

FEBRUARY 26, 2026
6:00 P.M. – UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER by Chair Brown at 6:01 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE by Commissioner Leger.

ROLL CALL

= Present = Absent

Commissioners

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

City Staff

- Brian Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director
- Monique Villasenor, Recreation Manager
- Robert Ryan, Maintenance Services Manager
- Laura Fautua, Executive Assistant
- Kathia Vitier, Recreation Specialist

*Commissioner Garcia entered at 6:03 PM during public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Commissioner Wright: Raised safety concerns at Lions Park to deter disruptive behavior near/in the library and lawn area, requested increased ranger or security presence, and expressed optimism about improvements to the park with the upcoming café operation.

Chair Brown: Proposed exploring a community “Picnic Day” event at Lions Park to encourage positive community use of the park and bring residents together in a simple, low-resource gathering.

Commissioner Dorn Parker: Supported the idea of a community picnic event and noted that similar neighborhood picnic days had previously been held in coordination with Newport-Mesa schools to encourage local community engagement.

SPECIAL ITEM:

1. CITYWIDE PARK AND PLAYGROUND ASSESSMENT

Mr. Robert Ryan, Maintenance Services Manager presented.

Commissioner Leger asked staff to repeat the list of parks identified for prioritization.

Commissioner Komala asked whether smaller issues identified at Harper Park could be addressed through maintenance and whether security lighting improvements at parks such as Moon Park or Harper Park could be incorporated into broader park security lighting projects.

Commissioner Dorn-Parker asked how park assessment items such as playgrounds, hardscape, fencing, and security features were categorized within the CIP and whether separating those elements would help the Commission evaluate park priorities more effectively.

Chair Brown asked process questions regarding the timing and cost of the park assessment, the development of the evaluation matrix, and how to better understand park needs across districts and related City planning documents.

Public Comment:

Debbie Marsteller: Resident living across from Moon Park, supported improving the park while urging the City to preserve its historic moon feature and avoid changes such as excessive lighting that could alter its character.

Commenter 2: Expressed disappointment with the condition of many City parks, questioned how development impacts were being addressed, and urged the City to require developers to provide additional park amenities or improvements.

Ralph Taboada: Urged the Commission not to simply receive and file the park assessment and instead recommended evaluating it alongside the Commission's adopted values and applicable General Plan policies before making recommendations.

Jason: State Streets resident advocated the Commission to prioritize Moon Park for renovation, citing deteriorated equipment, unsafe design, lack of barriers from the adjacent bike trail, and longstanding neighborhood need.

Jen Tanaka: East side resident, stated that the assessment highlighted a broader systemic need for a meaningful open space planning and funding strategy and urged the Commission to elevate the issue to the City Council.

Sonia Triana: Resident near Moon Park, stated that Moon Park has been neglected for many years and urged the City to address longstanding safety and maintenance concerns.

Public Commenter 7: Advocated for Moon Park improvements, citing safety concerns related to the adjacent bike trail, obstructed visibility between playground areas, and lack of adequate seating and amenities.

Public Commenter 8: Mesa Verde resident urged the City to prioritize Moon Park improvements, stating that deteriorated conditions, obstructed sight lines, lack of fencing, and inadequate maintenance created safety concerns for families.

Carla Stagman: State Streets resident, supported prioritizing Moon Park improvements so that neighborhood families could have a safer and more welcoming local park experience.

Public Commenter 10: Moon Park's blocked sight lines, lack of barriers from the bike trail, outdated equipment, and strong neighborhood support warranted prioritization for safety-focused redesign and reinvestment.

Garrett Fulbright: State Streets resident and parent, urged the Commission to prioritize Moon Park, stating that unsafe conditions and ongoing neighborhood concerns had made the park unsuitable for his family's use.

Steve: Resident near Moon Park, suggested installing speed bumps along the adjacent bike path to slow cyclists and improve safety near the park.

Public Commenter 13: Lives near Moon Park raised concerns about standing water, poor drainage, pests, and a broken drinking fountain, and urged the City to address those maintenance issues as part of future park improvements.

Lori: Nearby resident, supported prioritizing Moon Park and expressed particular interest in adding lighting to improve visibility and safety in the area.

Betsy Densmoore: Spoke about the assessment demonstrating significant park improvement needs and urged the City to give greater consideration to hardscape, trail safety, and the impacts of electric bikes in open spaces.

Laurens: State Streets resident, described safety and cleanliness concerns at Moon Park, including drug-related debris and impacts on pets and children, and urged the City to take those issues seriously.

Ryan Snyder: State Streets resident, acknowledged recent improvements at other Costa Mesa parks while urging the City to prioritize Moon Park for safety, security, and family use sooner than currently projected.

Christina: Resident near Moon Park, shared that safety concerns and outdated equipment had discouraged regular use of the park and urged the City to invest in improvements that better served families with young children.

Vice Chair Wright viewed the assessment as a factual baseline rather than a formal action plan, and said her priorities for future recommendations would focus on park equity, proximity to park-deficient areas, neighborhood demographics, and targeted safety and maintenance improvements.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos thanked the public for sharing their park experiences, asked about the process for installing safety features such as speed bumps near Moon Park, and raised questions about how a values-based assessment, open space planning, tree canopy priorities, and community engagement could inform future park improvements.

Commissioner Leger suggested exploring County partnership or outside funding for Moon Park safety improvements, supported preserving the moon structure while reconsidering playground layout, encouraged residents to report park issues to the appropriate agencies, and reiterated support for using QR codes and park ranger response tools to address concerns more quickly.

Commissioner Komala asked whether irrigation and lighting issues would be further assessed, suggested relying on existing open space planning standards when possible, and asked whether smaller safety-related issues identified in the report could be addressed separately from larger CIP projects.

Commissioner Dorn-Parker thanked the public for their input, emphasized that the park assessment represented an important first step in gathering data to guide future priorities, and recommended developing a triage approach to address immediate safety issues while considering funding sources, developer fees, and long-term planning.

Chair Brown thanked staff for the assessment effort, noted concerns about how the evaluation matrix and data aligned with the Commission's values and other planning efforts, and moved to continue the item to the next meeting to allow additional time for review and recommendations.

Commissioner Leger encouraged commissioners to visit the C-rated parks before the next meeting and observe conditions at different times of day to better inform future recommendations.

Vice Chair Wright supported visiting C-rated parks for further evaluation and stated that she would be focusing on parks such as Harper, Heller, Marina View, Smallwood, Wilson, Bark Park and Gisler Park when preparing her CIP recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT by Chair Brown at 8:02 PM.