



CITY OF SAN FERNANDO  
PARKS, WELLNESS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES  
JUNE 8, 2023  
ZOOM MEETING STREAMED ON YOUTUBE

THE FOLLOWING MINUTES ARE A SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE PARKS, WELLNESS AND RECREATION COMMISSION. VIDEO AND AUDIO OF THE ACTUAL MEETING ARE AVAILABLE FOR LISTENING AT: <https://www.youtube.com/c/CityOfSanFernando>

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Commissioner Robert Gonzales called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. Administrative Assistant, Linda Bowden-Moreno, called the roll call.

The following persons were recorded as present:

**PRESENT:**

Commissioners Robert Gonzales, Erica Friend, and Patty Lopez

**ABSENT:**

Commissioners Joe Ponce and Natasha Sanchez-Brooks

Commissioner Sanchez-Brooks notified staff by email she would not be attending due to a personal matter.

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Director of Recreation and Community Services Julian Venegas, Recreation Supervisor Maribel Perez, Police Chief Fabian Valdez, Housing Coordinator Kenya Marquez, Administrative Assistant Linda Bowden-Moreno, and Office Clerk Soledad Chavez

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chief Fabian Valdez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Lopez motioned to approve the agenda for the June 8, 2023 Parks, Wellness and Recreation Commission meeting. Commissioner Friend seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

AYES: R. Gonzales, E. Friend, P. Lopez

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NOES:

ABSENT: J. Ponce, N. Sanchez-Brooks

ABSTAIN:

## **PRESENTATIONS**

None

## **PUBLIC STATEMENTS – WRITTEN/ORAL**

German Mercado, Sylmar resident, spoke on making resources available to community members interested in entrepreneurship, vocation programs, education and other forms of personal development.

Ricardo Benitez, Sylmar resident, spoke on the beautification of San Fernando. He was very happy to see the improvements on Arroyo. He commented on the need to address some issues at the Cesar Chavez Memorial such as the dry plants, non-functioning water fountain, sprinkler system is currently off, and lack of lighting. San Fernando has its own well sites and therefore has the resources to water adequately.

Mark Ryan, with North Valley Military Institute, inquired about renting a gymnasium and pool use for their athletic program and requested assistance in the registration process for use of parks and facilities.

## **CULTURAL ARTS LIAISONS REPORT**

None

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Vice Chair Patty Lopez motioned to approve the Consent Calendar approving the Minutes of the May 11, 2023 Parks, Wellness and Recreation Commission Meeting. Commissioner Friend seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

AYES: R. Gonzales, E. Friend, P. Lopez

NOES:

ABSENT: J. Ponce, N. Sanchez-Brooks

ABSTAIN:

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## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

### **1. CESAR E. CHAVEZ MEMORIAL**

The RCS Department Director provided the PWR Commission with a copy of the City’s MOU with Pueblo Y Salud (PYS), as requested. A draft letter to PYS was previously provided to the Commission in an effort to restore the César E. Chávez Memorial and develop programming. Staff requested feedback on the letter and recommends an Ad Hoc Committee be developed.

Chair Gonzales motioned to form an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Vice Chair Lopez and Chair Gonzales, and to move forward with the letter to Pueblo Y Salud. Commissioner Friend seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

AYES: R. Gonzales, E. Friend, P. Lopez  
NOES:  
ABSENT: J. Ponce, N. Sanchez-Brooks  
ABSTAIN:

Staff will circulate the letter to each Commissioner for signature and then send out to PYS. Chair Gonzales congratulated PYS for being selected as the best non-profit organization and for being awarded and recognized in Sacramento.

### **2. DISCUSSION REGARDING VANDALISM IN THE PARKS**

Housing Coordinator Kenya Marquez, discussed the homelessness action plan including the five year plan and goals in addressing this issue. The City has partnered with North Valley Caring Services to offer outreach and resources to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Chief Fabian Valdez discussed the PD’s approach in dealing with issues such as homelessness, vandalism, parking issues, gang activity, illegal fireworks and other quality of life issues associated with the parks. A fourth detective position has been recently filled to help the Police Department with these efforts. Detective Sergeant Chiasson discussed the extra patrol being conducted at the parks to address various issues and concerns including illegal fireworks.

Vice Chair Lopez had questions regarding the homelessness program, particularly if the new outreach staff coming on board will be bilingual, mental health services, and opening and closing of Rudy Ortega Park. Commissioner Friend had questions regarding 8<sup>th</sup> Street Park hours/closures and illegal parking. Chair Gonzales thanked PD for their efforts in dealing with illegal fireworks

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which affect pets and those suffering from PTSD and autism. He also had questions regarding crime stats on Kalisher Park and the HOA pocket park by Rudy Ortega Park. Chair Gonzales thanked the Chief and Detective for making time attend the Commission Meeting.

Maribel Perez informed the Commission that she conducted an informal assessment of the signage currently posted at the parks. She recommended a formal assessment be conducted to develop a good option of signs to provide important information to the public without creating sign clutter. Julian Venegas discussed the lack of budget for new signage. An allocation of funds for new signage has been requested and is currently under review. The City website is currently being revamped and will include an application for the public to report issues.

Vice Chair Lopez had questions regarding the time table for this project. Commissioner Friend agrees with developing the best sign option to post important information and avoid posting too many signs which causes clutter. Chair Gonzales agrees with conducting a sign survey and asked about signage at Kalisher pocket park and requested to see the MOU. Chair Gonzales also recommended purchasing all signage for all parks at once to save time and cost.

Chair Gonzales directed staff to move forward with the sign survey of all parks and bring back this item at a later time.

## **4. DISCUSSION AND INFORMATIONAL UPDATE ON MAINTENANCE EFFORTS ON THE MISSION CITY BIKE TRAIL**

Chair Gonzales tabled this item to the next Commission meeting as it was placed on the agenda by Commissioner Sanchez-Brooks and she is currently absent.

## **5. PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

Chair Gonzales tabled this item to the next Commission meeting as it was placed on the agenda by Commissioner Sanchez-Brooks and she is currently absent.

## **6. FACILITY RENTALS**

Julian Venegas shared a Power Point Presentation detailing the policies and procedures on facility rentals. The Department currently has a pool of about 40 part-time staff responsible to work rentals, programs, and special events. Some of the issues that impact rentals and facility use include the limited number of staff members, the requirement to keep part-time staff under 1000 hours of work yearly, and maintenance issues associated with buildings and facilities requiring repairs and replacing.

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Chair Gonzales and Vice Chair Lopez requested this item be brought back in about six months with an updated policy.

### **7. DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES UPDATE**

Maribel Perez provided an update on the activities, programs, and workshops going on at the parks. A community outreach meeting was held in May at Las Palmas Park to gather input on the renovation project. This year's Senior Expo was held on May 17<sup>th</sup> with exhibitors, health screenings, raffles, live music and lunch. The Veteran's Recognition Event was held on Memorial Day at the American Legion. Veteran and graduate banners are now displayed. The MMAP applied for a grant from the CAC to put towards the program.

Commissioner Friend attended one of the community outreach meetings at Las Palmas Park and commented and praised the ability to allow community input on the renovation project.

### **8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Based on direction given to staff, all commissions will now implement a new process to add agenda items. The process consists of a commissioner introducing an item, obtaining a motion and a second. New agenda items will now require a majority vote.

Commissioner Friend motioned to approve the procedure of adding new agenda items to a future meeting. Chair Robert Gonzales seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

AYES: R. Gonzales, E. Friend

NOES:

ABSENT: J. Ponce, N. Sanchez-Brooks

ABSTAIN: P. Lopez

### **STAFF COMMUNICATION**

Staff informed the Commission of upcoming events and programs, such as Scam and Fraud workshops, the pickle ball program and the Fourth of July Fest on Saturday, July 1<sup>st</sup> at the San Fernando Mall.

Staff also informed the commission that the Youth Basketball League is holding games on Saturdays at Recreation Park, the Summer Day Camp begins on June 20<sup>th</sup>, Mission City Baseball

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Clinics run July 18- August 10, a Pride Celebration will be held on June 24<sup>th</sup> at the Lopez Adobe, and the Recreation Month Proclamation will be presented at the July 3<sup>rd</sup> Council meeting at City Hall. Updates on park projects included information on the various community meetings held on the conceptual design of the Las Palmas Park Renovation Project. The Layne Park Project construction phase should be completed by mid-July. Staff is negotiating the contractors bid to move forward on the project at Pioneer Park.

### **GENERAL COMMISSION COMMENTS**

Commissioner Friend thanked staff for their work and addressed issues associated with the Pacoima Wash Natural Park. Staff will look into her concerns and bring back more information.

Vice Chair Lopez thanked staff for their assistance and patience.

Chair Gonzales had questions regarding the Day Camp Program and outdoor access to campers.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Parks, Wellness and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.