

***These Meeting Minutes are not official until approved by  
the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission.***

REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CULVER CITY PARKS, RECREATION  
AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION  
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

December 1, 2020  
7:00 P.M.

**Call to Order & Roll Call**

Chair Amezola called the regular meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission to order at 7:04 P.M. via teleconference and discussed meeting procedures.

Present: Paula Amezola, Chair  
Kay Heineman, Vice Chair  
Palvi Mohammed, Commissioner  
William Rickards, Commissioner  
Scott Zeidman, Commissioner

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**Pledge of Allegiance**

Commissioner Zeidman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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**Public Comment - Items Not on the Agenda**

Chair Amezola invited public comment.

Patricia Mooney, Senior Management Analyst, reported that no public comment had been received.

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## **Consent Calendar**

### Item C-1

#### **PRCSC - Approval of the Minutes for the Regular Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission Meeting of November 10, 2020**

Vice Chair Heineman questioned why there had been no mention of the rental office going online for requests.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the general nature of the minutes; letting the public know about online services; clarification that the rental office is not yet open; the future goal for the public to be able to reserve facilities online in addition to walk-in service; the rental module; and staff agreement to add the words "facility rental module" into the minutes.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER RICKARDS AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MOHAMMED THAT THE PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 10, 2020 AS AMENDED.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: AMEZOLA, HEINEMAN, MOHAMMED, RICKARDS  
NOES: NONE  
ABSTAIN: ZEIDMAN

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## **Order of the Agenda**

No changes were made.

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## Action Items

### Item A-1

#### **PRCSC - Receipt and Filing of a Report Regarding Teen Programming and Teen Mental Health Resources**

Darren Uhl, Parks Recreation and Community Services Manager, provided a summary of the material of record; discussed past programs for those struggling with mental health issues; membership fees; activities included after school Monday through Friday; participation by middle school students; the target demographic; new circumstances allowing for different ways to reach the teen demographic and implement resources; feedback from the Culver City High School Student Advisory Committee; programs for teens available in the past; onboarding and training in process for current Student Recreation Leaders; staffing; recruitment for the position of Parks and Recreation Community Services Specialist; and an upcoming opening at the Senior Center.

Dani Cullens discussed COVID-19 health protocols in place for programs; class size; goals for teen programing; and details regarding the length and types of classes and programs offered.

Jill Thomsen, Recreation and Community Services Supervisor, discussed available mental health resources; duties of the Recreation and Community Services Coordinator; links on the Health and Wellness Resources page on the updated City website; services available from the Southern California Counseling Center; and she emphasized the many options available for individuals facing various difficulties.

Patricia Mooney, Senior Management Analyst, read public comment submitted by:

Kira Grimes discussed the value of opening the Teen Center; the importance of supporting the mental health of middle and high schoolers during the current uncertain time; the huge burden placed on teachers and administrators to handle increasing numbers of mental health issues; the need for additional resources to address issues; long-term neglect of student mental health; and she expressed support for allocating the proper funding and attention to address the issue.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Leah Pressman, Developmental Clinical Psychologist and teacher at UCLA's Geffen School of Medicine, provided background on herself; urged Commissioners to resume programming at the Teen Center and to provide mental health services for Culver City students through the Teen Center; discussed the essential nature of mental health resources; the mission of the California Surgeon General to address the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs); what constitutes ACEs; the pervasiveness and unfortunate commonality of ACEs; serious determinants to health from ACEs; caring adults outside of the family as valuable resources for children in navigating ACEs and developing resilience; limited access to trusted adults outside of the family as a result of the pandemic; the importance of mental health resources; and providing easily accessible, in person, one on one counseling available at the Teen Center.

Disa Lindgren discussed critical development in teen years; increased stress in adults, teens, and children due to the pandemic; the critical need for mental health services; she expressed gratitude for the funding of mental health services; urged the City to reopen the Teen Center and consider providing additional mental health services free of charge; and she noted the importance of availability of these programs and services to all students attending Culver City schools, regardless of the location of their residence.

Tashon McKethan, Vice President of the Culver City School Board, discussed the importance of adolescent friendships and peer relationships throughout teen years for social and emotional development; increased risk of anxiety, depression, and suicide without this contact; the disconnect with peers caused by the pandemic; serious concerns for teen health; increased isolation causing children and teens to be more likely to feel both depressed and discouraged to seek help; lack of opportunities for gathering or having fun, making separation from stress at home difficult; increased hopelessness, anxiety, and depression; financial stress; potential negative effects of increased screen time and decreased physical activity on sleep and ability to focus; impaired judgement; and she thanked the Commission for reopening and reimagining teen programming and finding ways to bring students together to support their mental health.

Dr. Kelly Kent, Culver City School Board Member, expressed gratitude for consideration of concepts and ideas for ways to support youth in Culver City; hoped that classes would be made available to all Culver City students; discussed public outreach; concern with potential lack of attendance due to people not being made aware that programs and services are available; support of the Culver City Unified School District (CCUSD) to aid in spreading awareness; involvement of the Student Advisory Council to generate teen interest in programs and promote classes; further consideration of allowing drop-in hours at the Teen Center; and the value of open drop-in hours vs. previously made appointments.

Darren Uhl, Parks Recreation and Community Services Manager, discussed difficulty reaching the teen population in Culver City; the partnership with Leslie Lockhart and CCUSD; the Culver Pride Newsletter; targeting higher need students who have expressed feeling isolated; the School District as the main source of communication between PRCS and teens; clarification that no PRCS facilities are currently open; and protocol that only permits outside gatherings of 12 people or less.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding availability of services to all CCUSD students; resilience and bullying; the importance of centers that offer counseling services to the community; potential positive impacts of the recreation centers on the neighborhood and teen community; development in the City; identifying benefits and opportunities for adolescents; appreciation to staff for the comprehensive programming offered; the importance of building relationships; the need for and relevance of these programs and of mental health resources for teens; availability of programs and classes; continued programming after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted; distribution of the Culver Pride Newsletter; clarification that the Teen Center is recreational and staff should not be considered counselors, but can direct students to resources if needed; the need to get programs going as soon as possible; fee waivers; staffing levels and changes; target audience and consideration of additional classes for the TikTok dance group; appreciation for the staff and School Board members who participated in the meeting by making public comment; the impact COVID-19 on teen mental health; location of classes and services at various parks in Culver City based on age group; statistics from the Centers for Disease Control

(CDC) showing adolescents age 12-17 accounted for the most mental health related emergency hospital visits from March to November 2020; data from a large California survey reporting that 60% of teens reported being depressed; linking current services to services that support the mental health of the community; hosting community support groups; City Council approval of increased social services; Teen Center membership fees; scholarships for low-income students; including information regarding scholarships on flyers and outreach to encourage students to ask; concern with not being able to meet expectations; potential non-profit funding; CCUSD funding; clarification that January services are free; development of a scholarship process; potential revision of the review process; the draft application, criteria, and dollar amounts that came to a halt due to the pandemic; and application of scholarships to any of the programming.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER ZEIDMAN, SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR HEINEMAN AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION RECEIVE AND FILE THE REPORT.

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Item A-2

**PRCSC - [Standing Item; Any or All of the Following Actions, if Desired] (1) Receipt and Filing of Updates from the Members of the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission Ad Hoc Subcommittees and Representative Appointees to Outside Associations and City Committees; (2) Formation of New and/or Dissolution of Existing Ad Hoc Subcommittee(s); and, (3) Appointment of Two Commissioners to Newly-Formed Ad Hoc**

Patricia Mooney, Senior Management Analyst, discussed reviewing vacancies created by the departure of Chair Amezola.

Vice Chair Heineman reported that refunds had been made due to the closure of the Senior Center.

Armando Abrego, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Interim Director, verified that refunds had been processed and noted that due to current public orders, the Senior Center must be closed, with no timeline currently available as to when it would reopen.

Commissioner Mohammed reported that the Municipal Code Subcommittee was awaiting a response from the City Attorney's office and he questioned whether there was a timeline in regard to the completion of the review.

Armando Abrego, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Interim Director, clarified that there was currently no timeline for a report from the City Attorney's office due to their increased workload, and he agreed to check in with them.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER ZEIDMAN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RICKARDS AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION RECEIVE AND FILE THE REPORT.

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Item A-3

**PRCSC - [Standing Item] (1) Review the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Commission Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Meeting Calendar and the Upcoming Agenda Items List and Make Adjustments, if Necessary; (2) Discuss Topics for Inclusion in the Next PRCS Commission Report to the City Council; and, (3) Receipt and Filing of the Report**

Patricia Mooney, Senior Management Analyst, discussed additions to the agenda list; clarified that election of Chair and Vice Chair positions and making appointments as necessary would take place at the next meeting on January 5, 2021 along with the budget and budget recommendations for City Council which would also be on the agenda for the planned meetings on February 4th, and March 2nd.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding availability of a preliminary draft of the PRCS budget; necessity of guidance for the framework of the department budget; pending information from the Finance department; hope that the PRCS department would continue to be able to provide the services it has in the past; supporting needs of the department in order to serve the needs of the community; resuming classes in February; inclusion of the recommendation for irrigation and other improvements in the budget discussion; availability of the Park Maintenance Report; agreement that reports from the Parks Manager scheduled for the January meeting, be moved to the regular PRCS meeting in February; and

agreement that the previous letter sent to City Council be included in January's report.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER ZEIDMAN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MOHAMMED AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION RECEIVE AND FILE THE REPORT.

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#### **Public Comment - Items Not on the Agenda**

Chair Amezola invited public comment.

Patricia Mooney, Senior Management Analyst, indicated that no public comment had been submitted.

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#### **Receipt and Filing of Correspondence**

Patricia Mooney, Senior Management Analyst, indicated that no correspondence had been received.

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#### **Items from Staff**

Patrick Reynolds, Parks Manager, discussed completion of Work Plan items; installation of exercise equipment at Blanco Park and Lindberg Park; the recent completion of the Tellefson Park playground project; the capital improvement project at the Veterans Park basketball courts; upcoming improvement of exercise equipment at Veterans Park; installation of a new drinking fountain with filling stations at Tellefson Park; and potential reassessment of park closings/openings.

Patricia Mooney, Senior Management Analyst, discussed updates to the Culver City website and the PRCS department homepage; she demonstrated new features available with the redesign, including navigating updates on park and playground reopenings; discussed the improved Search bar; the addition of multiple links to information on various programs, services, events, and all other resources offered by the department; access to local volunteer opportunities via the volunteer page; and greatly improved accessibility and user experience for the community on the website.



Chair Amezola expressed appreciation for the demonstration on accessing information on the City website, noting inquiries received by Commissioners from the public seeking information.

Darren Uhl, Parks Recreation and Community Services Manager, discussed the upcoming virtual event with Santa via Zoom; crafts and activities during the Zoom event; the questionnaire provided to parents beforehand so Santa is informed of the child's interests as a way to personalize time with Santa; the virtual tree lighting celebration on December 10 by the Downtown Business Association; the Winter Pod-Camp offered during the week of Christmas and New Year's; concern that the camp may be shut down by restrictions; logistics and limited group size, similar to the 2020 Summer Camp; clarification that registration is for first-graders, not kindergarteners; the lighting of Veterans Tower on December 10 with "Happy Holidays" on one side and snowflakes on the other; and current restrictions on The Plunge that limit one swimmer per lane through the registered lap swimming program and the suspension of rentals and other activities.

Jill Thomsen, Recreation and Community Services Supervisor, discussed recent drive-up events at the Senior Center; the department goal of hosting two drive up events per month; the partnership with the Lion's Club; success of the "Drive-By Pie" event, including a shout out to the Culver City Senior Center and a mention in the LA Times; wellness calls; and planned drive up events in December.

Armando Abrego, Parks Recreation and Community Services Interim Director, discussed closure of playgrounds and park equipment, and he emphasized that updates would be provided when received, with staff available to take any questions from Commissioners.

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#### **Items from Commissioners**

Commissioner Mohammed discussed the new security guard at Lindberg Park enforcing the no dog policy at the playground in a polite and effective way.

Armando Abrego, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Interim Director, discussed engagement of people by Park Ambassadors in a polite manner, and usage of Park Patrol.

Chair Amezola received clarification on the continuation of park programs and COVID-19 restrictions; she received staff agreement to investigate the viability of putting Commission meetings on social media; she encouraged the continuation of drive-by events and services; discussed challenges facing members of the community; students currently experiencing housing insecurity; and she encouraged the provision of free services for low-income students.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding clarification that in the past, tree lighting and other events had not cost money to participate in; the intent to break even with programming costs; and the importance of serving those who are most underserved in the community.

Chair Amezola expressed appreciation to staff and Commissioners; discussed her new position as the first Latina School Board member for Culver City; expressed gratitude and pride for being able to serve; and she had faith that most vulnerable communities would continue to be served, to the best of the department's ability.

Patricia Mooney, Senior Management Analyst, discussed recruitment for the vacancy left by Chair Amezola.

Staff and Commissioners thanked Chair Amezola for her service and expressed gratitude for the completion of the playground in Tellefson Park.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 9:05 P.M., the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held on Tuesday, January 5, 2021.

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Patricia A. Mooney  
SECRETARY of the Parks, Recreation and  
Community Services Commission

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

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CHAIR of the PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
COMMISSION  
Culver City, California

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that, on the date below written, these minutes were filed in the Office of the City Clerk, Culver City, California and constitute the Official Minutes of said meeting.

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Jeremy Green  
CITY CLERK

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Date