MAY 21, 2026
6:00 P.M. – OFFICIAL MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER by Chair Brown at 6:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE by Commissioner Komala.

ROLL CALL

☒ = Present ☐ = Absent

Commissioners	City Staff
☐ Cristian Garcia Arcos	☒ Brian Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director
☒ Jake Husen	☒ Monique Villasenor, Recreation Manager
☒ Jason Komala	☒ Robert Ryan, Maintenance Services Manager
☒ Brandine Leger	☒ Anna Acosta-Reyes, Finance Manager
☒ Elizabeth Dorn Parker	☒ Act. Finance Officer, Jasmine Vega
☒ Shayanne Wright, Vice Chair	☒ Laura Fautua, Executive Assistant
☒ Kelly Brown, Chair	☒ Kathia Vitier, Recreation Specialist

SPECIAL ITEMS:

1. **PARKS AND RECREATION PROPOSED USER FEE INCREASES**
Ms. Anna Acosta-Reyes, Finance Manager, Consultant; Clear Source Financial Consulting, Terry Madsen, presented.

Chair Brown thanked staff for the presentation and inquired when the fees were last evaluated and last adjusted. She sought clarification on the timeline of prior fee reviews and updates, noting that the Commission had not previously reviewed the fees. She also asked about the public outreach process, whether potentially impacted user groups were consulted, and whether proposed fees, including the new tournament rental fee, would affect partners such as Costa Mesa United.

Ms. Villasenor said it wouldn't impact probably 90% of those attendees. Most of those attendees are group one users, which have no fees associated with their use.

Chair Brown requested additional information regarding the consultant's fee study methodology, including comparative analysis with neighboring cities and how Costa Mesa's fees compare to similar jurisdictions. She stated that access to benchmarking data and comparable city fee information would help support informed decision-making and provide greater confidence in the proposed fee adjustments. She also expressed interest in understanding how the City's remaining fees compare to those of neighboring agencies and noted that broader comparative analysis would be valuable when evaluating future fee recommendations.

Ms. Villasenor explained that the fee recommendations were developed in coordination with the Parks and Community Services Department and focused on fees that would have minimal impact on programming and core user groups. Staff noted that the review prioritized facility rentals and tournament-related uses that place significant demand on City facilities while avoiding increases to program participation fees.

Vice Chair Wright expressed support for maintaining affordable youth, sports, and senior programming while exploring fee increases for facility rentals, park rentals, deposits, and commercial uses. He noted that a review of CPI increases and comparable city fees suggested there may be room for additional adjustments and stated support for incremental fee increases to improve cost recovery and reduce pressure on the General Fund. He also suggested recovering staff costs through user fees where applicable and inquired why community garden, golf course, and tennis center fees were not included in the review. He further expressed interest in providing future opportunities for public input regarding those fees.

Mr. Gruner explained that golf course fee adjustments are governed by the operating agreement, with proposed fee increases submitted by the operator for administrative review and approval by the City Manager, and therefore do not typically return to the City Council for consideration.

Vice Chair Wright expressed support for proactively engaging stakeholders regarding fees associated with contracted facilities and programs. He stated that he generally supported subsidizing youth, senior, and sports programming while considering higher fees for commercial uses, facility rentals, deposits, and large events. He noted that additional usage and participation data would be helpful in evaluating the financial impact of proposed fee increases and cost recovery projections.

Commissioner Leger expressed concern about increasing fees due to the financial challenges facing many residents and emphasized the importance of maintaining affordability. She inquired about park permit enforcement, permit compliance, penalties for unauthorized events, and fees associated with gas, electrical, and administrative services. She also requested fee comparisons with cities she considered more comparable to Costa Mesa.

Chair Brown observed that Commissioners appeared to share a desire for additional data and analysis before making recommendations and then opened the item for public comment.

Commissioner Komala thanked staff for the presentation and stated that the information provided addressed many of his questions. He noted the balance between minimizing impacts on residents and identifying opportunities for additional revenue to support City services and projects. He requested clarification regarding the calculation of senior special event fees and asked for information on the frequency of park deposit forfeitures following events.

Commissioner Dorn Parker emphasized the importance of cost recovery in supporting equitable access, facility maintenance, programming, and future park investments. She supported reviewing fee adjustments, particularly for non-resident users, commercial operators, and higher-level sports organizations, while maintaining affordability for resident youth and community programs. She requested additional comparative data from neighboring cities and suggested exploring automatic periodic fee adjustments tied to inflation or cost-of-living increases.

<u>Public Comment:</u>
Jay Humphrey: Expressed support for cost recovery principles and urged the

Commission to consider the costs associated with the Fairview Park fly field, including relocation, maintenance, environmental compliance, and impacts from non-resident users. He suggested that fly field users should contribute toward the costs associated with the activity.

Cynthia McDonald: Raised concerns regarding the omission of fly field operating costs from the fee discussion and stated that permit fees were not currently being collected. She asserted that the City subsidizes the activity and recommended evaluating and collecting fees sufficient to recover operational, capital, environmental compliance, and oversight costs.

Commissioner Leger supported exploring increased fees for non-residents rather than Costa Mesa residents and inquired whether fly field permit fees were currently being collected.

Mr. Gruner confirmed that fly field permit fees were not currently being collected and explained that use of the facility is governed through an agreement with the Harbor Soaring Society, which provides insurance coverage for authorized users.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos requested information regarding the costs associated with relocating the fly field and emphasized the importance of considering potential environmental impacts and protected wildlife. He supported additional public engagement, expanded data analysis, cost recovery measures, and evaluating increased fees for non-residents. He also inquired about the last time a significant fee increase had been implemented.

Commissioner Dorn Parker emphasized protecting affordable recreation opportunities for resident youth and seniors while evaluating cost recovery opportunities from non-residents, commercial users, and higher-level sports organizations. She encouraged reviewing actual program costs, including transportation expenses for senior programs, and supported a balanced approach that preserves access while increasing revenue where appropriate.

Vice Chair Wright stated that increased cost recovery could help fund future park improvements and community investments. He requested additional comparative, usage, and revenue data, as well as multiple fee adjustment scenarios for consideration, including options focused on non-resident and commercial users. He also expressed interest in understanding long-term revenue projections and implementation strategies.

Chair Brown requested additional information, including usage data, comparative city fee analyses, public input, and alternative fee structure options before making a recommendation. She expressed concern about potential impacts on seniors and suggested revisiting the item at a future meeting with additional data to support an informed recommendation to the City Council. She then made a motion to continue the item and request the additional information.

Commissioner Dorn Parker asked when the proposed fee adjustments were anticipated to be presented to the City Council and stated that she could not support forwarding the proposal as presented without additional supporting information and analysis.

Chair Brown restated her motion to continue the item and not approve the fee adjustments as presented. She requested that the item return at the next Commission meeting with additional data and analysis to assist the Commission in developing informed recommendations for the City Council's budget deliberations.

Commissioner Dorn Parker asked whether portions of the proposed fee adjustments, particularly resident-related fees, could move forward while additional analysis was conducted on other fee categories. She noted support for reasonable CPI-based adjustments and expressed interest in advancing fee changes that appeared to have general consensus while continuing to evaluate areas requiring further review.

Chair Brown stated that the Commission lacked sufficient information regarding usage trends, comparative city fee data, and other supporting analyses to approve the proposal. She reiterated that additional data was necessary before making a recommendation.

Commissioner Dorn Parker clarified that she was not making a substitute motion but expressed a preference for moving forward with resident fee adjustments while conducting additional analysis on other fee categories. She emphasized support for reasonable CPI-based increases and the need to continue reviewing more complex fee structures.

Vice Chair Wright stated that he understood the motion as a request for staff to return with additional data and multiple fee adjustment scenarios rather than a rejection of the proposal. He requested information regarding revenue impacts, usage levels, and alternative fee structures to support future decision-making.

Chair Brown clarified that her motion was to continue the item and direct staff to return at the next meeting with additional usage data, comparative analyses, and alternative fee adjustment options. She stated that the proposal was not being approved at the current meeting but was being continued for further review and discussion.

Commissioner Dorn Parker asked whether the requested information could realistically be provided by the next meeting and stated that obtaining additional data would help inform the Commission’s review.

Vice Chair Wright supported returning the item as soon as practicable, including the possibility of a special meeting if necessary. He emphasized that the Commission had an opportunity to provide meaningful input while the matter was actively being considered and encouraged staff to provide as much additional information as feasible.

Commissioner Komala asked whether the Commission could approve the current proposal and later revisit individual fee categories separately for further review and adjustment.

Commissioner Leger stated that the Commission’s detailed review was intended to strengthen the recommendation and supported receiving whatever additional information could be provided at the next meeting. She also expressed interest in discussing resident-related fees separately at a future meeting.

Chair Brown clarified that a motion and second were on the floor to continue the item and return it at the next meeting with additional supporting data to the extent practicable.

MOTION: To move item to next commission meeting.
MOVED/SECOND: Commissioner Brown / Commissioner Wright
The motion carried by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Commissioner Dorn Parker, Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Komala, Commissioner Leger, Vice Chair Wright, Chair Brown
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Husen
Motion Carried: 6 – 0

Chair Brown called for a recess to begin at 7:57 PM. Meeting was called back to order at 8:09 PM.

2. DONATION OF A MEMORIAL BENCH AND PLAQUE AT TEWINKLE PARK
Mr. Robert Ryan, Public Works Maintenance Services Manager presented.

<u>Public Comment:</u> None.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos thanked staff for the information provided and expressed appreciation that the Commission's prior comments had been considered. He stated that he would research comparable memorial bench programs in other cities and suggested incorporating pollinator-friendly landscaping near the bench location. He also recommended informing the donor family if related landscaping improvements were implemented as a result of their contribution.

Commissioner Leger asked how long memorial benches remain in place and whether the City could eventually run out of locations for future bench donations. She noted that the Commission may need to consider alternative memorial donation options in the future.

Chair Brown commented on the historical significance of the individual being honored and suggested highlighting notable Costa Mesa residents through social media and other educational opportunities. She then called for a motion on the proposed bench donation.

MOTION: To accept the donation of the memorial bench and plaque.
MOVED/SECOND: Commissioner Dorn Parker / Commissioner Garcia Arcos
The motion carried by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Commissioner Dorn Parker, Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Komala, Commissioner Leger, Vice Chair Wright, Chair Brown
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Husen
Motion Carried: 6 – 0

Chair Brown commented that Mr. Baker had an interesting history and expressed interest in Costa Mesa's bluegrass music heritage.

Commissioner Dorn Parker supported exploring opportunities to highlight the stories of notable Costa Mesa residents through features such as images, music, and memorial benches to enhance public engagement and historical awareness.

3. DONATION OF A MEMORIAL TREE, BENCH AND PLAQUE AT ESTANCIA PARK
Mr. Robert Ryan, Public Works Maintenance Services Manager presented.

Public Comment: None.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos requested that the proposed Jacaranda tree be reviewed by a certified arborist prior to installation to ensure it has a healthy structure and long-term viability. He expressed support for establishing standards that would allow the City to decline donated trees that may present future maintenance or safety concerns.

Commissioner Leger expressed support for the memorial tree and bench proposal and inquired whether a future memorial plaque for another family member could be added to the same bench or if a separate bench and plaque would be required.

MOTION: To approve the donation tree, bench, and plaque.
MOVED/SECOND: Commissioner Dorn Parker / Commissioner Komala
The motion carried by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Commissioner Dorn Parker, Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Komala, Commissioner Leger, Vice Chair Wright, Chair Brown
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Husen
Motion Carried: 6 – 0

4. PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT
Mr. Brian Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director presented.

Chair Brown explained that the document was intentionally presented in draft form to allow Commissioners to provide feedback before it is converted into a final presentation. She noted that the outline was developed from prior Commission discussions and was intended to capture the Commission’s priorities and goals for the coming year. She encouraged Commissioners to provide additional feedback and outlined a process for incorporating comments before the final presentation is prepared.

Commissioner Komala commended the Chair and Vice Chair for the draft presentation, stating that it accurately reflected prior Commission discussions and effectively highlighted the Commission’s key priorities and focus areas.

Chair Brown stated that the goal was to provide City Council with a concise and focused presentation that balanced important information without becoming overly detailed.

Commissioner Dorn Parker recommended adding language regarding the future relocation of Concerts in the Park from Fairview Park and stated that, otherwise, she found the draft presentation to be well prepared.

Chair Brown confirmed that Commissioners would have an additional opportunity to provide feedback and noted that comments submitted within the next week could be incorporated into the revised draft for Commission review.

Staff: there's a motion to approve for the next meeting, for like a final review.

Vice Chair Wright stated that the final presentation did not require Commission approval in its finished format and expressed confidence that the Chair, Vice Chair, and staff would accurately represent the Commission's direction in the final presentation.

Commissioner Dorn Parker amended her motion to approve the draft content as presented, allow for additional Commissioner feedback, and return the item for final review. She also expressed support for allowing the Chair, Vice Chair, and staff discretion in developing the final presentation format.

MOTION: To move this item to the next meeting.
MOVED/SECOND: Commissioner Dorn Parker / Chair Brown
The motion carried by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Commissioner Dorn Parker, Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Komala, Commissioner Leger, Vice Chair Wright, Chair Brown
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Husen
Motion Carried: 6 – 0

Public Comment: None.

5. NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN LOCATION STUDY
Mr. Brian Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director presented.

Commissioner Dorn Parker withdrew her interest in serving on the Community Garden Evaluation Team.

Chair Brown asked staff to explain the distinction between an evaluation team and a subcommittee and sought clarification regarding the scope of work for the Community Garden Evaluation Team. She noted that the Commission had discussed a broad range of topics, including fee structures, comparative analysis, user feedback, and potential locations, and asked whether the evaluation team would be limited to location analysis or could address additional community garden issues.

Commissioner Dorn Parker stated that collecting data, surveying current gardeners and waitlisted individuals, and addressing information gaps were among the objectives she envisioned for the evaluation team.

Chair Brown asked whether the evaluation team could utilize a hybrid approach that included both staff-supported meetings and independent research assignments, similar to the process used by the Arts Commission.

Ms. Villaseñor explained that the evaluation team would work collaboratively with staff throughout the process, similar to a recent Arts Commission working group. She stated that staff would provide support, answer questions, and assist with research and analysis as the team advanced its work.

Commissioner Leger asked whether the evaluation team could consist of more than three Commissioners if participation were divided into separate groups, given that it was being characterized as an evaluation team rather than an ad hoc committee

Chair Brown proposed polling Commissioners regarding their interest in serving on the evaluation team and providing an opportunity for Commissioners to reconsider or express interest in participating. She then began confirming interest from individual Commissioners.

The following commissioners who confirmed interest to be a part of the evaluation team were Commission Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Leger, and Commission Komala. Chair Brown and Vice Chair Wright opted out.

Commissioner Komala proposed agendizing the item for a future meeting to allow the Commission to conduct an additional brainstorming discussion before establishing and initiating the Community Garden Evaluation Team.

Commissioner Leger asked whether communications between Commissioners outside of a public meeting regarding topics for the evaluation team would constitute a Brown Act violation.

Ms. Villaseñor confirmed that such communications could violate the Brown Act and stated that any additional discussion or direction from Commissioners should occur at a properly noticed public meeting..

Commissioner Dorn Parker suggested utilizing QR codes as a tool to increase community engagement and gather public input related to community garden discussions.

<u>Public Comment:</u> None

MOTION: To approve an evaluation team that includes Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Ledger, and Commissioner Kamala.
MOVED/SECOND: Chair Brown / Commissioner Dorn Parker
The motion carried by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Commissioner Dorn Parker, Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Komala, Commissioner Leger, Vice Chair Wright, Chair Brown
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Husen
Motion Carried: 6 – 0

ADJOURNMENT by Chair Brown at 8:48PM.