



City of Lakewood
Recreation and Community Services Commission

MINUTES

Adjourned Regular Meeting Held

May 13, 2026

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Bert Johnson.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Chairperson Anitza Valles
Commissioner Bert Johnson
Commissioner Kristie Larison
Commissioner Veronica Lucio

ABSENT

Vice Chairperson Dave Allen

ROUTINE ITEMS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Meeting of April 8, 2026. Due to lack of a quorum, the minutes of April 8, 2026 were tabled for approval at the meeting of June 10, 2026.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Director Valarie Frost expressed her appreciation to the commission for their participation in various recent recreation events held throughout the city, noting that their presence was highly valued.

Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided information on programming and upcoming events. Mr. Bright reported that the Memorial Day program at the Veteran's Memorial Plaza at Del Valle Park would take place on Monday, May 25, at 11 a.m. It was said that as part of the 250th

commemoration of the country's independence, a community photograph would be taken under the Del Valle Park at the conclusion of the program. Mr. Bright shared that the photograph would be prominently featured at the Civic Center Block Party in June. Commissioners were requested to notify the secretary if interested in attending.

The commission was invited to attend the next Park Development Committee Meeting on Monday, June 1, at 6:30 p.m. in the Executive Board Room. Mr. Bright shared that staff would present the second-quarter 2026 report covering Program and Event Evaluation, Community Interest: Programs and Events, and the Expansion of Recreational Opportunities, as outlined in the Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Long-Range Plan. Commissioners wishing to attend as audience members were asked to RSVP with their secretary.

Lastly, Mr. Bright reported that the annual Summer Kick-Off would be held at Monte Verde Park on Thursday, June 4, at 6:30 p.m. It was said that participants were encouraged to wear nautical attire to correlate with the "Cruisin' into Summer" theme. Commissioners were asked to rsvp with their secretary if interested in attending.

REPORTS

1. CDBG FUNDING RECIPIENT AGENCY REPORT

Executive Director Bill Sinko of the Community Family Guidance Center (CFGF) provided a presentation to the commission regarding the programs and services the non-profit agency offers to the Lakewood community.

Mr. Sinko shared that the agency assists under-served children and families in Southeast Los Angeles County. It was said that CFGF utilizes proven interventions and compassionate guidance to help clients heal from trauma, abuse, and emotional, behavioral, and mental health issues. Through the combined efforts of staff, the board, and community members, the program establishes a safe environment dedicated to helping affected families heal and restore their lives.

Mr. Sinko reported that the agency employs 72 staff members when fully staffed—including therapists, supervisors, and support personnel—and serves over 28 cities. The commission was informed that CFGF serves approximately 200 children per week and admits around 1,400 new children annually across multiple areas—including Lakewood, and that the agency administers 34,000 clinical hours of cost-free service each year.

Mr. Sinko mentioned that operations were funded through the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). He detailed the agency's funded services, outpatient programs, and both intensive and non-intensive care options.

In response to an inquiry from Commissioner Johnson, Mr. Sinko clarified that children do not need to be personally amenable to receiving help, provided that parental consent is

obtained. He noted that the agency maintains a very low dropout rate, attributing this success to staff efforts in creating an inviting and supportive environment.

In response to a follow-up inquiry from Commissioner Johnson, Mr. Sinko clarified that formalized training is not always required for volunteers, as volunteers are needed for many duties, some which do not require prior training. He added that the program utilizes a wide range of professional experts; however, due to HIPAA compliance and privacy regulations, the agency is restricted from allowing volunteers to be present during clinical training sessions.

Mr. Sinko clarified for Commissioner Johnson that the agency defines a "crisis" as a situation involving a child who is suicidal, presents a danger to others, or exhibits extreme behavioral issues.

The commission received and filed the report on 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, the Civic Center Block Party and the summer catalog. Ms. Hitt reported that the Recreation and Community Services catalog would be available online, beginning Thursday, May 21. Residents will receive postcards directing them to the city's website to view the interactive online catalog. Additionally, 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 was provided by Ms. Hitt.

Ms. Hitt proceeded to provide details regarding contract classes and travel trips listed in the catalog, the Summer Concerts in the Park series, the Finally It's Friday series, 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 training during the summer was provided to the commission.

Chairperson Anitza Valles recommended that staff coordinate with the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) at local schools to advertise upcoming department recreation programs and events.

In response to an inquiry from Commissioner Johnson, Mr. Bright clarified that while attendance levels vary across different events and programs, participation numbers remain strong. He reported that staff had initiated the deployment of A-frame signage featuring QR codes that link to online surveys, which will assist in evaluating marketing reach and capturing resident feedback. Additionally, Mr. Bright noted that staff members are actively implementing strategies from the Long-Range Plan to further enhance community feedback collection regarding department programming and events.

Commissioner Johnson recommended that staff distribute information regarding upcoming department events and programs to neighborhood watch captains across Lakewood to further enhance community awareness.

Commissioner Veronica Lucio suggested increasing event promotions directly at local schools. She noted that department event and program flyers distributed via Peachjar frequently become overlooked in email inboxes and may not consistently reach parents.

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. He noted 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. It was said that capital improvement projects are funded through a variety of federal, state and local grants in conjunction with city general funds.

Mr. Vasquez reported that the city's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) was 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 the program was overseen by the Public Works Department and 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 was 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 was 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. He shared that in addition, Environmental Resources Division (ERD) staff carry out projects focused on enhancing and beautifying outdoor areas at city facilities, medians and other public spaces.

Updates and information regarding each capital improvement and Environmental Resources Division project at recreation facilities were provided by Mr. Vasquez as noted

in the written report.

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, Services and Maintenance Activities for the month of April and a listing of upcoming activities for June 2026.

The commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

1. Letter to Jimmy Adrian, Employee of the Month for March 2026.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Valles adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m. to Wednesday, June 10 at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission