

**CITY OF DUARTE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

MINUTES

Regular Meeting
September 8, 2025

7 PM

ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS:

PRESENT: Michael Powers, Eddie Olague, Alex Streff,
James Finlay, Jennifer Luna-Nguyen
ABSENT: None
STAFF LIAISON: Manuel Enríquez, Department Director
STAFF: Andres Rangel, Assistant to the City Manager;
Jeff Risley, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor;
Alberto Castaneda-Salazar, Fitness Center
Supervisor; Alyssa Rico, Parks and Recreation
Manager; Pam Romero, Administrative
Secretary
AUDIENCE: None

**PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE:**

Streff led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC
COMMENTS:**

None

**APPROVAL OF
MINUTES:**

Olague motioned, and Powers seconded to approve the July 14, 2025, minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Enriquez introduced Jeff Risley and Andres Rangel who will give an update regarding the 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**ITEMS OF
BUSINESS:**

- A. 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Update
Jeff Risley, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor, and Andres Rangel, Assistant to the City Manager, gave an update on the City of Duarte's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and provided a PowerPoint presentation. Some information included:
- The committee was comprised of staff from various departments. Risley was the Parks and Recreation Department's representative.
 - The committee had 5 meetings, which included the consultant.

- The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan primarily does two things: 1) Identify possible hazards and 2) outline strategies to reduce or eliminate the hazard altogether.
- The plan is not only in the best interest of the city, but it is also a federal requirement.
- For the City to receive any federal assistance, including FEMA, we must have an updated active mitigation plan.
- The plan needs to be updated every 5 years.
- The development of the plan began in August, when the planning team was formed.
- The goal of the Parks and Recreation Department was to identify some of the city's assets/structures/parks.
- A risk assessment was done to identify areas of vulnerability.
- There are five levels of identifying risk hazards:
 - Identify the hazard
 - Hazard profiles
 - Identifying community assets
 - Analyze the impacts
 - Summarize vulnerabilities
- There were community outreach elements such as a survey that was sent to all commissioners.
- Commissioners were also sent a link to the final draft plan and a link where they can provide any feedback.
- The window to submit feedback closes September 28.
- There is a Mitigation Actions Matrix in the plan.
- There is a community outreach component included this cycle as that was a requirement from FEMA.
- 5 national hazards were identified: dams, earthquakes, floods, wildfires, and severe winds
- Once the community feedback portion is completed, they will review the plan, submit it to Cal OES and FEMA, wait for their adoption, and then wait for City Council to adopt.
- Commissioners should have received a copy of the plan via email, but physical copies are available at City Hall, Public Safety, the Duarte Library, and on the City's website.

Streff asked if there were any aspects of the plan specifically related to Parks that were notable.

Rangel replied that there is, under or related to something like a city special event.

B. Review and Approval of Community Garden Grand Waitlist/Application Process for 2026 Growing Year

Enriquez went over different options for the Community Garden waitlist and application process for the 2026 growing year and asked Commissioners to give their input. Some information provided included the following:

- The Community Garden is fully activated, and all 22 spots have been filled (20 traditional plots and 2 ADA plots).
- Commissioners should have received an email inviting them to the Community Garden's first workshop, which is open to the entire community.
- Applicants who are on the waiting list were also invited.
- The event will be held on Saturday, September 20 at 9 AM.
- Staff and the garden contractor have met to prioritize the waiting list.
- There was a total of 83 applications.
- Priority has been given to applicants based on the guidelines established by the Parks and Recreation Commission.
- Staff would like to have commissioners establish how many years should be given to current plot holders.
- Currently plot holders would have to apply again next year.
- Next year's application process will begin in June of 2026.
- Since this is Food Ed's largest garden with the biggest turnout, they gave some recommendations in terms of what they think would be a good and acceptable approach.
 - They don't believe it would be good to start from scratch since this is the first year the garden is operating.
 - If individuals have been a good and active plot holder, that they should get a minimum of two years.
 - Any longer than two years will discourage people on the waiting list.
- Enriquez did a little research on surrounding cities with gardens and found that there was a range of 2 – 5 years.
- Rules and regulations have been given to all plot holders.
- Enriquez asked commissioners if they had any questions.

Powers asked if there was a probationary period since he wasn't a part of the initial process.

Enriquez replied that there is. Food Ed shows up weekly to make sure plot holders are working on their plots and to check in with the ones they feel are not showing up. Upon speaking with a plot holder and still seeing no participation, they would then report that they feel they may need to be replaced by someone on the waiting list.

Finlay asked if there is any advantage to having a rolling system in order to prevent a mass exodus.

Enriquez replied that he makes a good point and that it wasn't discussed at the time. Initially they were guaranteed one full year and that they would be asked in May of next year if they'd like to continue for the growing year starting in October 2026. After checking with current plot holders,

staff would then know how many plots would be available. Once it is known how many plots would be available, applicants on the waiting list would be notified, and the general public would be available to apply beginning in June.

Luna-Nguyen asked what the cycle was for when current plot holders would be on their own, without needing to attend workshops.

Enriquez replied that they are on their own from the beginning and are welcome to attend any workshops offered. Food Ed contractors are available on a weekly basis to meet with any plot holders with questions or who need assistance.

Powers asked if there is a way to determine who is a good steward of the plots.

Enriquez replied that there is a Garden Guidebook that identifies garden policies. The City is relying on the contractor to monitor plot holders activity level or inactivity and communicate with them accordingly.

Powers asked if it is codified so that all plot holders know the requirements.

Enriquez replied that they all got an orientation and guidebook outlining the requirements.

There was discussion amongst commissioners regarding the best plot holder agreement timeline.

Powers asked if another Community Garden would be considered if this current one is successful.

Enriquez replied that this current garden was funded through a grant. The City would need to see how many people are interested in having a bed in the next few years, or if another grant opportunity becomes available.

Finlay motioned, and Luna-Nguyen seconded to approve a 2 (two) year term for plot holders. The motioned passed unanimously.

C. Overview: City News Fall 2025

Enriquez gave an overview of the current City Newsletter. Some information provided included:

- Fall City Newsletters went out to residents a couple weeks ago.

- Registration began today for residents. Registration for non-residents begins tomorrow.
- The newsletter includes contracted classes, Fall swim lessons and special events.
- The upcoming City Anniversary Picnic and Parade will take place September 27 from 11 AM – 2 PM at Encanto Park. Some information included:
 - The Route 66 Parade will return this year beginning at 10 AM.
 - The City Picnic is celebrating the City's 68th year of incorporation.
 - There will be great entertainment, and an already sold-out car show with 120 cars registered.
 - Community resource booths, and vendor and food booths.
- The Senior Center will host its Monster Mash Bash on Halloween day from 2 – 5 PM.
- The Annual Halloween Howl will be held at Royal Oaks Park on Friday, October 31 from 5 – 8 PM and will include a trick or treat lane, fun zone, and costume contests for children, families, and dogs.
- Parks and Recreation will hold its 2nd Annual Día de los Muertos event the following day on Saturday, November 1st from 6 – 9 PM. This year the event will be held at Aloysia Moore Park with a different look.
- Our annual Veteran's Day ceremony will be held on Tuesday, November 11 at 9 AM. The ceremony will be held at Veterans Memorial Thorsen Park.
- The Holiday Decorating Contest will be held November 24 – December 7. Judging will begin the week of December 8. Winners will be announced on the City's social media sites on December 15.
- The annual Tree Lighting will be held in the Duarte City Hall Courtyard on Tuesday, December 2 from 6:30 – 8 PM with the tree lighting at 7:45 PM. This year, instead of the Duarte Rotary Club hosting a Breakfast with Santa, the Rotary Club will be featuring a Hot Cocoa with Santa station at the tree lighting event.

Luna-Nguyen asked if the Santa's Mailbox will be back this year.

Enriquez replied that it would.

ITEMS FROM
DIRECTOR/STAFF:

1. Announced the recent retirement of Teen Center Supervisor Marilyn Mays after 16 years.

2. The department is doing some restructuring and organization within the department due to Marilyn's retirement. Staff worked with the City Manager to update the department's organizational chart. Some information provided included:
 - The new organizational chart builds in room for some succession planning within the department.
 - George Dang, who previously served as our youth contract classes, youth sports and field rentals Supervisor, is now serving as our Youth and Teen Supervisor at the Teen Center.
 - Dang is maintaining the youth sports component out of the Teen Center, serving both youth and teens.
 - A new Coordinator position was opened and is posted for recruitment online.
 - The new coordinator will take over special events.
 - Kelly Barnes requested and has agreed to a lateral move from special events to contracted classes, field rentals, and facility rentals.
 - Recruitment for the new Coordinator position will close at the end of this month, and we hope to have the position filled by early to mid-November.
3. Lastly, at the September 23rd City Council meeting, the Crestfield project, formerly known as Andres Duarte School Site, will be in front of the city council with staff recommendation. Additional information included:
 - The Planning Commission has already held a public hearing.
 - The park component previously brought to the Parks and Recreation Commission will remain.
 - It will be a brand-new park with new fields, turf, lighting, restrooms, gazebos, and a new parking lot.

Streff asked if the City is investing any money in the park component of the project.

Enriquez replied that it is not and that the project will be funded by the developer and that the City would enter into an agreement with the developer to have control of the park for a certain number of years.

ITEMS FROM
COMMISSIONERS:

Finlay:

- Announced that the new gymnasium at Duarte High School is completed and will have its ribbon cutting on Saturday, September 20, at 10 AM. Also stated that it is a really impressive building, which the Duarte School Board designed to be a community resource.
- The new gymnasium has basketball and volleyball courts, and a weight room, locker rooms, and an aerobics/dance room on the second floor.

- Stated he has never been to a gymnasium with such a great view of the mountains.

Enriquez asked if the new gymnasium comes with air conditioning.

Finlay replied that it does.

Powers:

- Announced that he is glad to be a part of the Parks and Recreation Commission and apologized for missing previous meetings.
- Stated he lives across the street from the new Community Garden and is excited to see the progress. He is also looking forward to the fruit trees that will be planted.
- Mentioned he recently read an article that Scandinavian countries add fruit trees around cities and towns, so the communities have access to fresh fruit.
- Stated that as an outdoors person, he likes to hike and enjoy the outdoors and inquired as to whether there is any progress to the opening of the Fish Canyon Trail.

Enriquez replied that as it isn't an agenda item, he can't get too into the subject, but that they've closed out the planning part of the project. Staff is now working with our grant writer to submit an application near the end of October for implementation funding through L.A. County's recent release of about 58 million dollars in various categories of funding. Duarte is collaborating with the City of Azusa and Vulcan Materials to try and secure funding.

Olague:

- Nothing to report.

Luna-Nguyen:

- Announced that she attended the last Concert in the Park featuring the Taylor Swift Tribute Band and that it was really fun.
- Mentioned that she had been asked by a community member about having goats on the mountains for brush clearance.

Enriquez stated that it has been done in the last year or two and that Community Development and Public Safety oversee brush clearance and that he will ask them about any future plans for the use of goats. Also stated that the city's new landscape contract with Mariposa includes some brush clearance.

Streff:

- Announced the upcoming Route 66 Parade on September 27, and that they are still looking for cars to be a part of the parade if commissioner is interested or know of anyone interested.

Enriquez stated that there is a question on the city's car show form asking participants if they are interested in being in the parade, and then staff is forwarding them on to Casey Caracci.

ADJOURNMENT:

Finlay motioned, and Olague seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 PM. The motion was carried unanimously.

Commissioner

Streff

ATTEST:



Pamela Romero, Secretary