



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
July 9, 2025

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Dave Allen.

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

OTHER - REORGANIZATION OF COMMISSION OFFICERS

Nominations were opened for commission chairperson for a term of one year. Commissioner Ted Spaseff motioned to nominate Vice Chairperson Anitza Valles to serve as chairperson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kristie Larison. Upon unanimous roll call vote, the motion was carried.

Nominations were opened for commission vice chairperson for a term of one year. Commissioner Kristie Larison motioned to nominate Commissioner Dave Allen to serve as vice chairperson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ted Spaseff. Upon unanimous roll call vote, the motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of June 11, 2025. A motion was made by Commissioner Kristie Larison and seconded by Commissioner Dave Allen to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 11, 2025. Minutes were approved as submitted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Director Valarie Frost began her announcements by informing the commission that at a recent City Council meeting, Todd Rogers was recognized for his service as Mayor over the past year. In a ceremonial transition, Cassandra Chase was named Mayor, and Jeff Wood was elected to serve as Vice Mayor.

Ms. Frost proceeded to report that California Parks & Recreation Society (CPRS) established the *Parks Make Life Better!* branding initiative to help member agencies promote parks and recreation as essential community services. It was said that July has been designated as *Parks Make Life Better!* month to highlight the positive impact of parks and recreation programs on communities. In support of this initiative, Ms. Frost noted that the Lakewood City Council had approved a resolution and signed a proclamation affirming July as *Parks Make Life Better!* month.

Next, Ms. Frost informed the commission that the city had released the draft version of the *Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Long-Range Plan*. She explained that the plan outlines a

forward-looking vision for Lakewood's parks, recreational facilities, and community programs, and incorporates input from residents, stakeholders, and community partners. She shared that the community was encouraged to review the draft and provide feedback to help shape the final plan. It was said that comments would be accepted through Sunday, August 10. The commission was reminded that a study session and City Council presentation of the completed Long-Range Plan was scheduled for Tuesday, August 12.

Regarding the annual August RCS Commission Facilities Tour scheduled for Wednesday, August 13., Ms. Frost recommend that the commission tour the Weingart Senior Center. She explained that the tour would provide a current overview of the facility prior to its upcoming remodel. It was said that a virtual tour and images to illustrate the planned renovations would be provided.

In addition, Ms. Frost noted that the Commission could visit Mayfair Park to observe both aquatic and Lakewood Youth Sports (LYS) activities. It was said that the visit would demonstrate how staff plans to continue providing senior services at Mayfair Park during the remodeling of the Weingart Senior Center.

Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided the commission with information on programming and upcoming events. Mr. Bright reported that on Saturday, July 12, the annual Save-A-Life event would take place at Mayfair Pool beginning at 11 a.m. He shared that the free event would feature hands on CPR demonstrations, free swim lessons, life jacket fitting for youth and highlight the Water Watcher Program, which teaches adults how to maintain safety around bodies of water. Participants were said to receive a whistle and a water watcher card to reference for keeping safe when swimming.

Mr. Bright informed the commission that on Saturday, June 19, Teens in Lakewood Care (TLC) would visit a resident on Clark Avenue and assist with landscape maintenance in the front yard. Following the event, they will descend on McDonald's on Woodruff for a complementary lunch and plenty of fluids following a hard day's work.

Mr. Bright concluded his announcements by reporting that Tot Lots at Mayfair and Del Valle parks would open registration for the fall session on Friday, July 25 and August 1, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at each of the Tot Lot sites. He explained that these programs were a cooperative between the city and volunteer parents, offering weekday programs to help little ones adjust to a social, school-adjacent atmosphere. It was said that each site anticipates about 30 participants registering.

Parks Superintendent Abel Andrade shared with the commission that two projects were recently completed by the Environmental Resources Division; the landscape beautification project on Arbor Road, and the new trailhead entrance to the West San Gabriel Nature Trail Phase I, located at the terminus of Los Coyotes Diagonal.

Commissioner Ted Spaseff shared that he had been enjoying the Concerts in the Park series at Del Valle Park. He also shared that he attended a car show at Palms Park and commended Community Services Supervisor Noel Munoz for a job well done. He mentioned that he attended the Block

Party and commented on how much the community loves and appreciates the event. Lastly, Commissioner Spaseff shared that he attended the LYS Opening Day Ceremony at Mayfair Park. He mentioned that it was a great event, that he loved the performance of the LYS Oath, and that he was impressed with all the creative team names.

Commissioner Veronica Lucio shared that her daughter was taking swimming lessons at Mayfair Pool and mentioned she was impressed by how helpful and kind the staff were, and how clean the facility was.

Vice Chairperson Dave Allen shared that he attended the 33rd Annual Senior Health and Benefits Fair and commended Community Services Supervisor Sabrina Junkin for doing a great job with the event. He mentioned that there were tons of vendors and that the event was well attended. Commissioner Allen shared that he also attended the LYS Opening Day Ceremony, describing it as sensational. He shared Commissioner Spaseff's sentiments regarding the LYS Oath. Lastly, he shared that he recently attended a LYS t-ball game and said it was tons of fun to watch.

Commissioner Kristie Larison commented that the landscape project along Paramount Blvd. looked amazing and very welcoming. She thanked ERD staff for their hard work and effort.

Chairperson Anitza Valles mentioned that the landscaping near Studebaker Road also looked amazing. She noted that the flowers blooming at the Home Run Dog also looked great.

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 2025-2026. Mr. Bright noted that the budget report presented was the second year of a two-year budget which was developed beginning in February of 2024. He mentioned, however, that in the spring of 2025, staff reviewed and amended the current fiscal year budget with updated known conditions and trends based on financial standards at the time of development. It was said that the mid-cycle budget for FY25-26 was formally adopted by the City Council at their June 10 meeting, and the department was currently operating within the budget as of July 1. He shared that it was important to note that the budget is a crucial planning tool for the department, noting that it directs spending across all programs and functions, including personnel. Mr. Bright reported that all members of the RCS management team play a critical role in budget development and on-going review, both at the outset and throughout the fiscal year. Mr. Bright informed the commission that the RCS Department remains committed to the city's philosophy of fiscal responsibility, in functioning on lean budgetary allocations.

Mr. Bright pointed out some of the key changes from the budget the year prior, including the omission of the Lakewood Equestrian Center, with the new lessee assuming operations at the facility in January 2025. He noted that this omission removed just over one and a quarter million dollars from the department budget. Additionally, just over \$400,000 was

lost on the revenue side with the change in management at the equestrian center. Mr. Bright stated that not accounting for the removed equestrian center funds, the comparison of last fiscal year to this fiscal year is the department increased expenditures by \$203,806, or 1.2%. He noted that across each division, the \$203,806 was evenly disbursed with no major or singular expense representing the increase. He noted that several divisions represented modest increases, while others had relative or equally modest decreases. Mr. Bright informed the commission that the department does not anticipate any major capital purchases in 2025, as items such as new facility chairs were moved to 2024's fiscal year-end.

Mr. Bright informed the commission that staff adhered to the city manager's direction to work as close to a status quo budget as possible. Regarding revenues, Mr. Bright mentioned that as stated, the equestrian center change in management had reduced anticipated revenues by a measurable sum, however, he mentioned that other factors which would affect revenues in the current fiscal year include the anticipated start of both the Palms Park and Weingart Senior Center renovation projects. He noted that Palms Park would be off-limits completely during the renovation, and Weingart programs would be moved to Mayfair Park, thus reducing some of the revenues such as facility permits at each facility. Mr. Bright shared that the 2025-26 revenue was expected to decrease by just over 5% with said changes. He mentioned that it was important to note that when projecting revenues, staff remain very conservative and often the department's revenues outperform projections by the conclusion of the year.

In summary, Mr. Bright reported that the Recreation and Community Services Department has been allocated \$17,208,790 for expenditures, with the majority of \$16,364,219 coming from the general fund, and the department has projected revenues in the amount of \$2,058,600.

Mr. Bright then introduced to the commission, the RCS supervisors, lead workers, program coordinator, community service leader IVs and community services specialists present in the audience. He shared that the supervisors, lead workers and program coordinator were each tasked with highlighting their right-hand person and sharing with the commission how staff's leadership and key front-line staff team up to provide outstanding parks and recreation programs and events to the community. The RCS supervisors, lead workers and program coordinator each introduced their community service leaders to the commission and presented a slide show and detailed the many ways they work together to provide excellent service to the community.

2. Commission Newsletter No. 1

A written report of the Recreation and Community Services Department programs, events, services and maintenance activities for the month of June and a listing of upcoming activities for August 2025.

The commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Mikaela Munguia, Employee of the Month for May 2025.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Lakewood resident Ben Chavez thanked staff for the work that was done at the Lakewood Equestrian Center. He requested that staff check trees throughout the city to ensure that there are no limbs that could potentially fall. Lastly, he recommended that staff look into providing a parking permit to Lakewood residents who utilize the Weingart Senior Center, in order to prevent residents in nearby apartment buildings from parking in the lot.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Valles adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m. to Wednesday, August 13 at 5:30 p.m. in the Executive Board Room.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission