

**CLAREMONT COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 12, 2025 - 7:00 PM

Video recording is archived on the City website.

<https://www.claremontca.gov/Government/City-Council/Watch-a-Meeting>

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Sifuentes called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

COMMISSIONER: BINDER, BROWER, GLASS,
SCOTT TOUX, SIFUENTES, SILVA

ABSENT

COMMISSIONER: ROSELLE

EARLY DEPARTURE

COMMISSIONER: SCOTT TOUX (Left the meeting at
8:57 PM)

ALSO PRESENT

Michelle Castillo, Management Analyst
Patricia Cisneros, Senior Administrative Assistant
Eric Ey, Recreation and Human Services Manager
Dawn Ross, Senior Administrative Assistant
Jeremy Swan, Community Services Director
Melissa Vollaro, Recreation and Human Services Director

CEREMONIAL MATTERS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Announcement

Katherine Loeser, Claremont Helen Renwick Library Manager, shared Library updates and upcoming events during the month of February.

PUBLIC COMMENT

This item starts at 00:03:12 in the archived video.

Chair Sifuentes invited public comment.

Dawn Ross, Senior Administrative Assistant, announced that no written public comment had been received.

There were no requests to speak.

Chair Sifuentes closed public comment.

CONSENT CALENDAR

This item starts at 00:06:01 in the archived video.

Commissioner Silva pulled Item No. 4 from the Consent Calendar.

Chair Sifuentes invited public comment on Consent Calendar Item Nos. 1–3.

Dawn Ross, Senior Administrative Assistant, announced that no written public comment had been received on Consent Calendar Item Nos. 1–3.

There were no requests to speak.

Chair Sifuentes closed public comment.

Commissioner Scott Toux moved to approve Consent Calendar Item Nos. 1-3, seconded by Commissioner Brower, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

AYES: ***Commissioner – Binder, Brower, Glass, Scott Toux, Sifuentes, Silva***

NOES: ***Commissioner – None***

ABSENT: ***Commissioner – Roselle***

1. Community and Human Services Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of February 5, 2025
Approved and filed the Community and Human Services Commission regular meeting minutes of February 5, 2025.
2. Committee Meeting Minutes
Received and filed the various Committee meeting minutes.
3. Tree Plantings and Removals for December 2024
Received and filed the plantings and removals report for December 2024.
4. Policies and Procedures of the Committee on Human Relations
Item removed from the Consent Calendar.

ITEM REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR

4. Policies and Procedures of the Committee on Human Relations

This item starts at 00:08:44 in the archived video.

Commissioner Silva noted that one of the proposed changes to the Committee on Human Relations is to reduce the number of members from nine to seven, and asked why the City is having difficulty attracting candidates for the Committee.

Michelle Castillo, Management Analyst, responded that the issue is not specific to the Committee on Human Relations, and that other committees are having challenges in recruiting members and have had to make similar changes.

Chair Sifuentes invited public comment on Agenda Item No. 4.

Senior Administrative Assistant Ross announced that no written public had been received on Agenda Item No. 4.

There were no requests to speak.

Chair Sifuentes closed public comment.

Commissioner Binder moved to approve the revisions to the Committee on Human Relations Policies and Procedures, seconded by Commissioner Silva, and carried on a roll call vote as follows:

AYES: ***Commissioner – Binder, Brower, Glass, Scott Toux, Sifuentes, Silva***

NOES: ***Commissioner – None***

ABSENT: ***Commissioner – Roselle***

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM

5. **Ordinance Codifying Trail Etiquette Standards and Regulating the Use of Electric Bicycles in the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park**

This item starts at 00:15:01 in the archived video.

Eric Ey, Recreation and Human Services Manager, provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Manager Ey responded to questions from the Commission regarding the differences between the different classes of e-bikes as well as between e-bikes and pedal bikes, the types of comments and topics of concern mentioned in the survey responses, the likelihood of Park Rangers stopping riders to inspect bikes, proposed signage, concerns to be addressed by the proposed ordinance, data regarding accidents in the park involving bicycles, speed limit in the park and enforcement, various causes of trail damage in the park, how/whether the proposed ordinance addresses issues of fault regarding accidents or collisions, plans for education and outreach regarding the new regulations, plans to expand Park Ranger bike patrol, and a possible schedule for a shared use plan and whether other communities have implemented such a program.

Chair Sifuentes invited public comment.

Senior Administrative Assistant Ross announced that thirteen written public comments had been received on this item.

Barbara Perry Lorek, Claremont resident, expressed her appreciation for the park as a frequent hiker. Ms. Lorek emphasized the need for everyone to be able to enjoy the park

safely. Because an ordinance would be difficult to rescind once passed, Ms. Lorek suggested instead implementing a shared use schedule for a trial period of three to six months.

Ian Lorek, Claremont resident, supports e-bike use in the park. He stated that the combined weight of riders and their bikes, regardless of bike type, is more of an issue than the type of bike when considering trail damage. Mr. Lorek noted the omission of Bonelli Park (an LA County Regional Park) from the study, as well as the lack of research regarding the number of e-bikes used in the park. He stated that e-bikes provide access for park users that may not otherwise be able to manage the elevation gain and would not want to see them excluded. Mr. Lorek asked the Commission to consider restrictions for a trial period.

Michael Cronk, Claremont resident, uses a Class 2 e-bike. After knee replacement surgery, his bike allows him still to enjoy the park. Mr. Cronk challenged the assertion that Class 2 bike users are speeding or inconsiderate, and suggested that the bikes themselves are not the problem. He stated that the other parks in the study are flat, unlike the hilly terrain of the Wilderness Park.

Tim Croushore, Claremont resident, stated that using an e-bike allows him access to the Loop, since he is no longer able to ride his regular bike where and how he used to. Mr. Croushore outlined the differences between the different classes of e-bikes, and stated that regulation and enforcement will ensure continued access for responsible park users.

George Renville is a regular park user and noted the increase in the park's popularity, especially on the weekends. He stated that issues in the park seem to be more with young bike riders in the park than with older e-bike users. Mr. Renville asked if the City will perform a study regarding the possible impact of e-bikes on wildlife in the park.

Susan Neely, Claremont resident, stated that a Class 1 e-bike has allowed her the ability to get up the hill when she otherwise would have trouble. Ms. Neely stated that the issue of downhill speed is not necessarily specific to e-bikes, and that there may be a misperception that there is also excessive uphill speed. She confirmed that going uphill on a Class 1 bike still requires the rider to work, reducing speed. Ms. Neely has witnessed dogs in the park causing more disturbance to wildlife than e-bikes. Given the success of the Share the Trail campaign, Ms. Neely suggested expanding education efforts before enacting legislation.

Carol Blaney, Claremont resident and Claremont Wildlands Conservancy Board Member, stated that, in the CHWP Master Plan, it states that the park was created to preserve open space, protect the environmental resource, and allow for passive recreation. The Master Plan contrasts passive recreation with active recreation, including motorized vehicle usage. The Conservancy feels that e-bike access doesn't fit within the Park Master Plan and therefore urges the Commission to vote not to allow e-bikes in the park, making the trails safer for all users and wildlife and lessening damage.

Doug Sturgis, Claremont resident, has ridden a bike in the park for many years and currently uses a Class 1 e-bike with various warning devices. He feels that educating park users—not solely Claremont residents—is important, because many park users are not

Claremont residents and may not get notices targeting residents. Mr. Sturgis urged keeping the park closed during bad weather, as the trails may be damaged may be caused by foot traffic, not just bicycles. He would like to see the park kept safe and accessible for all users, with or without a motor.

Trevor, Claremont resident, stated that he would never have seen the shade structure at the top of the Loop without his e-bike. He feels that e-bikes do not seem to be a problem in the park and that there are no facts or figures to prove that they are an actual problem, nor any statistics backing the claims. Having an e-bike has taken him places he wouldn't otherwise have able to go, and he doesn't understand why there is a problem.

Unidentified Claremont resident recognized the Park as an amazing community asset and resource. She and friends who also enjoy the Park help to clean the trails. As a Class 1 rider she is concerned at the prospect of limiting park use by e-bike riders, since riding up and down the hill has gotten more difficult over the years. Because she feels that facts regarding collisions were not presented at the meeting and are not present in the report—and that she has never personally witnessed one—she cautioned the Commission not to jump into restrictions without considering those who will be impacted.

Richard Mayo runs a local mountain bike group and has been riding in the park since it was owned by the Metropolitan Water District. He noted a previous attempt by the adjacent Marshall Canyon Equestrian Center to prohibit mountain bikes in the park because of erosion, but the case was dismissed because studies showed that the horses caused more damage to the trail than the mountain bikes. Mr. Mayo suggested that installing signage along the trail and not just at the park entrance would be more effective. He would like the City to start with increased signage before enacting an ordinance.

Marianna Cronk, Claremont resident, stated that a Class 2 bike allows her husband to access the park, and that she has not seen another Class 2 bike in the park aside from his. Class 1 bikes cost considerably more than Class 2 bikes, and requiring purchase of a Class 1 bike by prohibiting Class 2s presents a financial burden. Ms. Cronk notes that young people racing downhill on mountain bikes are a bigger problem than e-bikes. She suggested a specific survey to determine the specific causes of the problems mentioned.

Muriel Poston, Claremont Wildlands Conservancy member, thanked the Commission for their service and staff for their work on providing the background information on this item. Ms. Poston stated that modifying bikes to provide the same features as other classes can be done easily by purchasing various kits, making enforcement difficult. If preventing only Class 2 and 3 bikes is not feasible, it would be easier to prohibit all e-bikes.

There were no additional requests to speak.

Chair Sifuentes closed public comment.

The Commission discussed the appearance and features of different bikes; identifying the sources of problems in the park; developing a plan for education regarding good trail etiquette, safety, and enforcement; the content of the proposed ordinance; and possible alternatives to staff's recommendations.

Commissioner Scott Toux left the meeting at 8:57 PM.

Manager Ey responded to additional questions from the Commission regarding the role of the Friends of the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park; how the proposed ordinance relates to the CHWP Master Plan; the ADA accommodations process; how long the City has owned and operated the park; agencies that respond to collisions and emergencies in the park; whether enacting the ordinance will require revision of the Master Plan; and whether the Commission could revisit the issues of conflict and right-of-way issues, signage, a shared or restricted use plan, etc.

The Community and Human Services Commission recessed at 9:21 PM.

The Community and Human Services Commission reconvened at 9:26 PM.

Melissa Vollaro, Recreation and Human Services Director, and Manager Ey continued to respond to additional questions from the Commission regarding whether the item could be forwarded the City Council without a Commission decision, the absence of research or data regarding safety hazards or dangers in the park, possibly conflicting language within the ordinance, whether the City attorney had yet reviewed the draft ordinances, which decisions by the Commission would be referred to the City Manager, issues brought up in the survey, the impetus behind formulating the ordinance, the reliability and availability of data regarding accidents; possible modifications to staff's recommendations; challenges to enforcement; and the effectiveness of education as seen with the Share the Trail campaign.

Chair Sifuentes moved to recommend that the City Council adopt the proposed Ordinance prohibiting the use of Class 2 and Class 3 e-bicycles in the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park, seconded by Commissioner Silva.

Commissioner Binder suggested that Chair Sifuentes's motion be amended to recommend that the City Council adopt an Ordinance prohibiting the use of Class 3 e-bicycles in the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park.

The substitute motion failed for lack of support.

The original motion carried on a roll call vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioner – Brower, Glass, Sifuentes, Silva
NOES: Commissioner – Binder
ABSENT: Commissioner – Roselle, Scott Toux

REPORTS

Staff

DIRECTORS' REPORT

This item starts at 03:04:39 in the archived video.

Jeremy Swan, Community Services Director, reported on:

- Arbor Day 2025
- Lewis Park Playground Project
- Pooch Park Closure
- Urban Forest Update
- Parks, Hillsides, and Utilities Committee Park Improvement Plan
- Open/Upcoming Bids

Melissa Vollaro, Recreation and Human Services Director, reported on:

- Recap of the 2025 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count
- Youth Programs Update
- Recap of the 35th Annual Making Change Contest
- Recap of the Special Needs St. Patrick's Day Dance
- Installation of Wildlife-Resistant Trash Receptacle at CHWP
- Senior Programs Updates
- 2025 Fourth of July Celebration Schedule
- 2025 Fourth of July Celebration Deadlines

Commission/Committee

Commissioner Brower reported that the Committee on Aging met on March 12, 2025. On Tuesdays, walkers meet at 8:00 AM downtown to walk, then they go have coffee. On Thursdays, they meet at the Thompson Creek Trail. An ad hoc committee was appointed for Joslyn Center awards.

Chair Sifuentes reported that the Independence Day Committee will meet on March 27, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sifuentes adjourned the meeting of the Community and Human Services Commission at 10:21 PM. The next regular meeting of the Claremont Community and Human Services Commission will be held on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 7:00 PM.

Brisa Sifuentes, Chair

Dawn Bonnell Ross, Recording Secretary