

JUNE 12, 2025
6:00 P.M. – UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE by Vice Chair Wright.

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 - None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Commissioner Komala: Thanked East Side residents for participating in Brentwood Park outreach and shared his appreciation for the park signage, and the monkey bars. He also thanked the Public Works team for completing the new batting cages at TeWinkle Athletic Complex.

Commissioner Leger: Expressed appreciation for the affordability of the Tennis Center, which her son recently started using. She praised the Police Department for engaging with students at a school kickball game and for ensuring pedestrian safety during a high school graduation.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos: Thanked staff but raised concerns about neglect on the West Side. He also shared safety concerns following a nearby shooting and encouraged residents to report issues and check in with their neighbors.

Vice Chair Wright: Expressed sadness over ICE raids and praised city leadership for showing solidarity with affected communities. She also discussed safety improvements under consideration for a dangerous crosswalk near Lions Park and looked forward to reviewing community feedback on Brentwood Park.

Chair Brown: Thanked attendees and survey participants, emphasizing the importance of community engagement, especially for those who may feel unsafe in public spaces. She commended staff for including meaningful public engagement items on the agenda and noted a need for more commission visibility on social media.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes – MAY 8, 2025 PACS Draft Minutes
2. Department Report – May 2025

Public Comment: None.

MOTION: To approve Consent Calendar items

MOVED/SECOND: Commissioner Leger / 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

MONTHLY REPORTS

1. PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

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

Commissioner Leger inquired about Balearic court completion and TeWinkle Park Project.

Vice Chair Wright inquired update on Skate Park updates for the Arts Commission. Coffee shop request for proposal process and status of Shalimar adjacent property and if any extensions to capital improvement projects (CIP) deadlines.

Chair Brown inquired about how the Fairview Park Master Plan would interact with the Parks and Community Services (PACS) Commission. She also suggested having commissioners participate in concerts in the park by hosting engaging outreach booths to gather public input, particularly on topics like principles and values.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos asked how events impact nesting birds, particularly given the importance of February and September for bird nesting.

Public Comment: None.

Vice Chair Wright would like to see program feedback from participants and end of the summer highlights at a future meeting.

MOTION: To bring agenda item New Business 2 forward before Old Business.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

2. APPROVE PROPOSED DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS FOR BRENTWOOD PARK

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

Chair Brown thanked staff for the thorough presentation and proposed that commissioners begin with only essential questions before moving to public comment, with the option to return for further discussion afterward.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos inquired about measures to minimize root damage from digging and heavy equipment and suggested establishing visual root protection zones on job sites to help prevent accidental impacts.

Vice Chair Wright requested clarification on remaining design variables, including the sand pit and cycle track, and encouraged public input on equipment features.

Commissioner Dorn Parker asked for clarification on the type of lighting proposed to avoid potential impacts on nearby homes and inquired about the use of fencing around playgrounds in relation to safety for children and off-leash dogs.

Commissioner Komala asked whether the project's grant-required completion by December 31, 2025, referred to full project completion or just equipment installation.

Commissioner Leger inquired whether it would be easy to replace wood chips with sand at a later stage.

Public Comment:

Kaya: Thanked the commission for creating wonderful playgrounds for children to enjoy.

Lynn Thuy: A resident backing the park, requested repairs to a hazardous cinder block fence and asked for careful consideration of lighting impacts on nearby homes.

Sage: 9-year-old resident, advocated for upgrading the Brentwood Park playground, highlighting accessibility needs and excitement about the proposed design.

Bob Stone: Lives across from the park, supported using DG instead of concrete for safety and expressed concern about potential noise from chimes and nighttime activities.

Speaker #5: A young speaker shared excitement about the prospect of having swings at the park.

Julia: Longtime neighborhood resident, supported the playground renovation so that current and future children could enjoy a safe and fun park, even if she may be too old to benefit herself.

Amy: Provided an aerial map to show Brentwood Park's density and diversity, emphasized the need for inclusive park design, and thanked the City for addressing long-standing community needs.

Son Ma: speaking for several (11) families, supported adding new equipment and sand instead of wood chips, opposed fencing, and emphasized the need for a safer, modern play area after years of delay.

Neil: Daily park user, supported playground upgrades and suggested adding amenities for adults such as a walking path or basketball court while voicing safety concerns about tree limbs near the proposed sand area.

Nico: Briefly thanked the City for preserving the park's trees.

Group of girls: Thanked the City for improving the park and requested swings.

Sean Crawford: House backs up to the park, supported replacing the outdated play structure, raised concerns about the park's unofficial use as a dog park, and cautioned against potential safety issues with restrooms.

Savannah Patterson: New neighborhood resident, suggested more space for trees, bathrooms, and general park improvements.

Friends of Brentwood Park Representative: Thanked staff for their efforts and urged approval of the proposed playground design to unlock grant funding, noting years of grassroots advocacy by residents and children.

Gibney: Grew up near the park, described the play structure as outdated and advocated for smoother pathways to improve access.

Joshua Bauer: Sustainability consultant, supported modernizing the playground but urged the City to preserve the park's green space and use natural materials for pathways rather than concrete.

Bob Turbio: Supports updating the play structure but opposed additions like bathrooms, new structures, and paths that could increase traffic and disrupt the current neighborhood environment.

Commissioner Dorn Parker clarified she was not requesting pickleball courts and asked about mulch vs. sand surfaces, water fountains, lighting, culvert upgrades, and the potential for future public art installations. She also shared a report from Long Beach on successful mobile restrooms and emphasized the value of fulfilling long-standing promises to the community regarding Brentwood Park.

Commissioner Leger proposed a QR code system for reporting off-leash dog activity and suggested using wood chips under the big kid play structure and sand around the toddler area to balance fall safety and accessibility.

Chair Brown asked for clarification on the DG pathway layout, the playground's footprint, and potential encroachment. She also expressed appreciation for the extensive community engagement and advocated for considering art and middle-aged users' needs in park planning.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos raised concerns about DG installation near mature trees and suggested using caution tape and budgeting for an arborist to evaluate tree health and safety, especially around branches overhanging structures..

Vice Chair Wright praised the playground design, highlighting its accessibility, amenities, and community-driven features. She shared survey analysis showing bathrooms were the top-requested item and emphasized including restrooms in future park planning.

Leger: Thank you. Vice Chair, Commissioner Leger, sorry, so working at a school, I could tell you that the wood when it rains swells up and is actually. Softer for falls, whereas the sand gets more compact. So would we be able to do the wood around the big kid play structure and then the sand around the toddler play structure, so they could still have that loop?

Commissioner Komala thanked staff and parents for their efforts and emphasized the importance of accessibility and green space preservation. He shared his personal support for DG paths and sand play, noting their successful use at other parks like Tanager.

Chair Brown emphasized that bathrooms should be viewed as an equity issue and that public parks should be welcoming to all, not just nearby residents. She called for future conversations around values and inclusive planning across Costa Mesa's park system.

MOTION: To approve staff recommendation and that staff explore incorporating an art component in a future stage of the project, seeking cost-effective options such as weatherproof boards for community use and modify the toddler play area design by replacing the proposed corner sand pit with a combination of rubber surfacing and sand, allowing the inclusion of a small track within the project's budget.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **DONATION OF A MEMORIAL TREE, BENCH AND PLAQUE AT TANAGER PARK**
Mr. Rober Ryan, Public Works Maintenance Manager presented.

Public Comment: None.

MOTION: To approve the donation of a memorial tree and plaque at Tanager Park.

MOVED/SECOND: Commissioner Leger / 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

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PRINCIPLE AND VALUES WORKSHOP**

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

Commissioner Garcia Arcos identified sustainability, community-centered planning, and equity/access as key values, emphasizing the need to update plant lists and train staff on climate-resilient landscaping. He gave examples of inappropriate plant selection, such as coast live oaks in high-water areas, and called for long-term, educated planning.

Vice Chair Wright highlighted the importance of applying shared values to real-life decisions and expressed concern about the lack of structure in how the commission presents unified input to City Council. She illustrated the complexity of balancing competing community interests using examples like off-leash dogs, model airplanes, and prioritizing different types of park investments.

Chair Brown stressed the need for the commission's work to balance values-based philosophy with practical usability for City Council. She emphasized the importance of creating adaptable tools for future decisions and acknowledged the ambiguity inherent in policymaking.

Public Comment:

Roberto: Chair of the City of Santa Ana's Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Commission, thanked Costa Mesa officials for supporting immigrant communities and encouraged the city to update its Master Plan. He explained the distinction between park access and park equity, urging Costa Mesa to adopt an equity-based analysis—similar to Santa Ana's approach—to better prioritize park investments in underserved and high-need areas.

Commissioner Komala emphasized the importance of community-centered planning, echoing previous comments about balancing philosophical values with practical application. He noted that listening to residents, as demonstrated in the Brentwood Park outreach, elevates equity and ensures city projects reflect diverse definitions of safety and community needs.

Vice Chair Wright supported creating a straightforward framework to clearly convey the commission's recommendations to future commissioners and City Council. She noted the potential value of a one-page tool to supplement verbal discussions and reduce the need to review lengthy meeting recordings.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos stressed the importance of ensuring Latino community representation in equity discussions and offered himself as a resource to support that effort.

Commissioner Dorn Parker agreed that simplicity was key to the effectiveness of the final product and supported developing a clearly defined evaluation tool based on six key criteria. She emphasized recognizing diverse community needs across the city and suggested solutions like designated off-leash areas for dogs as practical compromises.

MOTION: To move forward with a PACs Ad Hoc Committee that includes Commissioners Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Leger, and Chair Brown, with the idea that they will report back at the August meeting with a preliminary discussion item slash draft report

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

ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER MEMBER & STAFF COMMENTS

Commissioner Dorn Parker shared that she and other local moms had begun enjoying daytime pickleball games, with nighttime play also going well. She mentioned upcoming instructional sessions and casual tournaments, thanked the team for their efforts, and expressed enthusiasm for the program's future.

ADJOURNMENT by Chair Brown at 8:57 PM.