYS was included in their agenda packet.

Mr. Gorne reported that in the 2022 baseball and softball season, a new system for scheduling games was implemented. It was said that traditionally, LYS teams’ home games were scheduled to take place at the park out of which they were based, and their away games were played at the home park of the team against which they played. As a modification to comply with COVID regulations during the 2021/22 sports year, all games

for specific age divisions were scheduled at one single facility, regardless of a specific team's home park. Mr. Gorne noted that the system had received positive feedback from the participants and parents, so it was kept intact for the 2022/23 sports year, despite it no longer being a requirement to ensure compliance with COVID regulations.

Commissioner Valles commented that the report was very informational and interesting. She shared that she had signed her children up to play softball and t-ball with the LYS program. She provided feedback regarding the new system for scheduling games.

Ms. Frost assured Commissioner Valles that staff would work to educate residents during registration about the new scheduling system.

Commissioner Lucio commented that the new scheduling system had mixed results for families with children in multiple divisions.

Chairperson Spaseff shared that as a former coach, one of the hardest things to keep parents up to date on all of the different game locations and times. As a coach, he said he would have liked to have the consistency that the new scheduling system provides. He mentioned he was glad to hear that it was working out for the community. Mr. Gorne informed Chairperson Spaseff that in 2024 staff would have a better idea of how well the program's retention was in the 4-5 year old LYS division.

The commission received and filed the annual report on Sports Programs.

3. Commission Newsletter No. 10

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

The Commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Madison Yarak, Employee of the Month for February 2023.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Spaseff adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m. to Wednesday, May 10, at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.