



City of Lakewood
Recreation and Community Services Commission
MINUTES

Adjourned Regular Meeting Held

August 19, 2026

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Dave Allen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Bert Johnson.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE Administrative Secretary Michelle Williams administered the oath of office to Commissioners Dave Allen and Bert Johnson, and to newly appointed Commissioners Jessica Allen, Shanetta Weatherspoon and Eddie Witt.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Vice Chairperson Dave Allen
Commissioner Bert Johnson
Commissioner Jessica Allen
Commissioner Shanetta Weatherspoon
Commissioner Eddie Witt

OTHER – REORGANIZATION OF COMMISSION OFFICERS

Nominations were opened for commission chairperson for a term of one year. Commissioner Bert Johnson nominated Vice Chairperson Dave Allen to serve as chairperson. A motion of approval was made by Commissioner Eddie Witt and was seconded by Commissioner Jessica Allen. Upon unanimous roll call vote, the motion was carried.

Nominations were opened for commission vice chairperson for a term of one year. Chairperson Dave Allen nominated Commissioner Bert Johnson to serve as vice chairperson. A motion of approval was made by Commissioner Eddie Witt and was seconded by Commissioner Jessica Allen. Upon unanimous roll call vote, the motion was carried.

ROUTINE ITEMS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Meeting of July 15, 2026.

Due to lack of a quorum, the minutes of July 15, 2026 were received and filed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Director Valarie Frost opened the meeting by welcoming the three newly appointed commissioners to the dais, while also thanking the two returning commissioners for their continued dedication and support of departmental activities and programs. Ms. Frost informed the commission that the meeting would focus on the department's budget for Fiscal Year 26-27 as approved by the Lakewood City Council, noting that the timely presentation would offer the new commissioners valuable insight into the department's overarching responsibilities, programs and functions. She extended congratulations to Chairperson Dave Allen, pointing out that his longevity as a Lakewood resident, former Recreation and Community Services (RCS) manager and veteran commissioner serves as a tremendous resource for the commission; she requested that each new commissioner schedule a meeting with the Chair to gain a deeper understanding of the commission's roles and functions.

Moving into announcements, Ms. Frost noted that as the summer concludes and local school districts resume session, staff was actively preparing for the transition to fall activities and adjusting facility supervision hours to match shifting facility usage patterns. She reminded the commission that regular commission meetings take place on the second Wednesday of each month, setting the next meeting for Wednesday, September 9, at 6 p.m. She then highlighted several upcoming events, including the Patriot Day Ceremony on Friday, September 11, at 6:30 p.m. in the West Parking Lot of the Lakewood Civic Center, and the Lakewood Education Foundation's Annual Golf Tournament on Friday, September 18, at the Lakewood Country Club, noting that commissioners can support the fundraiser via purchase of tee signs or opportunity drawing tickets with the assistance of the commission secretary.

Additionally, Ms. Frost shared that the 28th Annual Summer Stampede Car Show would be hosted by the Rotary Club of Lakewood and the Lakewood Family YMCA in partnership with the city on Saturday, September 19, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Mayfair Park, which coincides with the start of the Lakewood Youth Sports (LYS) program season. She mentioned that the Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Expo was scheduled for Saturday, September 26, at the Civic Center Plaza east parking area, and noted that RCS staff would provide event supervision and maintenance support. Ms. Frost concluded her announcements by asking the commission to mark their calendars for a community walk at Del Valle Park on Saturday, October 3, organized in coordination with

the City Manager's Office as part of the Mayor's Community Engagement Initiative series spanning all five city districts.

Parks Superintendent Abel Andrade informed the commission that Environmental Resources Division (ERD) staff completed several landscape improvements at Cherry Cove Park during its recent closure for the new playground installation. He shared that at the park's main entrance, crews added drought-tolerant landscaping, decorative boulders and drip irrigation upgrades to improve appearance and reduce water use. Additionally, staff restored areas affected by construction by installing 9,000 square feet of new sod and over 5,000 square feet of creeping red fescue along the south hillside. Mr. Andrade reported that with the upcoming installation of a new ADA-accessible walking path, the park was nearly ready to reopen, allowing residents to enjoy the new playground, refreshed landscaping and enhanced accessibility.

Next, Mr. Andrade announced that crews would begin landscape restoration around City Hall in the coming weeks to repair areas impacted by the recent construction of a new heating and air conditioning unit. He shared that the project would incorporate new plant material and irrigation improvements to refresh the affected spaces.

Mr. Andrade informed the commission that ERD would host a professional seminar at The Centre on Wednesday, September 2, in collaboration with the Pesticide Applicators Professional Association (PAPA). He shared that the event was projected to bring over 100 area landscape and pesticide professionals to Lakewood for training and continuing education. Lastly, Mr. Andrade highlighted that ERD Supervisor Mike McDade serves on PAPA's Board of Directors, which enabled the city to bring this training opportunity to Lakewood while providing vital test preparation and certification resources for city personnel at no cost.

Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided information on programming and upcoming events. Mr. Bright reported that the fall LYS season—encompassing flag football, volleyball and volleyball—had a total of 809 participants registered, up from 657 in 2025, marking the second consecutive season of measured growth for the program in 2026. He noted that the growth was driven in part by the introduction of the department's first-ever girls flag football league, which he shared had successfully enrolled 125 participants across the 8–9, 10–11 and 12–14 age divisions. It was said that the coaches meeting for all fall sports was scheduled for Wednesday, August 26, with practices beginning the week of August 31 and games running from Saturday, September 19 through Saturday, November 7.

Additionally, Mr. Bright announced the submission of two competitive grant applications under the National Park Service Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program. The commission was informed that the first application requests a portion of the \$3 million total estimated project cost to install a new northwestern pickleball complex and upgrade existing game courts to support the Special Olympics and Adaptive Recreation Program at Bloomfield Park. It was said that the second application requests half of the \$10 million estimated project cost for

Palms Park to upgrade playgrounds with a focus on inclusive play for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and to construct a splash pad replacing the wading pool—complementing the new community center currently under construction. Mr. Bright noted that both grant applications leverage strong community input documented in the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Long Range Plan and project readiness. He mentioned that the grants require a 50% funding match, and that the city would evaluate potential funding sources and general fund allocations should the grants be awarded.

Commissioners Jessica Allen, Dr. Shanetta Weatherspoon and Eddie Witt provided a brief introduction of themselves to the department staff in attendance.

REPORTS

1. RCS DEPARTMENT ANNUAL BUDGET REPORT

Assistant Director Kevin Bright presented to the commission the Recreation and Community Services Annual Budget Report for Fiscal Year 2026-27, outlining the city's two-year budgeting cycle, which runs from July 1 through June 30 under the direction of the City Council. Mr. Bright noted that the department maintains a strong commitment to fiscal conservatism, thorough tracking and responsible stewardship of public funds. He reported that the budget development process, led by the City Manager and the Director of Finance and Administrative Services, began in February, and resulted in a budget approved by the City Council on June 9. Mr. Bright shared that while striving to maintain prior-year spending levels, necessary growth was driven by contractual employee wage increases under the 2024–2027 Memorandum of Understanding, a 7% water rate increase impacting facility and parkway irrigation and general water usage, capital allocations for equipment and facility enhancements, and a departmental transfer of funds for Long Beach Transit services funded by Los Angeles County Prop C funds.

Overall, it was said that the Fiscal Year 2026–2027 RCS budget totaled \$18,611,623, representing a 7.7% increase from the previous fiscal year, with projected revenues anticipated at \$1,917,680 generated through catering at The Centre, contract classes and swim lessons, tenant agreements, day camp programs, and room rentals. Mr. Bright commended the RCS management team for their meticulous preparation of detailed budget backups and ongoing monitoring.

Finally, Mr. Bright invited the departments' supervisors, lead workers and recreation program coordinator to the podium to share insights regarding their daily responsibilities and favorite aspects of their roles to the commission.

The commission received and filed the RCS Department Annual Budget Report.

2. ACTIVITIES AND MAINTENANCE REPORT NO. 2

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

The commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

1. Letters to Mia Botelo and Alyssa Carrillo, Employees of the Month for June 2026.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Dave Allen adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m. to Wednesday, September 9 at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission