MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
February 12, 2025

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Chairperson Veronica Lucio.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Kristie Larison.

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Ted Spaseff

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of January 8, 2024. A motion was made by Commissioner Allen and seconded by Commissioner Kristie Larison to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 8, 2024. Minutes were approved as submitted with a unanimous roll call vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:
Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided information on programming and events. Mr. Bright reported that on Thursday, February 6, staff reported to the Community Promotions Committee on the annual Fest-Of-All event. It was said that as the event has evolved over the previous five years, use of the Lakewood Center Parking lot has produced challenges and limitations. Mr. Bright noted that although the relationship has been highly synergistic, staff identified an opportunity to regain certain controls, increase patron safety and broaden the reach of the event. A proposal was made to the Community Promotions Committee and it was approved to relocate the event, with all existing event elements to Palms Park. The committee approved the change and asked that staff track expenditures and attendance in this first year of the change to ensure an equal or better event would be offered to residents. It was said that staff are excited about this move and the possibilities ahead.

Mr. Bright reminded the commission to RSVP with their secretary for the Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame Awards Banquet scheduled for Monday, February 24 at 6:30 p.m.

Next, he shared that on Wednesday, February 26, the annual State of the City Luncheon would be held in The Ballroom at The Centre at 12 p.m. The commission was asked to RSVP to their secretary.

Mr. Bright announced that on Monday, March 3, at 5:30 p.m. in the Executive Board Room, the Park Development Committee would hear two reports from staff. The first of which will be a recommendation for exclusive catering at The Centre and Monte Verde Park for a five-year agreement. He reminded the commission that at the end of 2024, staff published a Request for Proposals for caterers in an effort to ensure Lakewood residents and clients at The Centre and Monte Verde Park continue to receive top tier catering services at competitive pricing. It was said that the process is ongoing and the recommendation from the findings of the RFP will be presented. He shared that second on the agenda was a proposal for expansion of Rynerson Park on Southern

California Edison land. The commission was asked to RSVP with their secretary as dinner will be served. Mr. Bright reminded the commission that due to the Brown Act, their attendance is welcome, but as commissioners, there will not be an opportunity to weigh in on the reports presented to the committee.

Parks Superintendent Abel Andrade shared with the commission that Phase I of The Nature Trail would be closed on Thursday, February 20 for much needed gopher abatement throughout the trail. Additionally, he shared that crews would access irrigation systems as part of the closure. Next, he shared that after a year of taking over daily operations at the Lakewood Equestrian Center (LEC), city staff have successfully transitioned operations to the new lessee Pilmore Equestrian. He noted that he spent the month of January assisting Pilmore Equestrian with the changeover and is confident in their direction. Mr. Andrade pointed out that the department had faced many challenges in 2024 while overseeing the LEC, however, through the unwavering leadership of department Director Valarie Frost, and dedicated front line staff, the city was able to get the LEC back on track. He thanked ERD crews for their hard work and dedication throughout the past year.

Commissioner Dave Allen mentioned that he goes by Rynerson Park and the Home Run Dog Park every day and shared that it looks amazing and it is always great to see so many residents enjoying it. He shared his appreciation for ERD staff and their hard work in keeping the parks maintained and looking nice.

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 2024, 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 2025.

   Mr. McDade shared with the commission a video of the city's Licensed Pesticide Applicator (LPA) Tyler Percy relocating a bee hive and showcased the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) worn when performing such duties.

Commissioner Anitza Valles shared her appreciation for getting to see the process and procedures used in pest management. She also shared her appreciation for Lisa Fernandez Field and commented that it always looks well-manicured and cared for. Mr. McDade confirmed for Commissioner Valles that the city stopped using gopher bait block fumigants, per California law, and informed her that animals that eat any dead gophers would not be sick from poison within the gopher's body.

Commissioner Kristie Larison thanked the ERD staff in the audience for attending the meeting. Mr. McDade confirmed for Commissioner Larison that gophers were most active during the spring, and that any bees that are relocated were placed in an area off the Nature Trail, where they remain until they move along on their own to a new location. Mr. Andrade added that the LPA accesses the situation and decides whether to eradicate the bees or relocate them.

Commissioner Allen inquired about the Africanized Bee and whether or not they were still an issue in Lakewood. Mr. McDade informed him that they were definitely still an issue as staff has encountered more Africanized Bees than European Bees.

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

2. Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame Program

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 24, 2025, the 43rd 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 9, 2025 to select the 2024 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 2025 Lakewood Youth Hall of Fame event were provided by Mr. Vasquez, as noted in the written report.

The commission was informed that 2024 sponsors included the City of Lakewood, Piazza Family McDonald's Restaurants, Soroptimist International of Lakewood-Long Beach, and the Rotary Club of Lakewood.

Commissioner Allen mentioned the program is always a great show and gets better by the year. He shared his appreciation for getting to see and hear from the many athletes who come from Lakewood.

Chairperson Veronica Lucio shared that it was amazing to see and be a part of the voting process.

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

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 2025.

   The Commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Reeve Davis, Employee of the Month for December 2024.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Lucio adjourned the meeting in honor of Patricia Lewis at 6:45 p.m. to Wednesday, March 12 at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission