

NOVEMBER 13, 2025
6:00 P.M. – UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE by Commissioner Dorn Parker.

ROLL CALL

☒ = Present ☐ = Absent

Commissioners

- ☒ Cristian Garcia Arcos
- ☒ Jake Husen
- ☒ Jason Komala
- ☒ Brandine Leger
- ☒ Elizabeth Dorn Parker
- ☒ Shyanne Wright, Vice Chair
- ☒ Kelly Brown, Chair

City Staff

- ☒ Brian Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director
- ☒ Monique Villasenor, Recreation Manager
- ☒ Raja Sethuraman, Public Works Director
- ☒ Robert Ryan, Maintenance Services Manager
- ☒ Anna Partida, Administrative Assistant

PUBLIC COMMENTS

[Correspondence received.](#)

Ralph Taboada: Longtime resident, commended the Commission on its values document, the five-year parks forecast frequently changes without clear transparency or explanation, and urged the Commission to actively collaborate with staff in developing, prioritizing, and recommending park capital projects.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Commissioner Husen: None.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos: Thanked City staff for supporting a six-week youth financial literacy program, noting strong community participation, helpful logistical support, and expressing appreciation for the collaboration as a foundation for future programming.

Commissioner Dorn Parker: Highlighted the upcoming Brentwood Park groundbreaking and requested staff coordination with community leaders. Also raised safety concerns about suspicious, unmarked vehicles photographing and videotaping park users, urging the public to report incidents through 311 App.

Commissioner Komala: Expressed gratitude for the strong community turnout and engagement at the Fairview Park Master Plan Update item, thanked City Council, the Fairview Park Steering Committee, and staff for their work, and shared reminders about upcoming community bike workshops and monthly Fairview Park cleanup events.

Commissioner Leger: Noted that it was National Kindness Day and encouraged the community to understand the difference between being kind and being nice, emphasizing the importance of teaching true kindness to future generations.

Vice Chair Wright: Highlighted the Fairview Park item for its unprecedented level of public engagement, commended the Commission for living up to its stated values, and expressed appreciation for the substantive staff presentations and anticipation for the upcoming City Council discussion.

Chair Brown: Echoed appreciation for the strong public participation at the previous meeting, highlighted the usefulness of staff's matrix for advancing the master plan discussion, shared insights from a recent Costa Mesa Police Department ride-along, and suggested future discussions on police data and reporting.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. **Minutes – October 9, 2025 PACS Draft Minutes**
October 30, 2025 PACS Draft Minutes
2. **Department Report – October 2025**

Chair Brown thanked city staff for making updates to the minutes.

Public Comment: None.

MOTION: To approve consent calendar items

MOVED/SECOND: Commissioner Dorn Parker / Commissioner Leger

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioner Dorn Parker, Commissioner Husen, Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Komala, Commissioner Leger, Vice Chair Wright, Chair Brown

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried: 7 – 0

MONTHLY REPORTS

1. **PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

Mr. Brian Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director presented.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos thanked staff for the presentation, supported the affordability and community-focused programming. Encouraged expanding Police Department–youth sports interactions, explored offering CPR and safety training, and inquired about the location of the AED at City Hall.

Chair Brown expressed enthusiasm for the high demand for senior events and asked how interest compares to current capacity and what potential program expansion could look like.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **DONATION OF A TREE, BENCH AND MEMORIAL PLAQUE AT CANYON PARK**
Mr. Robert Ryan, Maintenance Services Manager presented.

Public Comment:

Danielle Sanford: Stated that she requested approval to donate a memorial bench and plaque, along with a tree, at Canyon Park in memory of her brother, Jacob Sandifer, noting the park's deep personal significance to her family and expressing appreciation for staff assistance in selecting the location.

Vice Chair Wright expressed appreciation for the memorial bench proposal, noting it was a meaningful way to honor Mr. Sandifer and that the park location and setting made it a fitting and thoughtful tribute.

Chair Brown thanked the family for sharing something so personal, emphasized the significance of the memorial, and expressed appreciation for being able to engage on a topic meaningful to both the family and the Commission.

MOTION: To ensure intentional tree care over the next three years by providing consistent watering as needed, requiring a certified arborist to properly plant the tree, and if a defective tree be returned and replaced with the same species.

MOVED/SECOND: Commissioner Garcia Arcos/ Commissioner Dorn Parker

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioner Dorn Parker, Commissioner Husen, Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Komala, Commissioner Leger, Vice Chair Wright, Chair Brown

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried: 7 – 0

2. DONATION OF A MEMORIAL BENCH AND PLAQUE AT BRENTWOOD PARK

Mr. Robert Ryan, Maintenance Services Manager presented.

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Garcia Arcos asked whether the existing staked tree behind the proposed bench was still viable or stressed and inquired on memorial location/view.

Vice Chair Wright sought clarification on the existing dirt walkway and bench orientation, recalling prior support for benches along that path, and questioned whether the bench could be positioned so it naturally faced pedestrians using the walkway.

MOTION: To approve staff recommendation that the Parks and Community Services Commission accept the donation of a memorial bench and plaque to be installed in Brentwood Park in memory of Brandon Beach.

MOVED/SECOND: Commissioner Leger / Commissioner Husen

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioner Dorn Parker, Commissioner Husen, Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Komala, Commissioner Leger, Vice Chair Wright, Chair Brown

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried: 7 – 0

3. REVIEW OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA URBAN CANOPY AND LAND ASSESSMENT

Mr. Robert Ryan, Maintenance Services Manager presented.

Public Comment:

Eric: Thanked the City and Commissioner Garcia Arcos for supporting youth programming in District Four, he cited research on the civic, health, and safety benefits of urban trees and urged the City to pilot a green equity program in District Four by prioritizing tree planting in rights-of-way and reclassifying limited impervious land using grant funding and community partnerships.

David Martinez: Found the canopy assessment informative, he recommended adding detailed, publicly accessible maps showing existing canopy and potential planting areas to better evaluate tree needs at specific sites and future developments.

Chair Brown encouraged commissioners to frame their questions and recommendations through the lens of the Commission's values document, noting this as an opportunity to reflect on the document's practical use.

Commissioner Leger advocated for closer collaboration with the school district to prioritize tree planting over shade structures, suggested using underutilized school grounds for trees, and proposed involving students and families in community planting efforts.

Commissioner Komala asked clarifying questions about trees rated in poor condition, whether those conditions, preventions, and partnerships with private properties to meet canopy goals.

Commissioner Dorn Parker called for courageous, intentional planning around tree species selection, wildfire risk, and water use, and proposed strategic collaborations with schools, water providers, private property owners, and a reevaluation of golf course land to significantly expand canopy and green space.

Commissioner Husen thanked staff for the presentation and inquired whether the city had previously established canopy goals, how the city planned to increase canopy from current levels, and what past or existing tree-planting programs could inform future efforts.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos supported investing in more detailed canopy mapping, asked about Arbor Day and tree-planting seasons, and spoke about the importance of mulching to improve tree survival.

Vice Chair Wright praised the canopy assessment as a strong data foundation and encouraged translating it into a strategic, CIP-driven approach, with enhanced and user-friendly maps focused on major corridors, pedestrian opportunity zones, and high-need neighborhoods to guide equitable investment and future Council action.

Chair Brown proposed consolidating commissioner suggestions into recommendations for Council, raised questions about equity and public-health outcomes related to tree canopy distribution, highlighted concerns about low canopy coverage at public schools, and emphasized prioritizing high-density, underserved districts while better understanding how large park areas affect district-level canopy data. Also inquired how District Five's tree canopy statistics would change if Fairview Park were excluded, expressed interest in concepts such as urban forest bathing, and emphasized the need to align mapping, outreach, and equity-focused priorities into clear, actionable recommendations.

Commissioner Leger stressed the importance of budgeting and suggested partnerships with local businesses to "adopt a tree," highlighted health and safety benefits of trees, including air quality and traffic safety, and urged evaluation of where trees have been removed without replacement.

Vice Chair Wright proposed leveraging existing interagency liaison meetings to advance collaboration with schools and water districts, and emphasized prioritizing low-canopy, low-opportunity areas through equity-driven strategies that may require greater creativity and investment. Emphasized the Commission's local knowledge of neighborhoods and recommended formally supporting a dedicated maintenance plan and budget to preserve and sustain the existing assessment.

Commissioner Dorn Parker cited research demonstrating health benefits of green space, highlighted the need to address tree loss on private property through incentive-based programs, and advocated for collaborations with private owners and water districts to reimagine and expand tree planting in currently unsuitable areas.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos questioned how water-resistant land could be reclassified to support tree planting, supported developing detailed maps to identify underserved areas, and recommended launching a pilot program in high-need districts while pursuing available grants and external resources to expand canopy coverage.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos emphasized the success of community forestry efforts in District Four, highlighting high tree survival rates due to resident stewardship, and urged greater attention to mulching—particularly in underserved areas—while encouraging replication of successful tree and fruit tree planting models citywide.

Item was received and filed.

ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER MEMBER & STAFF COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT by Chair Brown at 8:13 PM.