

**Parks, Beaches & Recreation Commission  
Regular Meeting  
September 2, 2025 – 5:00 p.m.**

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**I. CONVENE MEETING OF THE PARKS BEACHES & RECREATION COMMISSION TO ORDER – 5:00 p.m.**

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Anne Yelsey, Chair  
Amy Waunch, Vice Chair  
Hassan Archer, Commissioner  
Diane Daruty, Commissioner  
Keira Kirby, Commissioner  
Kate Malouf, Commissioner

Absent: Travis Pirdy, Commissioner (excused)

Staff: Sean Levin, Recreation & Senior Services Director  
Justin Schmillen, Recreation & Senior Services Deputy Director  
John Salazar, Acting Deputy Public Works Director  
Kevin Pekar, Parks and Trees Superintendent  
Mariah Stinson, Administrative Support Specialist  
Gregory Haynes, Public Works Supervisor

**III. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON CONSENT CALENDAR**

None

**V. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**A. Minutes of the Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission Meeting of August 5, 2025**

Recommendation: Waive reading of subject minutes, approve and order filed.

**B. PW Activity Report**

Recommendation: Receive/file Activity Report of past and upcoming projects and events.

**C. RSS Activity Report**

Recommendation: Receive/file Activity Report of past and upcoming projects and events.

**D. Request by Slammers Futbol Club for Weekend Light Usage at Arroyo Park**

*Recommendation: Approve the request from the Slammers Futbol Club to use lights on Saturday, October 4, 18 & 25 and November 1 & 8 and Sunday, November 9 at Arroyo Park from dusk to 8 p.m.*

Chair Yelsey opened public comment. There was none.

**Motion by Chair Yelsey,** seconded by Commissioner Kirby, to approve Item V. CONSENT CALENDAR.

**The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

## **VI. CURRENT BUSINESS**

### **A. Reforestation Request – 1716 Santiago Drive**

*Recommendation: Consider the reforestation request of a City American sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) located at 1716 Santiago Drive due to a blocked yard drain, roots encapsulating the water meter and the applicant's desire to re-grade and renovate the parkway as part of a larger landscape renovation project.*

*The applicant, Robert Kone, resident at 1716 Santiago Drive, has met the procedural requirements established in City Council Policy G-1 - Retention, Removal, and Maintenance of City Trees (City Council Policy G-1) to apply for reforestation. If approved by the PB&R Commission, staff recommends requiring the replanting of a one-for-one, 36-inch box holly oak (*Quercus ilex*) replacement tree. The applicant would pay for both removal and replacement, but the work would be performed by a City contractor coordinated by the Public Works Department.*

Parks and Trees Superintendent Kevin Pekar reported that the applicant, Robert Kone, lives at 1716 Santiago Drive, where there is a City American sweetgum considered a problem tree per City Council Policy G-1. He added that the tree's growth is creating blockages to a drain and raised a curb, while the applicant fears the roots are encroaching on utilities. He reported that the applicant proposes to plant a 36-inch box holly oak further from the utilities and closer to the center of the property. He added that staff approves of the replacement and reported that noticing within 500 feet of the property returned no public feedback. He added that the Dover Shores Community Association Board of Directors approved the reforestation. He lamented that the tree was not posted prior to the meeting.

In response to Commissioner Malouf's inquiries, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported that there are few cases where the water meter or water line is disrupted by City tree roots but added that there has been a civic history of preemptive utility work conducted due to tree root encroachment. He clarified that in this case, the roots have surrounded the utility box but have not penetrated the utility box. He confirmed that the holly oak would be slower growing than the

current tree and could even be safely moved five feet closer to the doorway with no likely difficulties.

In response to Vice Chair Waunch's inquiry, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar stated that the curb is likely already protruding upwards to the point where it could obstruct someone from opening a car door. He added that the tree's roots would continue to grow if not removed.

In response to Commissioner Daruty's inquiry, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar said that one repair bill was provided for the drain obstructed by the tree. He added that there has been no damage to the sewer.

In response to Chair Yelsey's inquiries, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported that the applicant has had to perform other tree-related repairs for which he could not produce a receipt. He noted that Mr. Kone is a newer resident and that the house has been reconstructed. He clarified that the tree impacted the street drain because the roots plugged it, leading to flooding. He could not confirm if the flooding had ever seeped inside the house. He added that he could not confirm the cost of the repair bills, but added that they were likely between \$150 and \$200 apiece. He confirmed that the applicant did not provide pictures of the drain impact.

In response to Commissioner Daruty's inquiries, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar clarified that more than \$500 in damage is the criterion for a standard tree removal and not reforestation. He added it could qualify as a standard removal or a problem tree removal if the \$500 in damages can be verified, but the damage standard is lower for reforestation. He clarified that the first page of the City's request form functions for both removal and reforestation requests. He confirmed there is a moderate probability of the roots bursting water pipes in the next 5-10 years. He stated that he is unaware of how the City's Utility Department monitors the potential for a water pipe burst or meter damage from tree root penetration.

Commissioner Daruty called for more evidence of the damages and threats posed by the tree's roots.

Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar confirmed that staff has requested evidence.

Chair Yelsey opened public comment.

Jim Mosher stated that properties with a similar rainwater connection to the street are grandfathered in, but it has been at least a decade since this has been allowed in new construction. He added that redesigned homes now require the rainwater to be contained on the property, so that it does not flow into the street.

Chair Yelsey closed public comment.

Commissioner Archer called for more proof of damages and lamented that the applicant is not here to answer questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Kirby echoed her peers' call for more evidence. She noted that the tree was not posted, theorizing this could have reduced neighborhood feedback. She inquired about the possibility of continuing the item.

In response to Recreation & Senior Services Director Sean Levin's inquiries, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar clarified that the tree does not require posting following the Commission meeting. He added that this could still be performed for a 30-day period if the item is continued. He confirmed the 30-day posting is only required for special trees.

Recreation & Senior Services Director Levin clarified that the Commission could approve, deny, or continue the item.

In response to Chair Yelsey's inquiry, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar clarified that there is a required posting before the meeting, which was not done.

Recreation & Senior Services Director Levin stated that, if the Commission wants to approve the item, he recommends adding that the reforestation is contingent on a 30-day posting with no objections.

Commissioner Malouf called for more evidence and agreed that the applicant should attend the meeting.

Recreation & Senior Services Director Levin confirmed that the Commission cannot legally compel the applicant to attend the meeting.

Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar recommended continuing the item as opposed to a decision that includes caveats.

Recreation & Senior Services Director Levin agreed that the cleanest course of action is to continue the item, invite the applicant to that future meeting, and sufficiently post the tree in advance.

Commissioner Malouf stated that the applicant should also be asked to produce supporting evidence at a future meeting.

Recreation & Senior Services Director Levin confirmed that, if the item is continued, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar can relay to the applicant that they should attend the meeting with evidence of damage.

**Motion by Commissioner Malouf**, seconded by Commissioner Kirby, to continue the reforestation request of a City American sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) located at 1716 Santiago Drive to a future PB&R Commission meeting.

**The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**B. City Park Signage Ad Hoc Subcommittee Pilot Program Update**

*Recommendation: Review the park sign pilot program survey results, and either 1.) Conclude the pilot program, maintain the existing sign style and sunset the Ad Hoc Subcommittee (Subcommittee), or 2.) Extend the pilot program and reaffirm the Subcommittee.*

Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported that the Park Signage Ad Hoc Subcommittee was established on October 1, 2024, including Chair Yelsey, Commissioner Malouf, and Vice Chair Waunch, with a scope of reviewing maintenance on current City signs and discussing new park sign design standards.

Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported that the City currently uses redwood signs, but is experiencing high maintenance needs due to a combination of fading, chipping, cracking, rot, and vandalism. He added that the Subcommittee concluded that the coastal environment contributes to the shorter-than-expected life expectancy of the signs, along with State environmental regulations prohibiting the use of more durable paint and other materials.

Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported that aluminum and stucco monument-style signs with a concrete base mimicking those in the City's medians were identified by the Subcommittee as a good potential option. He stated that this style of sign will have a lower maintenance cost because it will only require new paint as opposed to potentially replacing the entire sign on a regular basis.

Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported that on February 4<sup>th</sup>, the Commission approved a pilot program to install monument-style signs at John Wayne Park and Spyglass Reservoir Park with a four-month input gathering window. He reported that the City received 140 respondents, with the overwhelming majority agreeing that the signs clearly identify the park's name, a mixed bag on whether the sign is visually appealing, reflected the City's brand, and enhances the park, with a conclusion that 60.7% of respondents preferred the current redwood signs. He reported on the variety of written comments received through the survey.

Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar stated that, if the Commission is considering extending the pilot program, it can consider incorporating other design elements into the monument style designs, adding or changing new sign locations to more widely-used parks, coinciding a new survey around a large City event, altering the timeframe for responses (noting that 80% of responses came within the first two months), or updating the survey noting the higher costs associated with maintenance for the current signs. He added that sunseting the Subcommittee is also an option.

In response to Vice Chair Waunch's inquiry, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar reported that the comments were generally more negative from John Wayne Park's survey respondents than those at Spyglass Reservoir Park.

Commissioner Malouf reported that she was disappointed to see the negative results of the survey. She called to extend the pilot program and have the new signs tested in some more visible locations. She reported speaking with a neighbor about the new signs who was unaware of the significant difference in maintenance costs between the two styles, adding that the survey should bring the cost factor to light. She acknowledged that the monument signs might be too big for smaller parks such as Kings Road Park. She acknowledged that change can be generally unpopular but added that she is flexible towards what everyone thinks is best. She stated that the Subcommittee should continue its work.

In response to Commissioner Malouf's inquiry, Public Works Supervisor Greg Haynes clarified that the redwood signs cost about \$4,000 each, with frequent replacements needed, particularly for those near the water and/or in a sunny location. He agreed that the monument-style signs should be smaller. He added that a nautical wheel or sails can be added to the design and that the paint colors could be changed, noting Newport Coast's more muted tones.

Recreation & Senior Services Director Levin stated that Public Works Supervisor Haynes has good thoughts on possible changes to the signs, but noted the point of the item is whether the pilot program and Subcommittee should be extended. He encouraged continuing the work and having the Subcommittee discuss all these detailed suggestions being made.

Chair Yelsey agreed with the survey results, noting that the monument signs do not match Newport Beach's look and feel.

In response to Commissioner Daruty's inquiry, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar confirmed that staff did not consider a form of cement that looks like wood, but added that the City uses it in Sunset Ridge Park, and it can be incorporated into more signs.

Chair Yelsey opened public comment.

Mr. Mosher reported he was unaware of the survey because he had not visited either of the locations. He encouraged advertising the survey in a vehicle such as the City Manager's Newsletter to receive the desired wider array of feedback. He stated that the monument-style signs are corporate and bland. He lauded the sign at Bob Henry Park, adding he could not determine that it is wood due to the careful painting, and encouraged continuing the current redwood design with a more durable modern material.

Chair Yelsey closed public comment.

Commissioner Kirby commended only having three duplicate responses to the survey and encouraged obtaining additional feedback.

**Motion by Chair Yelsey**, seconded by Commissioner Daruty, to approve the extension of the pilot program and reaffirm the Subcommittee with the same membership.

**The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**C. General Plan Harbor, Bay, and Beaches Element, Natural Resources Element, and Recreation Element-Ad Hoc Subcommittee Appointment**

**Recommendation:** *Appoint three commissioners to serve on the Ad Hoc Subcommittee to provide initial feedback on the draft Harbor, Bay and Beaches Element, Natural Resources Element, and Recreation Element and bring comments back to full commission at the October 7, 2025, PB&R meeting.*

Recreation & Senior Services Director Levin reported that at the last meeting, three relevant elements of the General Plan update were presented to the Commission, with a decision reached to form an Ad Hoc Subcommittee for a more detailed analysis. He cautioned that the Subcommittee must have its commentary ready for the October meeting to keep the General Plan updating process on schedule.

Chair Yelsey opened public comment.

Mr. Mosher reported that he is a member of the General Plan Advisory Committee, but added that he is speaking today as an individual. He noted that the current General Plan's Recreation Element included a plan of new parks – most of which happened – and encouraged the Commissioners to add more specific vision to this section of the updated General Plan covering the City's goals through 2050.

Chair Yelsey closed public comment.

In response to Chair Yelsey's inquiries, Recreation & Senior Services Director Levin requested the submission of three Commissioners who would like to serve on the Subcommittee, noting that they will need to meet as soon as possible. He stated that a single two-hour meeting could likely accomplish the goal. He agreed that Mr. Mosher's comment is appropriate. He added that two members would be sufficient if needs be, because the matter will come back to the Commission.

In response to Chair Yelsey's inquiry, Commissioners Daruty, Kirby, and Malouf agreed to serve on the Subcommittee.

**Motion by Chair Yelsey**, seconded by Commissioner Archer, to approve the appointment of three commissioners (Commissioners Daruty, Kirby, and Malouf) to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee to provide initial feedback on the draft Harbor, Bay and Beaches Element, Natural Resources Element, and Recreation Element and bring comments back to full commission at the October 7, 2025, PB&R meeting.

**The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Commissioner Kirby requested more information about what the repercussions are for individuals who harm City trees, referring to the August meeting's reforestation request at 27 Point Loma Drive.

Recreation & Senior Services Director Levin confirmed that Code Enforcement could cite the individual with proper evidence. He noted that there is not always sufficient evidence of a guilty party to invoke enforcement measures.

Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar stated that he expects the tree to flush out. He added that sometimes a tree will grow even fuller than before as a reactionary measure based on how it was trimmed and grow faster. He predicted that the 27 Point Loma Drive tree will likely see rapid growth in the spring. He reported speaking with the Code Enforcement Supervisor about the tree and lamented that there is not much the City can do without an eyewitness or visual evidence. He added that the small administrative fine for performing the action lacks punch, and noted that if the tree were structurally destroyed, it would have to be removed so the denied applicant would get his way. He added that staff can ask the resident who reported the excessive trimming to remain vigilant.

Commissioner Malouf reported that the tree's health remains good and expressed hopes it will grow full in the spring. She lamented its extensive trimming shortly after the application was denied.

In response to Commissioner Malouf's inquiry, Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar stated that the tree is probably not sufficiently valuable to the City to warrant the installation of a security camera.

Recreation & Senior Services Director Levin stated that on Friday, the City will host a Movie in the Park at Sunset Ridge Park for the first time. He stated that there will be another Movie in the Park on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. He reported that there will be a City-run surfing contest from September 20-21, and a Concert at Marina Park on September 28<sup>th</sup>. He reported that a Roy Orbison impersonator will be performing at Older Adult Social and Information Services (OASIS) Senior Center, with tickets selling out in about 20 minutes. He added that a Friends of OASIS Cars and Coffee event and a boutique and rummage sale are also upcoming.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Mosher reported that the Commission recently approved the removal of a eucalyptus tree at the site of the Balboa Fire Station and Library reconstruction and encouraged the Commission to request an update, as the Planning Commission's



future agendas indicate that the tree's status remains an ongoing matter, including potential involvement from the California Coastal Commission over nesting herons.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT – 6:09 p.m.**

Submitted by:

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Mariah Stinson, Administrative Support Specialist

Approved by:

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Anne Yelsey, Chair