



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
February 11, 2026

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Chairperson Anitza Valles

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Kristie Larison.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE: The Commission Secretary, Michelle Williams, administered the Oath of Office to newly appointed Commissioner Bert Johnson.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Chairperson Anitza Valles
Vice Chairperson Dave Allen
Commissioner Bert Johnson
Commissioner Veronica Lucio
Commissioner Kristie Larison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of January 14, 2026. A motion was made by Commissioner Kristie Larison and seconded by Vice Chairperson Dave Allen to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 14, 2026. Minutes were approved as submitted with Commissioner Bert Johnson abstaining.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Assistant Director Kevin Bright began his announcements by welcoming Commissioner Bert Johnson to the Recreation and Community Services Commission.

Mr. Bright then provided information on programming and upcoming events. He reported that on Monday, January 26, the Community Promotions Committee had met and received two reports from staff. The first report was said to be on the FIFA World Cup Watch Party, which was proposed for Sunday, July 19, at which residents would be able to watch and celebrate the final match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup Tournament. Mr. Bright informed the commission that the committee was presented with two options to host a watch party at Lakewood Center Mall: activating the indoor space once occupied by Nordstrom Rack and the outdoor parking lot on the south side of the mall. It was said that the second option was to activate just the outdoor parking area. Mr. Bright noted that the two options would cost an estimated \$150,000 and \$106,000, respectively. Staff received direction from the committee to host a more modest version of the watch party at Mayfair Park for an estimated cost of \$50,000. Along with the watch party, which would feature a large LED screen, inflatable attractions and food trucks, a youth soccer clinic would be offered on Saturday, March 28, as well as two youth soccer tournaments at the mini pitch at Palms Park. He shared that the championship games would be played in advance of the World Cup Match on a rented mini pitch at Mayfair Park, the day of the watch party.

Mr. Bright informed the commission that the second report detailed an augmentation to the Civic Center Block Party which would celebrate the semi quinentennial of the country's founding. Staff

proposed giveaways, a T-shirt campaign for the public and additional graphics and signage to celebrate 250 years of the USA, while also proposing a drone show prior to the fireworks display. It was said that the drone show would offer up to six custom images to recognize Lakewood's patriotism and celebration of the country's anniversary and run for about 10 to 12 minutes, leading into the fireworks display. Mr. Bright mentioned that these additional event elements had been allotted \$30,000.

It was said that for both the FIFA Watch Party and the semi quincennial celebration, staff were directed to obtain sponsorships to help offset costs and to solicit local businesses in support of these programs.

Next, Mr. Bright reported that on Thursday, February 5, the Park Development Committee received the first quarter report on the progress of the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Long Range Plan. It was said that the committee was updated on the facility and amenities condition report developed by the plan. A detailed summary of over a dozen park and community center amenities was presented along with condition ratings for each. Items like drinking fountains, trash receptacles, bike racks, bleachers and more were given ratings of excellent through non-functional by the consultant team. The asset management and geodatabase that the consultant MIG utilized was also shown to the committee. Staff demonstrated how the program would be used to manage amenities and their condition moving forward. Additionally, a cost per item to replace was demonstrated. A process by which the city can replace those items rated either poor or non-functional was described for the committee. Staff were directed to work over the next two to six years to achieve a level of at least fair, but desiring to get to a rating of good for all amenities. It was shown that this endeavor would begin at around \$400,000, thus the need for a several years plan to achieve these ends. Mr. Bright informed the commission that the report concluded with a summary of grant programs, which included projects like the Weingart Senior Center and Palms Park Community Center renovations; the playgrounds completed at Biscailuz and Boyar parks; and upcoming playground replacements at Bloomfield Park and Cherry Cove, all funded through county, state and federal funds. Also included was the pending grant application for Bloomfield Park pickleball courts and basketball court upgrades with the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

With regard to The Centre, Mr. Bright reported that with the major electrical, roofing and HVAC project taking place at The Centre, Public Works had identified a gap in facility reservations during which they integrated additional work on the facility. It was said that over the last two weeks of January, the downstairs area had received much needed improvements. The Oak Room, Sycamore Room, city staff office and TGIS office all received fresh paint and new carpet, and the downstairs hallway also had new carpet installed. Mr. Bright noted that with the ballroom having received a facelift in 2024 and the meeting and office spaces downstairs now receiving the same, the majority of the facility has a new, clean look with a welcoming and professional feel for clients. He shared that RCS was greatly appreciative of the efforts to keep the facility in tip top form for those looking to hold milestone events and business meetings alike.

Mr. Bright then provided information regarding a recent City Council Meeting, noting that Director of Finance and Administrative Services Jose Gomez, delivered a report on Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Midyear Budget Review and Adjustments. Mr. Bright noted that Mr. Gomez had outlined that sales tax revenues were trending about \$1.4 million behind the prior year, and reported that sales tax revenues were generally holding level over the last several years. Mr. Gomez elaborated that the decline in tax revenues aligns with consumers' uncertainty about the economy. Further, he shared that the final estimate on the 2025-26 budget demonstrated a \$206,000 surplus, highlighting the city's ongoing commitment to fiscal responsibility, even considering declining revenue. Mr. Bright informed the commission that the budget report was approved by the council, which included the funds for the FIFA Watch Party and semi quincennial celebrations, with Vice Mayor Wood ensuring that "drone show" was not specified in the budget, allowing for alternate spending if another idea proves a better option to celebrate.

Mr. Bright reminded the commission to RSVP with their secretary if interested in attending the Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame Banquet on Monday, February 23, noting that a full report on the banquet would be provided later in the evening as noted on the agenda.

Mr. Bright reported that the Weingart Senior Center programming had started the relocation process to Mayfair Park. It was said that as of Monday, February 16, full programming would officially be moved to Mayfair Park and would remain for the duration of the renovation project, which was said to take approximately one year.

Lastly, Mr. Bright informed the commission that at their seat was the 2026 Arbor Week Performance calendar. He noted that staff were awaiting a few confirmations from schools, and shared that the commission secretary would be sure to provide the final copy once completed. It was said that the 2026 Arbor Day performance would be *K-Pop Demon Hunters—Battle for the Forest*. Mr. Bright shared that RCS's talented team of supervisors, along with Woody the Magical Tree, would descend on kindergarten through third grade classes throughout Lakewood and teach children about the importance of trees on earth. *K-Pop Demon Hunters* is this year's biggest hit among kids and they're sure to enjoy the presentation which helps the city to achieve Arbor Day awareness and maintain Lakewood's Tree City, USA designation. The commission was asked to RSVP with their secretary if interested in attending a performance.

Parks Superintendent Abel Andrade reminded the commission that RCS, in collaboration with the Development and Operations Section of the California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS) would host the Parks Symposium at Del Valle Park on Tuesday, March 10. He noted that the full-day professional event would bring together the park, turf and landscape professionals from throughout the region, along with industry vendors, to share best practices, innovations and operational strategies. He noted that the commission was invited to attend and asked that they RSVP with their secretary.

Next, Mr. Andrade informed the commission that with forecasted rain in the coming week, ERD staff would prepare sandbags for facilities, remove standing water from parks and ball diamonds,

clear standing debris in public rights-of-way and shift operations to deep cleaning the interior of park and recreation facilities to ensure areas remain safe and well-maintained.

Mr. Andrade confirmed for Chairperson Anitza Valles that in response to an uptick of mosquitoes throughout the county, ERD crews were working diligently to remove standing water throughout the city and to keep vegetation trimmed.

Mr. Andrade also confirmed for Commissioner Kristie Larison that ERD crews would begin mosquito abatement activities earlier than usual to address the current uptick.

In response to Vice Chairperson Dave Allen, Mr. Andrade confirmed that Vector Control also conducts annual mosquito abatement spraying within the area. He also highlighted the city's advantage in employing a licensed pesticide applicator for this purpose.

Mr. Bright noted that the Public Information Office conducts annual outreach to educate the public on mosquito prevention, including procedures for reporting standing water or areas with high mosquito populations.

Mr. Bright informed Chairperson Valles that staff were unable to expand Arbor Day performances to schools outside city limits, noting that the current production schedule was at full capacity and unable to accommodate additional performances.

REPORTS:

1. Pest Management Program Annual Report

Environmental Resources Division (ERD) Supervisor Mike McDade displayed slides and provided information regarding the city's pest management program. Mr. McDade informed the commission that the City of Lakewood is required to maintain and annually renew a pesticide use permit each year through the Los Angeles County Agriculture Commissioner's Office. He shared that in order to qualify for approval, a Los Angeles County agriculture inspector must verify that the city complies with state and federal laws. Details were provided regarding the requirements necessary to obtain the annual permit.

Next, Mr. McDade provided information regarding insect management, weed management and gopher abatement as noted in the written report.

Details regarding the annual training hosted by the Pesticide Applicators Professional Association (PAPA) were provided by Mr. McDade. It was said that Lakewood hosted two one-day events at The Centre in July and October 2025, which proved to be successful with over 300 registered participants at each event. Mr. McDade shared that these two seminars would be hosted again at The Centre in 2026 along with a test preparation course to support certification advancement.

Mr. McDade clarified for Commissioner Bert Johnson that for gopher abatement mesh to be fully effective, it must be laid down prior to the installation of new sod or grass surfaces.

In response to Commissioner Allen, Mr. McDade clarified that the beetles currently found within the city tend to forage on eucalyptus trees

Mr. McDade presented an Arborjet tree injection system to the commission. He demonstrated the device's components while walking the commission through the process of injecting treatments into trees and highlighting the machine's efficiency and ease of use.

The commission received and filed the annual report on the Pest Management Program.

2. Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame

Community Services Manager Joseph Vasquez displayed slides and provided a preview of the Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame. Mr. Vasquez reported that on Monday, February 23, 2026, the 44th Annual Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame Banquet would be held at The Centre. He informed the commission that the Hall of Fame Board of Electors had convened on Thursday, January 8, 2026, to select the 2025 Athlete of the Year and honors for other athletes and coaches. It was said that awards would be presented for Performer of the Year in each sport, various Special Achievement awards, including Scholar Athlete of the Year, and the highlight of the event, the crowning of the Athlete of the Year. Details regarding the 2026 Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame event were provided by Mr. Vasquez, as noted in the written report.

The commission was informed that 2025 sponsors included the City of Lakewood, Piazza Family McDonald's Restaurants, Soroptimist International of Lakewood-Long Beach, and the Rotary Club of Lakewood.

Commissioner Larison commented that the 2025 banquet was great and shared her excitement for the 2026 event. Mr. Bright informed Commissioner Larison that staff would attempt to make a nod to Walter 'Spud' O'Neil, Lakewood High School's long-time and soon-to-retire baseball coach at the banquet.

Chairperson Valles thanked staff for allowing her to participate in the Board of Elector's meeting. She shared that she was honored to be a part of the selection process.

The commission received and filed the report on Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame.

3. Activities and Maintenance Report No. 8

A written report and discussion of the Recreation and Community Services Department Programs, Services and Maintenance Activities for the month of January and a listing of upcoming activities for March 2026.

The commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Mikaela Munguia, Employee of the Month for January 2026.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Valles adjourned the meeting at 7 p.m. to Wednesday, March 11 at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission