



Leslie Hardy  
Community Services Director

Nathalie Adourian  
City Attorney

Jessica Wang  
Executive Assistant

# AGENDA

## Park Planning and Community Events Commission January 20, 2026

### 5:30 PM Regular Session

City Council Chamber  
300 E. Chapman Avenue  
Orange, CA 92866

JAMES KUSHON  
Chair

STEVE FREEMAN  
Vice Chair

ADAM LITWIN  
Commissioner

EUGENE FIELDS  
Commissioner

EVA PEREZ  
Commissioner

CHIP AHLWEDE  
Commissioner

BRANDY ROMERO  
Commissioner

Welcome to the Park Planning and Community Events Commission. Regular meetings of the City of Orange Park Planning and Community Events Commission are held on the third Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September, and October at 5:30 p.m.

#### Agenda Information

The agenda contains a brief general description of each item to be considered. Written materials relating to an item on the agenda that are provided to the Park Commission after agenda packet distribution and within 72 hours before it is to consider the item will be made available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office located at 300 E. Chapman Avenue, Orange, during normal business hours; at the Park Commission meeting; and made available on the City's website.

#### Public Participation

Park Planning and Community Events Commission meetings are streamed live and on-demand on the City's website at [www.cityoforange.org](http://www.cityoforange.org).

Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.3, members of the public may address the Commission on any agenda items or matters within the jurisdiction of the governing body by using any of the following methods:

##### 1) In-Person

To speak on an item on the agenda, complete a speaker's card indicating your name, address, and identify the agenda item number or subject matter you wish to address. The card should be given to staff prior to the start of the meeting. General comments are made during the "Public Comments" section on the agenda. Public comments are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker, unless a different time limit is announced.

##### 2) Written Public Comments

Members of the public can submit their written comments electronically for the Park Commission's consideration by using the eComment feature on the Agenda page of the City's website at [www.cityoforange.org](http://www.cityoforange.org). To ensure distribution to the Park Commission prior to consideration of the agenda, we encourage the public to submit written comments by 3:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. All written comments will be provided to the Commissioners and posted on the City's website after the meeting.

Please contact the City Clerk's Office at (714) 744-5500 with any questions.

ADA Requirements: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need accommodations to participate in this meeting, contact the Community Services Department at (714) 744-7274. Notification at least 48 hours in advance of meeting will enable the City to make arrangements to assure accessibility to this meeting.

**1. OPENING/CALL TO ORDER**

**1.1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Chip Ahlswede

**1.2 ROLL CALL**

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

At this time, members of the public may address the Commission on matters not listed on the Agenda which are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission, provided that NO action may be taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law. Public Comments are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**3.1. Approval of minutes of the City of Orange Park Planning & Community Events Commission Regular Meeting held on October 21, 2025**

**Recommended Action:**

Approve minutes as presented.

**Attachments:**     [Staff Report](#)  
                                 [October 21, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes](#)

**4. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

**4.1. Selection of Park Planning and Community Events Commission Officers**

**Recommended Action:**

Select a Chair and Vice Chair of the Park Planning and Community Events Commission for a one-year term.

**Attachments:**     [Staff Report](#)

**4.2. Recommendation for Celebration in the Park on July 3, 2026 in Connection with the USA250 Initiative**

**Recommended Action:**

Recommend the proposed event for City Council consideration.

**Attachments:**     [Staff Report](#)

**5. COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

The next Regular Park Planning & Community Events Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., in the Council Chamber.

I, Jessica Wang, Executive Assistant for the City of Orange, hereby declare, under penalty of perjury, that a full and correct copy of this agenda was posted pursuant to Government Code Section 54950 et. seq., at the following locations: Orange Civic Center kiosk and Orange City Clerk's Office at 300 E. Chapman Avenue, Orange Main Public Library at 407 E. Chapman Avenue, Police facility at 1107 N. Batavia, and uploaded to the City's website [www.cityoforange.org](http://www.cityoforange.org).

Date posted: January 15, 2026



# Agenda Item

## Park Planning and Community Events Commission

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**Item #:** 3.1.

1/20/2026

**File #:** 26-0029

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**TO:** Chair and Members of the Park Planning and Community Events Commission

**THRU:** Leslie Hardy, Community Services Director

**FROM:** Jessica Wang, Executive Assistant

### 1. SUBJECT

Approval of minutes of the City of Orange Park Planning & Community Events Commission Regular Meeting held on October 21, 2025

### 2. SUMMARY

Submitted for your consideration and approval are the minutes of the above meeting.

### 3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve minutes as presented.

### 4. ATTACHMENTS

- October 21, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes



# Agenda Item

## Park Planning and Community Events Commission

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**Item #:** 3.1.

1/20/2026

**File #:** 26-0029

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**TO:** Chair and Members of the Park Planning and Community Events Commission

**THRU:** Leslie Hardy, Community Services Director

**FROM:** Jessica Wang, Executive Assistant

### **1. SUBJECT**

Approval of minutes of the City of Orange Park Planning & Community Events Commission Regular Meeting held on October 21, 2025

### **2. SUMMARY**

Submitted for your consideration and approval are the minutes of the above meeting.

### **3. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Approve minutes as presented.

### **4. ATTACHMENTS**

- October 21, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes

## MINUTES - DRAFT

### City of Orange

#### Park Planning and Community Events Commission

October 21, 2025

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The Park Planning & Community Events Commission of the City of Orange, California convened on October 21, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in a Regular Meeting in the Council Chamber, 300 E. Chapman Avenue, Orange, California.

#### 1. OPENING/CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kushon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

#### 1.1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Commissioner Romero.

#### 1.2 ROLL CALL

**Present** Freeman, Ahlswede, Romero, and Kushon

**Absent** Litwin, Fields, and Perez

#### 1.3 PRESENTATIONS

##### Presentation on Grijalva Park Masterplan

Cassie Bretschger of Kimley-Horn gave a presentation on the Grijalva Park Masterplan. She provided a brief history of the site along with the proposed vision, objectives, and anticipated next steps. Community outreach is set to begin in March-April 2026.

#### 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

#### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

##### 3.1. Approval of minutes of the City of Orange Park Planning & Community Events Commission Regular Meeting held on September 16, 2025

A motion was made by Vice Chair Freeman, seconded by Commissioner Romero, to approve the minutes as presented.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Ayes:** Freeman, Ahlswede, Romero, and Kushon

**Noes:** None

**Absent:** Litwin, Fields, and Perez

## 4. COMMISSION BUSINESS

### 4.1. Capital Improvement Project Planning for Fiscal Year 2026-27 (FY27)

Robert Ambriz Jr., Parks and Facilities Manager, presented the staff report and provided a comprehensive overview on potential Park Capital Improvement projects for FY27.

Staff responded to Commissioner questions regarding funding for projects and amenities provided at pickleball courts.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ahlswede, seconded by Commissioner Romero, to recommend the FY27 Capital Improvement Plan projects presented for approval by the City Council.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Ayes:** Freeman, Ahlswede, Romero, and Kushon

**Noes:** None

**Absent:** Litwin, Fields, and Perez

### 4.2. 2026 3rd of July Celebration

Emily Bustamante, Assistant Community Services Director, presented the staff report on a re-imagined 3rd of July 2026 Celebration event.

Staff responded to Commissioner questions regarding the feasibility and availability of elements in different event scenarios. Due to a variety of safety precautions, the proposed event must take place at Hart Park without fireworks. Commissioners reached consensus to form a subcommittee to focus on event fundraising.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ahlswede to select Commissioners Romero, Fields, and Chair Kushon to serve on the 3rd of July Celebration Fundraising Subcommittee.

Commissioner deliberation ensued. There was no second to the motion.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Romero, seconded by Chair Kushon, to select Commissioner Romero, Vice Chair Freeman, and Chair Kushon to serve on the 3rd of July Celebration Fundraising Subcommittee.

The substitute motion failed due to lack of majority by the following vote:

**Ayes:** Freeman, Romero, and Kushon

**Noes:** Ahlswede

**Absent:** Litwin, Fields, and Perez

The Commission returned to the original motion on the floor made by Commissioner Ahlswede to select Commissioners Romero, Fields, and Chair Kushon to serve on the 3rd of July Celebration Fundraising Subcommittee.



The motion failed for lack of a second and discussion continued.

A motion was made by Commissioner Romero, seconded by Commissioner Ahlswede, to select Commissioner Romero and Chair Kushon to serve on the 3rd of July Celebration Fundraising Subcommittee.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Ayes:** Freeman, Ahlswede, Romero, and Kushon

**Noes:** None

**Absent:** Litwin, Fields, and Perez

## 5. COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Emily Bustamante, Assistant Community Services Director, provided the Commission the 2026 meeting schedule and updates on the progress of the Semiquincentennial Subcommittee. She announced details on the Antepasado Park and Well Site 28 Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

The next Regular Park Planning and Community Events Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

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Emily Bustamante  
Assistant Community Services Director



# Agenda Item

## Park Planning and Community Events Commission

Item #: 4.1.

1/20/2026

File #: 26-0030

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Park Planning & Community Events Commission

**THRU:** Leslie Hardy, Community Services Director

**FROM:** Emily Bustamante, Community Services Assistant Director

### 1. SUBJECT

Selection of Park Planning and Community Events Commission Officers

### 2. SUMMARY

As part of its responsibilities, the Park Planning and Community Events Commission will select a Chair and Vice Chair to lead the Commission meetings. The term will be effective from the March 2026 meeting through the first meeting of the 2027 calendar year. The Vice Chair will step into the role of the Chair in the event that the Chair is unavailable. At this time, staff is recommending that the Commission select its Chair and Vice Chair for a one-year term.

### 3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Select a Chair and Vice Chair of the Park Planning and Community Events Commission for a one-year term.

### 4. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

### 5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 3: Enhance Public Communication Strategy and Quality of Life.

### 6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

Section 2.60.040 of the Orange Municipal Code (OMC) states that the Park Planning and Community Events Commission (Commission) "...shall elect at its first meeting of the Calendar year, from its members, a chairman and a vice chairman. The terms of office for these officers shall be one year." The responsibility of the Commission Chair is to run the bimonthly meetings in accordance with the Brown Act and Roberts Rules of Order. Comparable boards and commissions commonly appoint the current Vice Chair to serve as Chair for the forthcoming year. At this time, staff is recommending that the Commission select its Chair and Vice Chair for a one-year term.

### 7. ATTACHMENTS

- None



# Agenda Item

## Park Planning and Community Events Commission

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**Item #:** 4.1.

**1/20/2026**

**File #:** 26-0030

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**TO:** Chair and Members of the Park Planning & Community Events Commission

**THRU:** Leslie Hardy, Community Services Director

**FROM:** Emily Bustamante, Community Services Assistant Director

### **1. SUBJECT**

Selection of Park Planning and Community Events Commission Officers

### **2. SUMMARY**

As part of its responsibilities, the Park Planning and Community Events Commission will select a Chair and Vice Chair to lead the Commission meetings. The term will be effective from the March 2026 meeting through the first meeting of the 2027 calendar year. The Vice Chair will step into the role of the Chair in the event that the Chair is unavailable. At this time, staff is recommending that the Commission select its Chair and Vice Chair for a one-year term.

### **3. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Select a Chair and Vice Chair of the Park Planning and Community Events Commission for a one-year term.

### **4. FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

### **5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

Goal 3: Enhance Public Communication Strategy and Quality of Life.

### **6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND**

Section 2.60.040 of the Orange Municipal Code (OMC) states that the Park Planning and Community Events Commission (Commission) "...shall elect at its first meeting of the Calendar year, from its members, a chairman and a vice chairman. The terms of office for these officers shall be one year." The responsibility of the Commission Chair is to run the bimonthly meetings in accordance with the Brown Act and Roberts Rules of Order. Comparable boards and commissions commonly appoint the current Vice Chair to serve as Chair for the forthcoming year. At this time, staff is recommending that the Commission select its Chair and Vice Chair for a one-year term.

### **7. ATTACHMENTS**

- None



# Agenda Item

## Park Planning and Community Events Commission

Item #: 4.2.

1/20/2026

File #: 26-0034

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Park Planning & Community Events Commission

**THRU:** Leslie Hardy, Community and Library Services Director

**FROM:** Emily Bustamante, Community Services Assistant Director

### 1. SUBJECT

Recommendation for Celebration in the Park on July 3, 2026 in Connection with the USA250 Initiative

### 2. SUMMARY

Recommendation regarding the proposed USA 250 - Celebration in the Park at Hart Park, a free family-friendly celebration that activates existing park amenities and collaborates with local-nonprofit organizations to assist with implementation on select components.

### 3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Recommend the proposed event for City Council consideration.

### 4. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

### 5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 3.7 Continue to offer high quality and efficient, city led recreation programs.

### 6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

In preparation for the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, also known as the Semiquincentennial (USA250), the City Council directed staff in March 2025 to collaborate with the Park Planning and Community Events Commission (Commission) to develop a plan to commemorate this milestone in the City of Orange. At its May 2025 meeting, the Commission established a Semiquincentennial Subcommittee consisting of Chair Kushon, Commissioner Freeman, and Commissioner Litwin. The Subcommittee adopted a decentralized approach that encourages community partners, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses to incorporate the USA250 theme into their existing programming. To support this effort, information about the initiative, along with a calendar of related events occurring throughout the Orange community, has been made available on the City's website. Commission input was discussed at the September 2025 meeting, and subsequent updates have been provided on an ongoing basis.

At the October 2025 Commission meeting, the Commission provided feedback on a re-imagined July

3rd event concept aligned with USA250 as part of the broader Semiquincentennial initiative. At that time, the Commission also appointed Chair Kushon and Commissioner Romero to serve on a fundraising subcommittee to support the event during Fiscal Year 2025-26.

As previously discussed with the Commission, the proposed event-now titled *Celebration in the Park at Hart Park*-is envisioned as a free, family-friendly community gathering to be held on July 3, 2026. The event is designed to activate existing park amenities while requiring minimal staffing from Police, Fire, Public Works, and Community Services. The concept emphasizes community connection, collaboration with local nonprofit organizations, and fiscal responsibility. Planned elements include live music, a small patriotic ceremony commemorating the Semiquincentennial, and use of existing Hart Park amenities throughout the day, such as swimming at the Hart Park Pool, pickleball, softball, and other recreational activities.

Following the elimination of funding for City-led special events in 2024 and reductions in staffing levels, this approach leverages existing park resources to create a welcoming community experience without the high operational costs associated with a fully enclosed, ticketed event featuring large-scale musical performances and fireworks. In addition, the event concept relies on partnerships with local nonprofit organizations to assist with select implementation components, as Community Services staffing positions for day-of-event support are currently vacant.

The proposed event does not include a commercial-grade fireworks display. The cost, space, staffing, and safety requirements associated with such a display were determined to be prohibitive given current budget and staffing constraints. This approach is further supported by the continued allowance of Safe and Sane Fireworks sales within the City.

The fundraising subcommittee has established a goal of securing approximately \$35,000 in sponsorship funding to fully support the event. In coordination with staff, a tiered sponsorship program has been developed, with contribution levels ranging from \$500 to \$20,000. Full funding is required in order to proceed with the event. While written updates have been provided to the Commission and City Council over the past several months, questions have arisen regarding the proposal. This report is clarify those questions and formally present the *Celebration in the Park at Hart Park* event proposal for City Council consideration.

## 7. ATTACHMENTS

- None



# Agenda Item

## Park Planning and Community Events Commission

Item #: 4.2.

1/20/2026

File #: 26-0034

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Park Planning & Community Events Commission

**THRU:** Leslie Hardy, Community and Library Services Director

**FROM:** Emily Bustamante, Community Services Assistant Director

### 1. SUBJECT

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### 2. SUMMARY

Recommendation regarding the proposed USA 250 - Celebration in the Park at Hart Park, a free family-friendly celebration that activates existing park amenities and collaborates with local-nonprofit organizations to assist with implementation on select components.

### 3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Recommend the proposed event for City Council consideration.

### 4. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

### 5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 3.7 Continue to offer high quality and efficient, city led recreation programs.

### 6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

In preparation for the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, also known as the Semiquincentennial (USA250), the City Council directed staff in March 2025 to collaborate with the Park Planning and Community Events Commission (Commission) to develop a plan to commemorate this milestone in the City of Orange. At its May 2025 meeting, the Commission established a Semiquincentennial Subcommittee consisting of Chair Kushon, Commissioner Freeman, and Commissioner Litwin. The Subcommittee adopted a decentralized approach that encourages community partners, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses to incorporate the USA250 theme into their existing programming. To support this effort, information about the initiative, along with a calendar of related events occurring throughout the Orange community, has been made available on the City's website. Commission input was discussed at the September 2025 meeting, and subsequent updates have been provided on an ongoing basis.

At the October 2025 Commission meeting, the Commission provided feedback on a re-imagined July 3rd event concept aligned with USA250 as part of the broader Semiquincentennial initiative. At that

time, the Commission also appointed Chair Kushon and Commissioner Romero to serve on a fundraising subcommittee to support the event during Fiscal Year 2025-26.

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The proposed event does not include a commercial-grade fireworks display. The cost, space, staffing, and safety requirements associated with such a display were determined to be prohibitive given current budget and staffing constraints. This approach is further supported by the continued allowance of Safe and Sane Fireworks sales within the City.

The fundraising subcommittee has established a goal of securing approximately \$35,000 in sponsorship funding to fully support the event. In coordination with staff, a tiered sponsorship program has been developed, with contribution levels ranging from \$500 to \$20,000. Full funding is required in order to proceed with the event. While written updates have been provided to the Commission and City Council over the past several months, questions have arisen regarding the proposal. This report is clarify those questions and formally present the *Celebration in the Park at Hart Park* event proposal for City Council consideration.

## 7. ATTACHMENTS

- None