

SEPTEMBER 11, 2025
6:00 P.M. – UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER by Chair Brown at 6:03 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

Vice Chair Wright arrived at 6:04 PM

City Staff

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mat Garcia: Costa Mesa resident and Harbor Soaring Society President, noted the Fairview Park Master Plan revision was nearing completion and invited members to attend the Harbor Soaring Society's flight day on September 20th.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Commissioner Dorn Parker: commended staff for their professionalism and support in planning a potential pickleball mixer fundraiser, noting the event was postponed to next year after sponsors withdrew.

Commissioner Komala: Commissioner Komala announced California Biodiversity Day at Fairview Park on September 13th, promoted upcoming ARTventure events, and encouraged visiting the Harbor Soaring Society's activities.

Commissioner Leger: Acknowledged the significance of September 11th date.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos: Announced the Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture's 92nd anniversary event in Yosemite, encouraged safety practices in landscaping, thanked staff for responsiveness regarding trees, and highlighted Bright Youth's community work.

Vice Chair Wright: Reported that the Fairview Park Master Plan draft would come to the commission in October after coordination with council, noted submitting a memo summarizing commission feedback, and announced her appointment to the Costa Mesa Sanitary District Board.

Chair Brown: Congratulated Vice Chair Wright on her appointment, encouraged review of the recent council memo, and announced the Earth Rise Climate Action Festival on October 11 at Harbor Christian Church, featuring arts, environmental activities, and discussions.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes – August 14, 2025 PACS Draft Minutes

Minutes were pulled by Chair Brown.

2. Department Report – August 2025

Public Comment: None.

MOTION: To approve August 2025 Department Report

MOVED/SECOND: Chair Brown / Vice Chair 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

MOTION: Requested staff revisit the recording to expand the minutes to better reflect the commission's discussion on Fairview Park and moved to have the revised minutes brought back at the October meeting.

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

MONTHLY REPORTS

1. PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Mr. Brian Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director presented, as well as, Sr. Recreation Supervisors; Ashley Thomas and Kevin Stoddart.

Commissioner Leger inquired about attendance at Concerts in the Park, highlighted the need for more tech help at the Senior Center, asked about sports program sign-ups, and praised swim class enrollment.

Commissioner Komala praised Concerts in the Park, shared his family's positive experience at Del Mar Gardens, and encouraged others to visit.

Commissioner Dorn Parker asked about viewing hours for ARTventure at the Norma Herzog Center, ticket availability for the event, and whether local facilities were being considered for Olympic training use.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos praised recent events, asked about coordination with Coastal Corridor Spanish volunteer outreach, commended the Back to School Fresh event, and encouraged continued city partnerships with nonprofits.

Commissioner Leger raised concern about coffee pricing at the future Lions Park café.

Vice Chair Wright praised affordable recreation programs, inquired about senior mental health services, the taxi and Circuit programs, Mobile Rec schedules, facility access, the joint-use agreement with NMUSD, and Harper Park enforcement. She supported evening programming for working parents, praised Aquatic Center staff, and asked how staff incorporated program feedback. She also reflected on transportation barriers for seniors and suggested advocacy with Orange County Transportation Authority and encouraged creative approaches to expand facilities.

Commissioner Parker suggested exploring a “Give a Ride, Get a Ride” program for seniors, where volunteer drivers earn future ride credits, noting its popularity in other communities and potential benefits for connectivity and cost savings.

Chair Brown praised staff’s work and suggested using photos to create social media reels to highlight programs. She encouraged future reports to provide more analysis by contextualizing data, showing impacts (such as users served), and identifying both successes and limitations to better evaluate program effectiveness.

Public Comment:

Mat Garcia: Resident and parent, thanked the Parks Department for its programs, noting his children’s enjoyment of swimming, running club, and concerts. He suggested offering allergen-free candy at events like the Scarecrow Festival to better accommodate children with dietary restrictions.

Vice Chair Wright emphasized the commission’s role in using data to advocate for staff needs and priorities with council, particularly during the CIP budget process, and encouraged deeper analysis to support long-term planning.

2. PUBLIC WORKS MAINTENANCE SERVICES UPDATE

Mr. Rober Ryan, Public Works Maintenance Manager presented.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos thanked staff for efforts to preserve trees and inquired about tree types and selection process.

Chair Brown asked Commissioner Garcia Arcos to define carbon sequestration for clarity.

Commissioner Leger asked if ground squirrel management would be addressed during the TeWinkle Park Lake improvements.

Commissioner Komala asked about the overall goals and strategy of the tree canopy survey, including whether density or over-density issues were being considered.

Chair Brown noted that the upcoming values document should align with the tree canopy assessment and suggested district-level analysis could address equity concerns.

Vice Chair Wright asked for confirmation on Brentwood Park's sand installation, praised the new Shalimar crosswalk and sidewalk improvements, and inquired if the TeWinkle Lakes project scope had been reduced.

Chair Brown also asked what users should expect during the Fairview Park bluff restoration.

Public Comment:

Ralph Taboada: Asked staff to collaborate with the Commission by applying the Commission's value-based capital project process to the upcoming Park Assessment.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PRINCIPLE AND VALUES WORKSHOP

Ad Hoc committee (Chair Brown, commissioner Garcia Arcos, and Commissioner Leger) provided updates. Chair Brown explained her focus was community engagement/public outreach, Commissioner Garcia Arcos focus was demographics and impact in the values, Commissioner Leger looked into similar City values and definitions.

Commissioner Komala praised the clarity of the values document, highlighting strong examples of community engagement and equity, and suggested adding real-life pilots to illustrate innovation.

Commissioner Dorn Parker commended the clarity of the values and emphasized the importance of defining creativity and innovation through examples such as interactive signage and cross-connections with art and education.

Vice Chair Wright supported the framework as a tool for council engagement, praised the inclusion of demographics in equity, and suggested innovation examples such as mixed uses in parks, addressing transportation access, pilot programs like pop-up dog parks, and design features from other cities.

Chair Brown clarified that creativity and innovation were not ranked least important but organized for readability, and agreed innovation should emphasize trying new approaches and drawing from other cities.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos encouraged building on sustainability efforts by learning from peer cities, implementing drought-resistant plants, and adopting proven practices rather than reinventing strategies.

Chair Brown questioned whether measurable metrics were necessary, noting the values document was meant to guide recommendations to council rather than serve as a grant-style checklist.

Commissioner Dorn Parker viewed the document as a draft template to evaluate CIP projects against defined values, allowing staff and the public to see how projects align with priorities, while acknowledging it would evolve over time.

Commissioner Leger did not see the need for metrics, stating each park should embody the values and recalling that safety and maintenance were already considered in the Shalimar project design.

Chair Brown raised concerns about creating a matrix to measure values without prioritizing one over another, noting it could become complex and labor-intensive but expressed openness if staff capacity allowed.

Commissioner Komala supported the clarity of the values document and suggested possible metrics such as resident outreach, number of meetings, accessibility features, inspection frequency, and safety incidents. He acknowledged the workload but proposed developing metrics gradually as a working document to support the upcoming CIP process.

Vice Chair Wright suggested metrics be applied selectively per project to clarify gray areas while keeping the process manageable.

Commissioner Dorn Parker asked whether consensus or a formal action item was needed for staff to move forward.

MOTION: To accept the draft values as written with additional edits as discussed.

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

Public Comment: None

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER MEMBER & STAFF COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT by Chair Brown at 8:27 PM.