



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
May 8, 2024

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Veronica Lucio.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Dave Allen.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE: The Oath of Office was administered to all members of the commission present for the meeting.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Vice Chairperson Veronica Lucio
Commissioner Dave Allen
Commissioner Kristie Larison
Commissioner Ted Spaseff

ABSENT: Commissioner Anitza Valles

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of April 10, 2024. A motion was made by Commissioner Ted Spaseff and seconded by Commissioner Dave Allen to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 14, 2024. Minutes were approved as submitted with Commissioner Kristie Larison abstaining.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Director Valarie Frost began her announcements by congratulating and welcoming new Commissioner Kristie Larison.

Ms. Frost then provided information on programming and upcoming events. She reported that the next Lakewood Celebrates was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, May 14 at 5:30 p.m. in the Weingart Ballroom at The Centre. The commission was asked to inform their secretary if they would like to attend. It was said that recognitions were planned for outgoing commissioners—including RCS Commission former Chair Stacy Valdez; the Older Adult Volunteer of the Year; participants of the city's Volunteer Day; volunteer coaches in the Lakewood Youth Sports (LYS) program; and all of the CPRS District 10 award recipients which included Volunteer Merit Awards winners the Lakewood Women's Club and Odyssey STEM Academy's Tree Huggers; and RCS staff member Madison Yarak, who received the Most Valuable Part Time Player Award.

Ms. Frost announced that Mayfair Pool would open on Saturday, May 25 for recreation swim and pre-summer lessons. Additionally, she mentioned that the Memorial Day Ceremony was scheduled to take place at 11 a.m. on Monday, May 27 at the Veterans Memorial at Del Valle Park. The commission was asked to RSVP with their secretary by Friday, May 17.

Next, Ms. Frost shared that the RCS Summer Kick Off would take place on Thursday, May 30 at 6:30 p.m. at Monte Verde Park. It was said that the theme was “ParkChella,” a take on the annual musical festival.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that the Commission Work Calendar would be presented at the June commission meeting. The commission was asked to inform their secretary by Monday, June 3, if there is a report they would like to be presented in the coming commission year. A copy of the prior year’s report was provided to the commission.

Lastly, Ms. Frost announced that the Southern California Special Olympics Summer Games would be held on Saturday, June 8 and Sunday, June 9 at California State University Long Beach. It was said that Team Lakewood would be well represented as they have earned a bid to participate in the bocce tournament. Five athletes and two coaches are excited to participate in the 2024 games.

Parks Superintendent Abel Andrade highlighted the Environmental Resources Division’s recent efforts at the Home Run Dog Park. He informed the commission that ERD crews have been busy installing nearly 10,000 square feet of sod, primarily in the large dog park. They also installed a 1,000 square foot decomposed granite pad for dog owners to sit and relax. Additionally, irrigation repairs and tree work have been prioritized during the four-week closure; crews removed two large ash trees that were in decline, and trimmed a large sycamore tree. It was said that the dog park would be reopened by the Memorial Day holiday.

Mr. Andrade reported that the West Coast Arborists, along with ERD crews, would trim trees on Phases I and II of The Nature Trail in the coming weeks. It was said that beginning on Tuesday, May 21, tree trimming would begin at Del Valle Park in preparation of the Concerts in the Park series.

Assistant Director Kevin Bright announced that the Pan Am Fiesta would take place from Thursday, May 9 to Sunday, May 12 at Mayfair Park. Mr. Bright provided the commission with details regarding event elements. Lastly, Mr. Bright reported that on Sunday, May 12, the Mother’s Day Champagne Brunch would take place in the Weingart Ballroom at The Centre, complete with a buffet brunch, a swag bag, and a themed photo booth. Mr. Bright noted that the event was sold out.

Commissioner Spaseff welcomed Commissioner Kristie Larison to the RCS Commission. He shared that attended the 70th Anniversary Party at the Weingart Senior Center and mentioned there was a great turn out and a great time was had by all. He also attended the Older Adult Volunteer Luncheon, and mentioned that Commissioner Allen did a wonderful job as emcee. He noted that the city’s volunteers help so much throughout the city, and that it was nice to see them recognized for their hard work and efforts. Next, he shared that he attended the LYS Coaches Dinner and mentioned that it was a great event, and that he loved the concession stand. Lastly, he commented that he attended the Cinco de Mayo party at the Weingart Senior Center, and shared that it was a fun event full of dancing and fun.

Commissioner Allen shared that he attended the LYS Coaches Recognition Dinner and Angels game and mentioned it was a great time and staff did an amazing job coordinating the event.

Vice Chairperson Lucio shared that she too attended the LYS Coaches Recognition Dinner and Angels game and mentioned she had a wonderful time and it was a great event and game. She shared that it was nice to see all of the coaches being recognized. She mentioned that she too loved the concession stand. She asked staff to commend Community Services Supervisor Kelly Garnetti for putting together an awesome event.

REPORTS:

1. CDBG Funding Recipient Agency Report

Pathways Volunteer Hospice Executive Director Cindy Skovgard displayed slides and provided the commission with information regarding the Pathways Volunteer Hospice program and the many programs and services the agency offers to the Lakewood community. Ms. Skovgard introduced the Pathways Volunteer Hospice Community Engagement and Public Relations Coordinator Jeremy Crooks, who provided a brief history of the program, as well as additional information on the programs and services offered.

Commissioner Allen described Pathways Volunteer Hospice as the beacon of the community; he thanked Ms. Skovgard and her staff for their service to Lakewood.

The commission received and filed the report on the CDBG Funding Recipient Agency.

2. Summer Programs, Civic Center Block Party Preview and Catalog Preview

Community Services Manager Nancy Hitt displayed slides and provided the commission with information regarding summer programs and the summer catalog. Ms. Hitt reported that the Recreation and Community Services catalog would be available online beginning Thursday, May 23. Residents will receive postcards directing them to the city's website to view the interactive online catalog. Additionally, a limited number of hard copies of the catalog will be available for pick up at city parks and community centers, Lakewood City Hall and Lakewood's libraries. It was said that hundreds of programs and classes would be advertised in the summer recreation catalog. Information regarding the contract classes were provided by Ms. Hitt.

Ms. Hitt proceeded to provide details regarding the Summer Concerts in the Park series, the Finally It's Friday Family programs, Lakewood Youth Sports (LYS), the Civic Center Block Party, park programs, older adult programs, and aquatics programs as noted in the written report. Lastly, information regarding staff trainings during the summer were provided to the commission.

Commissioner Spaseff commended Ms. Hitt for her hard work and efforts. He mentioned that he loves the catalog and thanked staff for doing such a great job with it.

Vice Chairperson Lucio echoed Commissioner Spaseff's sentiments.

Ms. Hitt confirmed for Commissioner Larison that pickle ball was open-play only.

The commission received and filed the report on Summer Programs, Civic Center Block Party Preview and Catalog Preview.

3. Capital Improvement and Environmental Resources Projects at Recreation Facilities

Community Services Manager Joe Vasquez provided information on capital improvement and Environmental Resources Division projects at recreation facilities as noted in the written report. Mr. Vasquez reminded the commission that capital improvements are projects of large size, fixed nature, or long life, which renovate existing or provide new or additional public facilities or services. It was said that included in this broad definition of the term are major replacements, reconstructions and procurement of large equipment such as furniture, vehicles, and heating and electrical systems. Capital improvement projects are funded through a variety of federal, state, and local grants in conjunction with city general funds.

Mr. Vasquez stated that the city's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is comprised of a combination of infrastructure renewal and replacement projects, small and large projects to support ongoing operations, and the study of future needs for city facilities. He shared that this program was strengthened by Lakewood's Measure L sales tax, passed in 2021 by Lakewood voters and of which a portion was designed to be used for capital improvements. It was said that the appropriation of funding is programmed to address critical infrastructure needs including electrical systems, roofs and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems; address outstanding critical maintenance needs at city parks and community centers; address accessibility per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and begin the planning and design for future projects.

Mr. Vasquez informed the commission that CIP spending is directed by the Lakewood City Council through ongoing monthly meetings with the CIP Committee, comprised of two council members. It was said that staff from Public Works in conjunction with Recreation and Community Services Department staff advise the committee members of ongoing projects and recommendations for projects of future consideration.

Updates and information regarding each capital improvement and Environmental Resources Division projects at recreation facilities were provided by Mr. Vasquez as noted in the written report.

Vice Chairperson Lucio thanked Mr. Vasquez for his report and mentioned that it was nice to know where these funds come from and how they are allocated.

The commission received and filed the report on Capital Improvement and Environmental Resources Projects at Recreation Facilities.

4. Activities and Maintenance Report No. 11

A written report and discussion of the Recreation and Community Services Department Programs, Events, Services and Maintenance Activities for the month of April and a listing of upcoming activities for June 2024.

The Commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Bijan Ashouri, Employee of the Month for March 2024.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Vice Chairperson Lucio adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m. to Wednesday, June 12 at 6:45 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission