

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

**CALL TO ORDER** by Chair Brown at 6:00pm.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** by Commissioner Husen.

**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
- Raja Sethuraman, Public Works Director
- Robert Ryan, Public Works Maintenance Manager
- Laura Fautua, Executive Assistant
- Kathia Viteri, Office Specialist II

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** – [Correspondence received.](#)

Scott Glabb: Reflected on his service on the Parks and Community Services Commission. Thanked staff and fellow commissioners, emphasizing his appreciation for their work and the opportunity to serve. Shared a personal incident where he was nearly attacked by two unleashed pit bulls while walking his dog, highlighting the importance of leash regulations.

Cynthia McDonald (Zoom): Costa Mesa resident advocated for park update to help enhance the park's functionality, such as restroom and drinking fountain installation and safety updates for community use.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

**Commissioner Dorn Parker:** Spoke about the increasing problem of dogs off-leash, called for strategic approach to addressing the concern. Highlighted recent park improvement projects like pickleball courts, praising the focus on local residents' needs and priorities.

**Commissioner Komala:** Expressed gratitude for the accessibility of staff and commission members, highlighting their support in addressing community concerns. Spoke about his recent community interactions and exploration of parks and the use of the 311 to report any concerns.

**Commissioner Leger:** Shared her observations from visiting parks in District 2. Shared experience of unleashed dog encounters and dog training business operating with some dogs off-leash, but also praised the parks for their cleanliness, expressing appreciation for the staff's maintenance efforts.

**Commissioner Husen:** Expressed gratitude to a colleague for directing him to the Open Space Master Plan. Shared his efforts to visit various parks with his sons to gather insight about park equipment. Also expressed excitement about upcoming projects like Ketchum

Libolt Park, which he believed needed improvement, and the skate park expansion, drawing on his personal skateboarding background. Concluded by thanking community members for their regular participation and comments, finding their involvement inspiring and helpful in his role as a commissioner.

**Commissioner Garcia Arcos:** Announced an upcoming community event. Shared his excitement about partnering with OC Resilience and discussed meeting with Mr. Gruner and Think! together board to collaborate on ways of reconnecting the community through expansion of resources.

**Vice Chair Wright:** Welcomed everyone and emphasized that commissioners serve at the pleasure of the City Council. Encouraged commissioners to stay informed about City Council agendas to ensure their commission's work stays relevant and timely. Spoke about the recent budget and finance study session as an example of why staying informed is important and concluded by expressing her appreciation and enthusiasm for the meeting.

**Chair Brown:** Highlighted the City's social media presence, acknowledged Mat Vito's contributions. Echoed Vice Chair Wright's earlier remarks regarding councilmember relationships and recent city council budget session. She highlighted that City Council expressed a need for more context and historical background on certain Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects and wanted input from commissions and committees on CIP priorities. Chair Brown requested agenda posting and information updates be made sooner to help prepare for meetings.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

- 1. Minutes – February 13, 2025 PACS Draft Minutes**
- 2. Department Report – February 2025**

**MOTION:** to approve Consent Calendar items

**MOVED/SECOND:** Commissioner Leger / Commissioner Wright.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

**Ayes:** Commissioner Dorn Parker, Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Husen, 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.

Chair Brown inquired how many kids were on the waitlist for swim lessons.

Commissioner Leger asked if staff were reaching out to schools regarding the walk more, bike more events.

Vice Chair Wright highlighted the swim program as a successful example of collaboration with the school district. Also sought clarity on the current status of park

joint use agreements with the school district, expressing curiosity about the frequency and depth of their collaborative efforts.

Public Comment: None.

Vice Chair Wright inquired where presentations and minutes can be found for the public.

## **OLD BUSINESS: NONE**

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **1. CONCEPTUAL PLAN FOR COSTA MESA SKATEPARK EXPANSION**

Mr. Raja Sethuraman, Public Works Director, and Bryant Avalos from David Volz Design Landscape Architects, Inc. presented.

Commissioner Dorn Parker asked for clarification on what "minor input" meant following the previous day's meeting. She expressed interest in understanding what specific changes were being made and how feasible they would be to incorporate at this stage. Raised concerns about how the city would reconnect with invested community members—particularly regarding specific design requests, such as round vs. flat features—and how those preferences would be communicated and confirmed moving forward. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that the changes reflected broad consensus, not just individual opinions, and worried that approaching deadlines might prevent thorough follow-up.

Commissioner Husen expressed concerns about the proposed 9ft. bowl in the skate park, questioning its advanced nature and potential usage, especially given an existing bowl. He raised liability considerations and sought feedback on the decision regarding the bowl's size and whether less advanced options had been discussed.

Commissioner Leger inquired about the meaning of "Euro gap" and sought information about the demographic breakdown of participants in the outreach meeting, specifically asking about the balance between youth and adult attendees. She also questioned whether the skatepark received more patrolling compared to other parks.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos inquired if there is active signs at the park addressing safety.

Vice Chair Wright raised questions about the skate park conceptual plan, including the transition from a previously discussed beginner area to the current design and whether it still met initial criteria. She inquired about the incomplete sidewalk, potential 24/7 access or lighting, and the possibility of incorporating mural art into the space, referencing both her own observations and public comments.

Commissioner Komala sought clarification about the existing skate park fence, asking if it would be removed. He also raised concerns about parking and if parking considerations were part of the skate park design discussions.

Chair Brown focused her questions on youth involvement in the skate park project, seeking information about youth utilization and specific outreach efforts. She asked

about the adequacy of spaces for younger skaters, requested demographic usage data (particularly the percentage of skaters under 18 on weekends), and inquired whether the local skateboard club was consulted during the planning process.

Public Comment:

Ralph Taboada: Commented on the discussion of age demographics and then sought financial details about the skate park project. He asked about the total budget, including the \$2 million grant mentioned by Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley and the city's contribution, and requested the estimated cost of the current design and construction.

David Martinez (Zoom): Emphasized the importance of youth outreach, suggested strategies like announcing outreach meetings at high school announcements or collaborating with government teachers to encourage student participation for civic credits. He also supported incorporating arts into the park's initial design, viewing it as an opportunity to showcase Costa Mesa as a *City of Arts*, rather than adding art as an afterthought.

Vice Chair Wright asked if the existing skate areas will remain open while under construction or would the entire park be closed.

Chair Brown inquired about the total budget for this, the cost of the design and would it be possible to get this before the Arts Commission, to take a look at how art could be woven in.

Commissioner Leger asked if we have any type of skate contests as it might be a good way to raise funds for art or other more expansions or whatever.

Commissioner Husen inquired on the relationship with Volcom and the skate park.

*Vice Chair Wright stepped away momentarily during the voting of this item.*

**MOTION:** to approve the adoption of the Costa Mesa skate park expansion, with the note that staff will try to get item before the Arts Commission and do some youth outreach.

**MOVED/SECOND:** Commissioner Dorn Parker / Commissioner Komala

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

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

**Nays:** none

**Absent:** Vice Chair Wright

**Motion Carried:** 6 – 0

## 2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) PARK PROJECTS UPDATE

Mr. Robert Ryan, Public Works Maintenance Manager, and Raja Sethuraman, Public Works Director presented.

Dorn Parker Project inquired on project commencement.

Vice Chair Wright asked if there are staff concern for other projects, or if there is a

different approach when item goes out for the bidding process and if it includes all the beautification components.

Chair Brown inquired if staff can foresee project coming in under budget.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos inquired on construction phases for Shalimar Park.

Public Comment:

Ralph Taboada: Followed up on his previous comments about the CIP process. He referenced a letter he had sent to the commission summarizing his points. Voice the current CIP approach lacks measurable baselines or context, omits some already approved CIP projects without explanation, and prevents PACs from fully understanding the broader picture. This, he said, limits their ability to evaluate or suggest alternative projects. Recommended that staff include both the forecasted projects from the CIP and the proposed list in their presentations. Emphasized the need for a more collaborative process involving commissioners, staff, and public input to make better-informed decisions.

Commissioner Dorn Parker stressed the need for a comprehensive, data-driven assessment of park needs to replace reactive decision-making, using Moon Park as an example to illustrate the importance of identifying specific issues. She acknowledged public concerns about amenities like drinking fountains and restrooms but noted the complexities involved, particularly around bathroom access. Also emphasized the importance of using the upcoming year to build an assessment system that guides long-term planning and funding, urging commissioners to gather public input and ensure identified priorities remain consistent despite resource limitations.

Garcia Arcos encouraged staff to attend conferences that highlight tree maintenance.

Vice Chair Wright raised detailed questions about the city's park maintenance and capital improvement processes, seeking clarity on how often assessments are conducted, how their value is determined, and the standards used for prioritization. She expressed concern about whether the process is reactive or influenced by specific neighborhoods or council members and asked for transparency regarding project selection criteria, funding sources, and the prioritization of projects like the Jack Hammett field restoration. Wright also requested explanations for cost discrepancies between past and current project lists and sought insight into how grant eligibility influences project inclusion in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), as well as how previously approved projects are being reevaluated. Requested for more transparent CIP document, suggesting a ledger or key that explains project funding sources and grant opportunities. She emphasized the need for clarity, noting that the current format can be confusing for public members who cannot see the intentional reasoning behind project placement. Wright also proposed cross-referencing the tree canopy assessment with the pedestrian master plan to align tree planting with walkability initiatives.

Chair Brown thanked staff for their project overview and emphasized how helpful the document is, especially for new commissioners, noting it provided structure that has not existed. She highlighted the importance of responding to the City Council's request

for input on project prioritization, referencing Ralph Taboada's broader planning document and suggesting additions like funding sources, health and safety criteria, and project difficulty levels. Chair Brown stressed the need to include underserved neighborhoods in planning, advocated for thoughtful budget review, and proposed a study session or April meeting to help the commission align its recommendations with the Council's decision-making timeline.

Commissioner Dorn Parker emphasized the importance of commissioners conducting personal observations within their districts to identify local park needs and a more collaborative approach where commissioners and staff both contribute to identifying priorities for park improvements.

Chair Brown advocated for an opportunity before the city council meets to talk about CIP priorities.

Vice Chair Wright proposed holding a study session on the draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to help commissioners better understand the projects before formal review. She recommended including a presentation that outlines project sources over three years, clearly marked as a draft. The goal of the session would be informational, aligning the commission's preparation with the City Council's timeline without requiring immediate decisions.

Chair Brown noted a study session requires City Manager approval.

Commissioner Wright hopes there is some alignment with the assessment and commission discussion when it becomes available.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos like the idea of reaching out to members of their district to get more feedback from the public.

Commissioner Leger inquired if her comments should wait until a meeting or an email of her observations to the city.

Staff encouraged any reporting of safety concerns be addressed sooner rather than later to help address the concerns in a timely manner.

Vice Chair Wright expressed that having a five-year plan chart showing City Council priorities, maintenance need, and financial/grant eligibility. Echoed commission engagement with parks and residents.

Item received and filed no action needed.

## **ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER MEMBER & STAFF COMMENTS**

Staff clarified *New Business 1. Conceptual Plan for the Costa Mesa Skate Park* carried with majority votes, so no additional votes are needed.

Chair Brown highlighted the lunar eclipse for tonight.

Dorn Parker mentioned Orange Coast College planetarium has an event tonight in the planetarium, with telescopes.

**ADJOURNMENT** by Chair Brown at 8:59 PM.

DRAFT