



Minutes

Lakewood City Council
Regular Meeting held
October 13, 2026

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 7:33 p.m. by Mayor Wood in the Council Chambers at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

INVOCATION was offered by Reverend Petero Taufagu, Vai O Le Ola Church

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Scouting America Pack 75

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mayor Jeff Wood
Vice Mayor David Arellano
Council Member Cassandra Chase
Council Member Todd Rogers
Council Member Rudy Villarreal

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA – None

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Mayor Wood 1) announced the meeting would be adjourned in memory of a) Bobbi Longbrake, longtime Lakewood resident and volunteer; b) Dr. Mary Sieu, former Superintendent for ABC Unified School District; and c) Rod Ford, longtime Lakewood resident and volunteer; 2) acknowledged the proposed closure of Gompers Elementary School, noting that a) the City addressed the Long Beach Unified School District Board to express its support for Gompers families and the importance of ensuring their voices are heard; b) schools are an integral part of the City's community, and the City recognizes the significant impact a closure would have on students, families, and the surrounding community; and c) the Long Beach Unified School District Board is tentatively scheduled to consider the proposed closures at its October 21, 2026, Board Meeting; 3) discussed the proposed rezoning of several religious institution properties within the City, stating a) as part of the State-mandated Housing Element, the City is required to rezone certain properties to accommodate its housing requirements; b) the rezoning does not require religious institutions to construct housing on their properties and does not indicate that housing will be developed on these sites; and c) the City must comply with State requirements while seeking to preserve as much local control as possible over future development; 4) proclaimed October as a) Disability Awareness Month; b) Breast Cancer Awareness Month; and c) Filipino American Heritage Month; and 5) highlighted the City's a) "Mosey with the Mayor: City Council + Community Connect" held on October 3, 2026, at Del Valle Park; and b) annual Fest-of-All event held on October 10, 2026.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS – Continued

For the record, at the request of Mayor Wood relative to the proposed rezoning of several religious institution properties within the City, City Manager McCormack 1) clarified that the City is not seeking to take, sell or redevelop church properties, nor is it requiring any religious organization to build housing, relocate or change how it currently uses its property; and 2) reiterated that the proposed rezoning is part of the City's State-mandated Housing Element, which requires cities to identify sufficient land to accommodate future housing needs, further noting that the City is obligated to implement the rezoning commitments contained in its State-certified Housing Element to maintain compliance with the California law.

Council Member Chase 1) recognized Jennifer Kumiya, Executive Director, Disabled Resource Center (DRC) for her advocacy for those with differing abilities; 2) reported on her attendance at the League of California Cities Annual Conference held on September 22-24, 2026, highlighting that she was appointed as President of the League of California Cities Women's Caucus; and 3) thanked staff for their work on the Fest-of-All event held on October 10, 2026.

Council Member Rogers 1) expressed condolences to the Longbrake, Sieu, and Ford families; 2) expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed closures of Gompers Elementary School and Edison Elementary School, stating a) the Long Beach Unified School District did not adequately communicate information regarding the proposed closures, noting that the City was informed of the proposed closures at the same time as the community; b) ABC Unified School District faced similar challenges but provided affected families with an opportunity to express their concerns; and c) he would attend the October 21, 2026, Board Meeting to stand in solidarity with students and families affected; and 3) reiterated that a) the City is required to rezone certain properties to accommodate its Housing Element, further explaining that the City has challenged the State on housing-related requirements in court, but those challenges were unsuccessful; and b) if the State-mandated Housing Element is decertified, the City could face significant penalties.

Council Member Villarreal 1) reported on his attendance at the a) League of California Cities Annual Conference held on September 22-24, 2026; b) The Friends of the Lakewood Libraries (FOL) Quartermania fundraiser held on October 3, 2026; and c) "Mosey with the Mayor: City Council + Community Connect" event held on October 3, 2026; and 2) expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed closures of Gompers Elementary School and Edison Elementary School, reiterating a) the proposed closures are under the authority of the Long Beach School Unified School District, not the City of Lakewood; b) schools are an integral part of the City's community; and c) the Long Beach Unified School District is tentatively scheduled to consider the proposed closures at its October 21, 2026, Board Meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS – Continued

Vice Mayor Arellano 1) thanked the City Council for addressing concerns relative to the proposed school closures and rezoning of several religious institution properties within the City; 2) recognized October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, noting the loss of his mother to ovarian cancer and acknowledging those who continue to fight cancer each day; 3) reported on his attendance at the Lakewood High School Pancake Breakfast held on October 10, 2026; and 4) recognized Kody Kuehnast, Band Director, Lakewood High School, for his dedication and commitment to students.

For the record, Mayor Wood introduced 1) Lynsey Russell, Rotary Club of Lakewood, who a) provided a verbal report on Project Sheperd; and b) requested Mayor Wood to serve as Honorary Chairperson and the City's continued co-sponsorship of the program; and 2) Sarah Comfort, Community Library Manager, Angelo M. Iacoboni Library, who provided updates on the Library serving as a Vote Center for the upcoming General Election and Hello Kitty Library Cards.

For the record, Mayor Wood accepted the request to serve as Honorary Chairperson for Project Shepherd.

ROUTINE ITEMS:

It was moved by Vice Mayor Arellano, seconded by Council Member Chase, and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, to approve the balance of the actions stipulated on the Routine Items:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS – Rogers, Villarreal, Arellano, Chase, and
Mayor Wood

RI-1. Approval of Meeting Minutes held September 22, 2026

RI-2. Approval of Personnel Transactions Report

RI-3. Approval of Registers of Demands

RI-4. Approval of Meeting Reports and Authorizations Pursuant to AB1234

RI-5. Approval of Memorandum of Understanding for Proposition A Discretionary Grant Program

RI-6. Approval of Southern California Edison Company License Agreement Renewal for Lakewood Community Gardens

RI-7. Approval of Monthly Report of Investment Transactions – September 2026

ROUTINE ITEMS – Continued

RI-8. Approval of Permit for Street Closure for Block Party on Eastbrook Avenue and Barlin Avenue and General Fund Appropriation in the Amount of \$356.16

3.1 JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT (JAG) PROGRAM FUNDING APPLICATION.

For the record, 1) Mayor Wood introduced the item; and 2) Director of Public Safety Yordt provided a verbal report of the Staff Report.

It was moved by Council Member Rogers, seconded by Council Member Villarreal, and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, to 1) approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 JAG program funding project for the purchase of a variable message board radar trailer for traffic safety purposes; 2) authorize the Mayor to sign the Certifications and Assurances by the Chief Executive of the Applicant Government upon notice of grant award approval; 3) authorize the City Manager to sign the appropriate award acceptance documents upon notification of the grant award; and 4) direct the Director of Finance and Administrative Services to appropriate \$24,363 of JAG funds in the Fiscal year 2026-2027 General Budget upon acceptance of the grant award:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS – Rogers, Villarreal, Arellano, Chase, and
Mayor Wood

3.2 2026 HALLOWEEN CARNIVALS AT LAKEWOOD PARKS.

For the record, 1) Mayor Wood introduced the item; and 2) Assistant Director of Recreation and Community Services Bright provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Staff Report.

Following brief discussion, Vice Mayor Arellano thanked staff for their work on the Halloween Carnivals.

For the record, and without objection, the report was received and filed.

LAKEWOOD HOUSING SUCCESSOR AGENCY

1 REGISTER OF DEMANDS

It was moved by Council Member Rogers, seconded by Vice Mayor Arellano, and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, to approve the register of demands:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS – Rogers, Villarreal, Arellano, Chase, and
Mayor Wood

For the record, Mayor Wood recessed the meeting at 8:34 p.m. for a brief break.

For the record, Mayor Wood reconvened the meeting at 8:41 p.m. with all members present.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Micha Jennings, resident, expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that 1) she understood the State's requirements were based on acreage and questioned whether the subject properties were subject to the requirements; and 2) the proposal did not reflect the City's motto, "Times Change, Values Don't."

Donna Pettway-Brown, resident, expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that 1) land is important to churches and religious institutions; and 2) the proposal could create opportunities for commercial activities that would be harmful to the community, further requesting that the City Council consider commercial areas instead to allow residents to continue practicing their religion and exercising their freedom of religion.

Sonya Downtin, resident, expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that 1) she understood the City was required to comply with State mandates; however, housing at the subject properties could negatively affect the quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods and create additional burdens, including increased traffic, infrastructure demands, and public safety concerns; and 2) the City should consider alternative housing sites and encouraged residents to contact the property owners directly to determine whether they intended to develop housing on their properties.

Maureen Flaherty, expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that 1) churches are essential to the community; 2) the public deserves answers regarding why the properties were selected and an explanation of the State requirements; and 3) although the City needs housing, it also needs churches.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – Continued

Lisa Woods, resident, expressed concerns regarding the proposed closure of Gompers Elementary School, stating that 1) she is a member of the Gompers Elementary School Parent Teacher Association (PTA); 2) she appreciates the Mayor's and City Council's support and understands that decisions regarding school closures are within the authority of the Long Beach Unified School District, not the City; and 3) she and others plan to appeal to the Long Beach Unified School District Board Members to reconsider the proposed closures.

Bridget Antuna, expressed concerns regarding 1) the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that a) the City should reconsider the proposal; and b) she appreciates that City staff met with Reverend Ortiz to discuss the matter; and 2) the decorations depicted in the 2026 Halloween Carnivals at Lakewood Parks PowerPoint presentation.

Dawn Thomas, expressed concerns regarding 1) the decorations depicted in the 2026 Halloween Carnivals at Lakewood Parks PowerPoint presentation; and 2) the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City.

Brian, resident, expressed concerns regarding 1) the decorations depicted in the 2026 Halloween Carnivals at Lakewood Parks PowerPoint presentation; and 2) the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that City Council Members supported legislators who supported State housing mandates, further suggesting the City consider adopting a Resolution naming and condemning legislators' actions in an effort to stop the various State mandates.

Eric Escobedo, resident, 1) thanked the Sheriff's Department and veterans for their service; and 2) expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that a) elected officials who failed to represent their constituents should be voted out of office; b) the City should consider adopting a Resolution naming and condemning legislators' actions in an effort to stop the various State mandates; and c) residents elected the current City Council and will continue to support its members through these times.

A. Esther Harbour, expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that 1) residents had expressed concerns to the Planning and Environment Commission but felt they had not been heard; and 2) the current City Council may no longer be serving when housing is developed on the subject properties, further expressing concern that future City Council Members will use eminent domain to facilitate housing development.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – Continued

Philip Norris, resident, 1) explained that the City had approximately \$70 million in reserves which is equivalent to approximately \$875 per resident; 2) questioned a) whether the recently held “Mosey with the Mayor: City Council + Community Connect” complied with the Brown Act, noting that registration was required to attend; and b) whether any City employees were also City residents; 3) requested traffic and parking enforcement near Monroe Elementary School; and 4) suggested that the City review a) each department’s functions to determine whether services could be contracted out; b) neighboring cities’ salary schedules to assess employee compensation; and c) the Lakewood Municipal Code to ensure its provisions are enforced.

Reverend Paul Ortiz, Jr., resident, expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that 1) the State was overreaching, although the City had attempted to oppose the mandates, further thanking Council Member Rogers and City staff for meeting with him to discuss the matter; and 2) residents should work collaboratively with the City to identify alternative ways to comply with State requirements.

Paul Jones, resident, expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that 1) he is a candidate on the November ballot and has received significant criticism from residents regarding the proposal; 2) during the COVID-19 pandemic, churches were deemed nonessential while cannabis and liquor stores were deemed essential; 3) residents believed the City should have notified more than just the property owners and residents within 300 feet of the subject properties; and 4) the matter falls within the City’s jurisdiction and the City should help address the concerns, further expressing willingness to discuss the matter with the City.

Louise, California Precinct Activators, 1) submitted “notices” for the record; and 2) expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that a) the Constitution is the supreme law of the land and binds trustees to their oaths; b) the proposed rezoning is unconstitutional and lacks due process of law; and c) the law prohibits the taking or damaging of private property without just compensation.

Kathy, resident, expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that 1) the removal of churches could lead to increased crime within the City; and 2) the City Council should reconsider the subject properties and explore abandoned or vacant commercial properties as alternative housing sites.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – Continued

Larry McMillan, expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that 1) the technical aspects of the State mandates should be discussed, further thanking Director of Community Development Cervantes for explaining the matter before the start of the meeting; 2) properties that are not rezoned could be subject to protection from the “builder’s remedy”; and 3) the City should consider designating Gompers Elementary School as a rezoning site if the school were to close.

Gloria Hernandez, resident, expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of religious institution properties within the City, stating that 1) the City Council’s body language conveyed a negative response to the community’s concerns; and 2) certain areas of the City are already congested and the City lacks sufficient first responders to accommodate additional demands.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Wood adjourned the meeting at 9:32 p.m. to Tuesday, October 27, 2026, at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. A moment of silence was observed in memory of Bobbi Longbrake, Dr. Mary Sieu, and Rod Ford.

Respectfully submitted,

Dakota Wallace, CMC
City Clerk