

SEPTEMBER 10, 2026
6:00 P.M. – UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

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

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
- ☒ Robert Ryan, Maintenance Services Manager
- ☒ Laura Fautua, Executive Assistant
- ☒ Kathia Vitieri, Recreation Specialist
- ☒ Police Captain Diaz
- ☒ Police Lieutenant Brown
- ☒ Police, Sergeant Guenther

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE by Commissioner Dorn Parker

PUBLIC COMMENTS – [Correspondence received.](#)

Ralph Taboada: Suggested considering City-owned properties, including the golf course, Lions Park, and the Senior Center, as potential locations for community gardens to avoid land acquisition costs. He also noted the lack of a drinking fountain at Balearic Park and suggested that the City consider adding one.

Teague McGrath: Expressed concerns regarding delays and limited communication associated with RFP for operation of the Costa Mesa Tennis Center. He outlined multiple changes and postponements to the anticipated interview and award schedule and requested that the Commission seek a status update, including a firm interview date and target award date.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Commissioner Dorn Parker: Shared observations from Carmody Park in Lakewood, Colorado, highlighting its inclusive design and recreational programming for children and adults of all abilities. She encouraged the City to explore similar inclusive amenities and programs and offered to share information from the park with staff.

Commissioner Komala: Thanked the community for providing feedback on Shalimar Park and the Community Gardens Program and recognized staff for their support of the community gardens. He also highlighted upcoming California Biodiversity Day and ARTventure events.

Commissioner Leger: Shared feedback from the Community Gardens work party and recognized Commissioner Komala's contribution of seeds and staff's support of the gardeners.

Commissioner Husen: Requested additional information regarding concerns raised about the Tennis Center and sought clarification on how commissioners could obtain staff responses to questions submitted through public comment.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos: Thanked staff for their responsiveness to community concerns, particularly during Shalimar Park outreach, and emphasized the importance of considering community feedback regarding the park.

Vice Chair Wright: Suggested exploring opportunities to open community facilities during periods of extreme heat and considering additional cooling amenities, such as a splash pad or water feature, as part of future park improvements.

Chair Brown: Encouraged commissioners and the public to participate in the upcoming City Council meeting regarding the Fairview Developmental Center and Climate Adaptation Plan and emphasized the importance of parks, trees, open space, and cooling resources.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. **MINUTES – 6/11/26**
2. **DEPARTMENT REPORT – JUNE & JULY 2026**
3. **PARK RANGER REPORT – JUNE & JULY 2026**

MOTION: To approve consent calendar items

MOVED/SECOND: Vice Chair Wright / Commissioner Dorn Parker

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. Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director presented updates.

Public Comment: None.

Commissioner Husen asked how information about City events, such as Symphony on the Go!, was promoted and how commissioners and community members could stay informed.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos highlighted an upcoming community trunk-or-treat event and thanked the City Council for its investment in parks and the community. He recommended that City arborists assess potential soil compaction around trees and expressed appreciation for information regarding Senior Center programs.

Commissioner Dorn Parker asked whether signage with QR codes would be posted at Harper Park and Moon Park to provide additional opportunities for park users to participate in outreach outside scheduled events.

Commissioner Leger asked whether the Senior Center art exhibit was open to the public, whether the Senior Center served as a cooling center, and whether pumpkin decorating at the Scarecrow Festival was limited to children.

Vice Chair Wright requested that the Harper Park outreach flyer be shared on social media and sought updates regarding the Fairview Park fly field, Master Plan approval process, potential Measure A implications, and the Harper Park project timeline and future Commission review.

Chair Brown thanked staff for their work and requested that future Director's Reports continue to include staffing updates. She also asked for an anticipated opening timeframe for Lions Park.

Commissioner Dorn Parker noted that Orange County health agency review could impact the Lions Park project timeline.

Chair Brown asked how many scarecrow entries were typically received for the Scarecrow Festival. Noted increasing demand for senior services, including Meals on Wheels, and emphasized the importance of targeted outreach to ensure residents were aware of available programs. She specifically asked about outreach, accessibility, and transportation related to senior mental health services.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

1. PARK RANGER BIENNIAL REPORT

Police Sgt. Guenther, Lt. Brown, and Captain Diaz presented updates.

Chair Brown asked about the effectiveness and outcome of a recent e-bike enforcement operation at Fairview Park.

Commissioner Leger praised the expanded Park Ranger reporting and asked about ranger staffing levels, Talbert Park patrol methods, e-bike enforcement, and alcohol-related incidents at Lions Park.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos asked about the process and costs associated with impounded e-bikes and encouraged consideration of protected wildlife when conducting drone patrols. He also commended Park Rangers and outreach partners for their coordination and cleanup efforts at Talbert Park.

Commissioner Husen thanked Park Rangers for their efforts and noted noticeable improvements in encampment cleanup at South Talbert Regional Park.

Commissioner Komala commended Park Rangers for effectively managing staffing resources and asked about joint outreach patrols, security measures during park construction, and the frequency and potential expansion of drone patrols at Talbert Park.

Commissioner Dorn Parker praised the Park Ranger report and encouraged greater awareness of the 311 app and e-bike regulations.

Vice Chair Wright asked about the primary issues facing Park Rangers and discussed opportunities to improve e-bike enforcement and public safety at Lions Park. She also requested data regarding off-leash dog contacts and discussed potential designated areas for off-leash activity. Additionally, she requested proactive planning, security measures, and future reporting regarding the Skate Park expansion.

Chair Brown thanked Park Rangers for their work and recommended that the Commission receive a future updates regarding anticipated operations and safety considerations for the Skate Park expansion.

Public Comment:

Speaker 2: Expressed concerns regarding increased use of drones and surveillance technology in parks and questioned whether it affected Park Ranger staffing. The speaker also raised concerns regarding e-bike enforcement involving youth, encouraged consideration of alternative recreational opportunities, and advocated for a trauma-informed approach when addressing homelessness.

2. REVIEW OF CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR PROPERTY ADJACENT TO SHALIMAR PARK

Mr. Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director, and consultant Pat West presented.

Chair Brown supported considering the overall design and asked commissioners to first raise clarifying questions before receiving public input.

Commissioner Husen asked for clarification on the Commission's role, the proposed park vs. community center concept, existing site improvements, and the proposed mini courts.

Chair Brown sought clarification on community preferences, available funding, the Commission's requested input, and the timeline for pursuing a future community center. She expressed concern that the site could remain unfinished if funding was not secured.

Commissioner Dorn Parker asked about available funding and potential interim amenities that could make the site more functional gathering space during the interim while funding for a future community center was pursued.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos expressed concern that temporary improvements could delay or replace the long-term community center goal and raised concerns regarding the clarity of Spanish translations used during outreach.

Vice Chair Wright sought clarification on how community voting corresponded with the presented concepts and whether participants had an opportunity to specifically indicate support for a community center. She also asked about the current condition of the property.

Public Comment:

Speaker 2: Encouraged consideration of workforce development programming and partnerships with existing programs to provide educational and employment opportunities for the community.

Speaker 3: Supported providing interim improvements while pursuing a future community center and requested clarification regarding available funding and the project timeline. The speaker also encouraged staffing and programming to support community activities at the site.

Speaker 4: Thanked staff and project partners and supported cooling amenities, natural turf, and a functional multi-use court. The speaker also suggested incorporating public art into the site.

Commissioner Komala asked about the long-term operating model, programming, staffing, and financial sustainability of a future community center.

Chair Brown clarified that commissioners could provide specific recommendations and concerns regarding the proposed concept for consideration by the City Council.

Vice Chair Wright supported completing the project while pursuing additional funding for a future community center.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos emphasized the community's historical need for a dedicated gathering and programming space and supported prioritizing a future community center through the five-year CIP.

Commissioner Dorn-Parker supported moving forward with the interim improvements using available funding while pursuing future CIP funding for a community center.

Commissioner Leger expressed support for the presentation and proposed concepts.

Chair Brown supported moving forward but expressed concern about staffing, future funding, and ensuring the project was ultimately completed rather than left unfinished. She requested that those concerns be communicated to the City Council.

Vice Chair Wright suggested exploring additional locations and partnerships for a future Westside community center. She supported natural grass and recommended cooling and water amenities while seeking clarification on several design elements and the next steps for community outreach.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos recommended improving future outreach through advance translations and greater involvement of established community members. He supported moving forward with the project while incorporating greenery and gathering spaces that could support community activities.

Commissioner Husen supported the proposed park improvements while maintaining a future community center as a long-term goal.

Brief recess occurred from 8:45 PM to 8:58 PM.

Commissioner Komala left during the break.

3. **REVIEW OF FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 THROUGH 2030-31**

Mr. Robert Ryan, Public Works Maintenance Services Manager presented.

Chair Brown thanked staff for providing the Commission an opportunity to engage earlier in the CIP process and encouraged commissioners to identify priorities, concerns, and potential next steps.

Public Comment:

Ralph Taboada: Supported increased Commission involvement in the CIP process and encouraged commissioners to develop their own five-year project priorities while advocating for adequate funding for parks.

Chair Brown suggested aligning CIP priorities with the Park and Playground Assessment and Urban Canopy and Land Assessment, guiding values, and unmet community needs, including future park development and amenities.

Commissioner Leger asked whether additional development funding could be secured for Shiffer Park improvements to accommodate increased use associated with nearby housing development.

Commissioner Dorn Parker recommended aligning CIP priorities with the Park and Playground Assessment and Urban Canopy and Land Assessment and identify park challenges. She also suggested distinguishing required projects from discretionary improvements and pursuing outside funding for priority projects.

Commissioner Husen suggested establishing an annual funding allocation for playground improvements to address lower-rated parks over time and asked whether unused funds could accumulate for future projects.

Commissioner Leger asked whether previously removed playground equipment remained available for replacement parts or future repairs.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos asked about the City's expenditures for contracted landscape services and suggested evaluating the cost and feasibility of bringing certain tree maintenance services in-house.

Chair Brown asked how many additional City employees would be needed to perform tree maintenance services currently provided through contracted services.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos supported further discussion of in-house tree maintenance to improve consistency and recommended prioritizing additional CIP funding for the future Shalimar Park community center.

Commissioner Dorn Parker suggested creating a specific CIP line item for the Shalimar Park Community Center to clearly reflect the Commission's long-term commitment to the project.

Chair Brown noted that the Commission could recommend specific funding allocations and changes to CIP line items as part of its formal recommendations.

Vice Chair Wright supported a comprehensive review of CIP priorities using existing assessments, funding sources, maintenance needs, and new versus existing amenities. She expressed interest in participating in a working group to develop recommendations efficiently with staff.

Vice Chair Wright recommended prioritizing upcoming CIP projects and participating in a working group.

Chair Brown identified community gardens, art in parks, and additional dog park opportunities as priorities for consideration. She supported forming a working group to review the five-year CIP alongside existing assessments and Commission priorities and report back in November.

4. CONCERT IN THE PARK SURVEYS

Mr. Robert Ryan, Public Works Maintenance Services Manager presented.

Chair Brown expressed appreciation for the survey and supported continuing it as a public engagement tool. She noted strong support for Concerts in the Park at Fairview Park and encouraged expanding similar park activation opportunities throughout the City while maintaining a running list of topics for future surveys.

Commissioner Leger supported continuing the survey and noted the economic benefit of attracting attendees from outside the City. She appreciated the survey data and expressed interest in understanding demographic trends among responses.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos supported maintaining Concerts in the Park at Fairview Park and suggested scheduling concerts later in the summer to minimize impacts on bird nesting.

Commissioner Dorn Parker supported expanding concerts to different areas of the City to increase geographic participation and reduce impacts on Fairview Park wildlife. She suggested considering multiple park locations for future concerts.

Vice Chair Wright Supported continuing surveys at City events and appreciated the combination of structured and open-ended feedback. She encouraged conducting surveys at a variety of events and locations to capture input from a broader range of residents.

Chair Brown noted that music programming was already occurring at other parks, including Songs in the Canyon, and supported continued activation of additional parks.

ADDITIONAL COMMISSION MEMBER & STAFF COMMENTS - None

ADJOURNMENT by Chair Brown at 9:57 PM.

Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, October 8, 2026