



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
June 11, 2025

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Ted Spaseff.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of May 14, 2025. A motion was made by Commissioner Dave Allen and seconded by Commissioner Kristie Larison to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 14, 2025. Minutes were approved as submitted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Director Valarie Frost began her announcements by thanking the commission for their attendance at the Summer Kickoff event at Monte Verde Park on Thursday, June 5. She reminded the commission that the new community services supervisor at The Centre would be introduced at the Lakewood Celebrates event scheduled at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8 in the Weingart Ballroom. Ms. Frost announced that at a recent City Council meeting, the midcycle operating budget was approved and would take effect on July 1. She noted that as part of the budget approval process, adjustment to the current fiscal year's budget was reviewed and approved by the City Council. Ms. Frost reminded the commission that they would receive a full budget update specific to the department at the July RCS Commission meeting. It was said that the annual commission reorganization would also take place at the July meeting. Ms. Frost also asked that the commission think of potential sites they would like to visit for the annual tour scheduled in August.

Next, Ms. Frost reported that the Lakewood Blvd. panel project was progressing, as was the development of the trailhead for the first phase of the Nature Trail at the start of Los Coyotes Diagonal.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that a draft version of the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Long Range Plan was submitted by the contractor, MIG, and it was said that the review committee, along with executive management staff, had been asked to provide feedback by Monday, June 23. She shared that staff intends to finalize all revisions by Friday, July 11. Ms. Frost reported that following the internal review of the draft document, it will be released for a 30-day public review period. It was said that the goal was to present the final version of the Long Range Plan at both a City Council study session, and the regular City Council meeting on Tuesday, August 12. Ms. Frost mentioned her hope that all commissioners can attend said meeting as audience members.

Assistant Director Kevin Bright provided the commission with information on programming and upcoming events. Mr. Bright reported that on Saturday, June 14, the Lakewood Youth Sports (LYS) Opening Day Ceremony would take place at 9:30 a.m., with a parade of 93 baseball, softball and t-ball teams raring to go for the summer season. He mentioned that the pageantry of the parade of teams onto Lisa Fernandez Field at Mayfair Park was always a colorful sight to see. Mr. Bright mentioned that the event would feature a message from Mayor Rogers to get the youth pumped up to play ball, inflatable attractions and a food truck supporting Meals on Wheels of Long Beach. The commission was reminded that parking passes had been emailed to them by their secretary.

Next, Mr. Bright reported that both Mayfair and McCormick pools will open for full summer programming on Saturday, June 14, with youth lessons, Junior Lifeguards, lap swim, water aerobics and daily recreation swim. It was said that there was a great group of mostly returning lifeguarding staff in 2025, and the team was ready to ensure the waters are safe, and keep residents cool throughout the season.

Mr. Bright announced that on Friday, June 20, the 33rd annual Senior Benefits Fair would take place at Weingart Senior Center. He shared that the fair provides opportunities for Lakewood seniors to meet with, ask questions of, and receive on site screenings from health care and benefits providers to ensure access and understanding of key health care issues, unique to our older adults. It was said that the event begins at 10 am and concludes at noon.

Lastly, Mr. Bright shared that the annual Civic Center Block Party would take place on Saturday, June 28. It was said that the event opens at 4 p.m., with stage entertainment getting under way. At 5 p.m., headline act Pop Vinyl will perform. And as always, the On the Block Food Court will offer a variety of delicacies, while the Family Fun Zone will provide kids with a place to play, jump and slide throughout the evening. Mr. Bright shared that the crowning event, the Fireworks Spectacular, would be launched from the Costco parking lot at Lakewood Center at 9:15 p.m. It was said that staff would be busy setting up, maintaining cleanliness and safety, and ensuring Clark Avenue and the Civic Center return to looking pristine and untouched following the event.

Commissioner Spaseff shared that he attended the Summer Kickoff event and mentioned that the Family Feud style game was a lot of fun. He thanked Environmental Resources Division (ERD) staff for their hard work in renovating and maintaining the Home Run Dog Park. He mentioned that it looked great and shared his appreciation for the drought-tolerant landscaping. He also thanked ERD staff for getting Mayfair Park back in shape after the Pan Am Fiesta, and in time for the Lakewood Youth Sports (LYS) Opening Day Ceremony. Lastly, Commissioner Spaseff shared his excitement to see the addition of the Adaptive Recreation Pee wee Sports Program in the Recreation Catalog.

Commissioner Kristie Larison echoed Commissioner Spaseff's sentiments regarding the Summer Kickoff event. She mentioned that it was nice to meet so many new faces throughout the evening. She shared that she was looking forward to the LYS Opening Day Ceremony and was excited to attend the many summer events scheduled to take place. Commissioner Larison also mentioned that Home Run Dog park looked pristine, and was very well-maintained.

REPORTS:

1. Commission FY 25-26 Work Calendar Adoption

Mr. Bright presented the FY 25-26 Work Calendar to the commission. He reminded the commission that these reports would be presented throughout the course of the fiscal year. Mr. Bright noted that at any time the commission may request from staff an opportunity to report on something new.

Mr. Bright recommended that the commission adopt the FY 25-26 Recreation Commission Work Calendar.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ted Spaseff and seconded by Commissioner Dave Allen.

The secretary took roll, and with a unanimous vote the work calendar was adopted.

2. DASH Transit Annual Report

Community Transportation Supervisor Jessica Johnson displayed slides and provided the commission with information regarding the DASH Transit program in 2024. Ms. Johnson reported that as a continued effort to enhance service, DASH recently acquired the My Senior Center RIDES Module, a new dispatching software. She shared that the DASH team was currently customizing the platform to better align with DASH's operational needs. It was said that the RIDES module would streamline scheduling, improve route efficiency, and support data tracking. Ms. Johnson noted that the DASH team was collaborating closely with the software developers to prepare for a full launch, which was said to be expected by late summer 2025.

Ms. Johnson informed the commission that over the past year, DASH saw an increase in registered clients, indicating continued interest in the program. She noted, however, that overall ridership had declined during the same period, highlighting an opportunity to better connect residents with available services. In response, it was said that a comprehensive marketing plan was developed to re-engage current clients and attract new riders. Key strategies were said to include the launch of a DASH Riders' Guide, which outlines service information and policies in alignment with industry standards, and the addition of the transit agency's contact number on all DASH vehicles for greater visibility. The commission was informed that a promotional flyer highlighting DASH services and recent service expansion would be distributed to residents, and that DASH staff would be present at several city-wide special events and visit senior living facilities to raise awareness and promote the program directly to the public.

Ms. Johnson shared DASH's newly expanded service offerings as noted in the written report.

Lastly, Ms. Johnson provided information regarding the DASH services for recreation programs, events and travel trips as noted in the written report.

Commissioner Spaseff thanked Ms. Johnson, noting that the program had greatly improved under her leadership. He mentioned that he was excited to see the new marketing plan, and suggested increasing the program's visibility to help bring awareness its many offerings.

Ms. Johnson informed Vice Chairperson Anitza Valles that she would look into adding a survey into the marketing plan to determine how patrons of the DASH Transit Program initially heard of the program. Ms. Johnson explained to Vice Chairperson Valles that there was not an ideal client for the DASH Transit Program, just a requirement that they are 60 years of age or older. Vice Chairperson Valles suggested possibly adding night rides, field trips to increase ridership for existing clients. Ms. Johnson explained that contracted coach buses must be used for travel trips.

Ms. Johnson explained to Commissioner Larison that mobility aids were any type of mobility device other than a wheelchair. Commissioner Larison commented on what a great service DASH provides to the community, and thanked staff for getting seniors out of their homes and connecting them to the community. She mentioned possibly surveying patrons to see what kind of places they'd like to visit. Ms. Johnson informed Commissioner Larison that DASH does not provide rides to Summer Concerts in the Park as that takes place outside of current operation hours. Ms. Johnson also confirmed for Commissioner Larison that the reason for the decrease in ridership for the Adaptive Recreation Program was due to a smaller program size.

Commissioner Dave Allen mentioned that he was impressed at the efficiency of the DASH Transit Program. Ms. Johnson informed Commissioner Allen that there were not currently plans to expand the program's boundaries for service, noting that special trips are only made to get to medical facilities outside of the boundary.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that the program must follow specific guidelines as it is fully funded by Prop C. She shared that a transit guide goes out to residents and lists all transit programs that are available in Lakewood for residents to use.

The commission received and filed the annual report on DASH Transit.

3. Landscape and Turf Maintenance Annual Report

Environmental Resources Division Supervisor Mike McDade displayed slides and provided the commission with information regarding landscape and turf maintenance activities in 2024. Mr. McDade reported that in the last year ERD staff has been busy completing numerous projects throughout the city. Landscape projects were said to include the installation of a dry creek bed, the regrading of a boulder bed, and the renovation of 5 flowerbeds at the West San Gabriel Nature Trail Phase I; 13,000 square feet of turf renovation at parks; the removal and replacement of outdated vegetation and repair of irrigation systems at the Burns Community Center; and the construction of a protective landscape buffer at the intersection of Downey Avenue and Del Amo Blvd. Turf

Maintenance projects in 2024 were said to include key renovations throughout the Civic Center Complex, Mayfair Park fields, and Home Run Dog Park. Details regarding said projects were provided by Mr. McDade as noted in the written report.

In addition, Mr. McDade noted that nine new backflow prevention devices and 14 new irrigation valves, each secured with vandal-resistant enclosures.

Mr. McDade informed the commission that a significant irrigation enhancement was completed along the medians on Carson Street, west of Paramount Boulevard. Following coordination with Lakewood's Water Resources Department, potable water—previously disconnected due to the integration of Long Beach's recycled water system—was restored. Details were provided as noted in the written report.

Mr. McDade shared that ERD staff were currently working on Lakewood Boulevard between Arbor Road and Del Amo Boulevard where trees, boulders and a dry creek have already been installed. Additionally, it was said that staff was working on creating a new entrance into Phase I of The Nature Trail at Los Coyotes Diagonal.

Mr. McDade introduced ERD Lead Worker Edward Salas, who was in the audience, to the commission. Lastly, Mr. McDade presented to the commission a City of Lakewood iron branding plate, used on backflow devices to help prevent theft, and tree pressure-reducing adapter.

Commissioner Allen gave kudos to Mr. McDade and ERD staff for keeping the city looking fantastic.

Commissioner Spaseff reminded the commission of how ERD crews completed all of the landscaping of the Burns Community Center in-house, saving the city over \$300,000. He thanked Mr. McDade and staff for all of their hard work and efforts.

Commissioner Larison commented that all city facilities look great all of the time, and mentioned that the ERD crews represent Lakewood well.

The commission received and filed the annual report on Landscape and Turf Maintenance.

4. Commission Newsletter No. 12

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

The commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Alyssa Mejia, Employee of the Month for April 2025.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Lucio adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m. to Wednesday, July 9 at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission