

MINUTES

**Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission
Kern River Parkway Nature Center
8000 River Road, Bakersfield, CA 93308
Bakersfield**

Regular Meeting
Wednesday, May 20, 2026
6:00 P.M.

The Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, May 20, 2026. Commissioner Abler presided and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioner(s): Ryan Abler, District I; William Chapman, District II; and Carol Lair, District III

Absent: Commissioner(s): Lorena Cervantes, District IV; and Vacant: District V

Staff: Kathleen Rivera, Chief Deputy County Counsel; Isaac Preston, Deputy Chief General Services Officer

Others: There were 12 others present

Note: Ab, Ch, La, Ce, and Os are abbreviations for Commissioners Abler, Chapman, Lair, Cervantes, and Osby. As an example, Ab-La denotes Commissioner Abler made a motion and Commissioner Lair seconded the motion

SALUTE TO THE FLAG: LEAD BY COMMISSIONER ABLER

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS, COMMENTS AND REQUESTS

- I. **MICHELLE BURNS-LUSICH:** CHIEF GENERAL SERVICES OFFICER, INTRODUCED BILL POTTER AS THE NEW DEPUTY CHIEF OVERSEEING CONSTRUCTION SERVICES AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS. MR. POTTER WILL SERVE AS THE PRIMARY CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS WITHIN COUNTY PARKS.
- II. **CARLA RIVAS:** APPEARED BEFORE THE COMMISSION TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE NATURE CENTER'S MONTHLY OUTREACH AND VISITOR ACTIVITY. THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER REACHES OVER 1,000 SUBSCRIBERS AND SERVES AS A KEY PUBLIC COMMUNICATION TOOL. MARCH RECORDED MORE THAN 1,000 VISITORS, THE HIGHEST MONTHLY ATTENDANCE TO DATE, SUPPORTED BY SPECIAL EVENTS AND EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS
- III. **BILL COOPER:** APPEARED BEFORE THE COMMISSION TO EXPRESS HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE INCREASE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT PRESENCE AT HART PARK, NOTING IMPROVED COMPLIANCE WITH PARK RULES AND

REDUCED DISTURBANCES

CONSENT AGENDA

- I. Approval of Minutes: Regular meeting on April 15, 2026; **Ab:La TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN; MOTION CARRIED. 3 AYES; 1 ABSENT – CERVANTES; AND 1 VACANT**
- II. Miscellaneous Correspondence: No written correspondence was received for April 15, 2026

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

General Services – Status Update

- I. **PARK UPDATES:** ISAAC PRESTON, DEPUTY CHIEF GENERAL SERVICES OFFICER, PROVIDED KERN COUNTY PARK UPDATES:
 - A. **DISTRICT 3:** HART MEMORIAL PARK THE ADVENTURE PLAY AREA PROJECT, FUNDED THROUGH STATE PARKS AND COUNTY GENERAL FUND SOURCES, INCLUDES A SPLASH PAD, PLAYGROUNDS, ACCESSIBLE RESTROOMS, PARKING IMPROVEMENTS, AND WALKWAYS, IS ANTICIPATED TO BE COMPLETED JULY 2026. THE TRAIL RESTORATION PROJECT, A FEMA-FUNDED EFFORT THAT INCLUDES RIVERBANK STABILIZATION, TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS, AND FENCING, IS ANTICIPATED TO BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF 2026

Park Ranger – Status Update

- I. **DAVID NELSON:** LIEUTENANT, KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, REPORTED THAT RANGER OPERATIONS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SPECIAL EVENTS AND PARK PATROLS, WITH EXPANDED SEVEN-DAY PARK COVERAGE EXPECTED SOON. RECRUITMENT EFFORTS WILL ALSO RESUME TO FILL REMAINING RANGER VACANCIES

NEW, UNFINISHED, AND OTHER BUSINESS

- I. **KERN COUNTY OHV 2026 GRANT APPLICATIONS**; STAFF PROVIDED THE COMMISSION WITH THE 2026 OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLE (OHV) FUNDING REQUEST APPLICATIONS FROM STEWARDS OF THE SEQUOIA, KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND FRIENDS OF JAWBONE; REVIEWED GRANT APPLICATION SUBMITTALS; DISCUSSED; SUBMIT GRANT AWARD RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS; **Ch-Ce TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THAT \$14,250 BE GRANTED TO FRIENDS OF JAWBONE AND \$69,750 BE GRANTED TO STEWARDS OF THE SEQUOIA. MOTION CARRIED. 3 AYES, 2 ABSENT - CERVANTES; AND 1 VACANT**
- II. Upcoming Commission meeting locations as per code §2.50.060(D); **THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY DECIDED TO HOLD THE JUNE 17, 2026, MEETING AT THE WEST HALF OF THE 3RD FLOOR MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM LOCATED IN THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER AT 1115 TRUXTUN AVE., BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301 AT 6:00 PM**

COMMISSION MEMBER PRESENTATIONS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

- I. COMMISSIONER MEMBER CHAPMAN TO BE ABSENT FROM THE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 14,2026 AND JULY15,2026

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn at 7:04 P.M. to the next regular meeting, scheduled for June 17, 2026, at 6:00 P.M., at the West half of the 3rd Floor Multi-Purpose Room, 1115 Truxtun Ave., Bakersfield, CA. 93301 unless otherwise indicated, changed, and/or canceled by the Commission.