

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OF THE CITY OF BUENA PARK
HELD MARCH 24, 2026

Vol. 55 Pg. 149

1. GENERAL

The City Council met in a regular session on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. in the City Council Chamber of the Civic Center, 6650 Beach Boulevard, Buena Park, California, Mayor Traut presiding.

1A. CALL TO ORDER

1B. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Ahn, Franco, Sonne, Hoque, Traut
ABSENT: None

Also present were: Aaron France, City Manager; Chris Cardinale, City Attorney; and Adria M. Vicuña, MMC, Director of Government and Community Relations/City Clerk.

1C. INVOCATION

The Invocation was led by Imam Mohamad El Zahed, Islamic Institute of Orange County.

1D. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Annabelle Navarro, Buena Terra Elementary School.

1E. CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager France reported on the following:

- Assistant City Clerk Almquist provided information regarding the 2026 Passport Walk-ins offered from April 7 through August 27, 2026. Passport walk-ins are available every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at Buena Park City Hall. For passport-related questions, please visit the Passport page on the City's website or contact the Passport Services Division at (714) 562-3758.
- Spring Eggstravaganza and Sustainability Fair, April 4, 2026, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., at Boisseranc Park.
- All City Schools Youth Track and Field Meet, April 10, 2026, 5:00 p.m., at Buena Park High School. Check-in begins at 4:00 p.m.
- Pet License Renewal for a chance to win four tickets to Knott's Berry Farm. All renewals or new licenses must be paid between July 2026 and June 2026. Visit www.buenapark.com/pet to enter to win or learn more about licensing your pet.
- Applications are now open for the Youth in Action Microgrant Program. Youth ages 13 – 18 can apply for up to \$999 to bring their community project to life. To learn more about the program and its requirements, visit www.buenepark.com/microgrant.
- Myrna Holmquist Communications Scholarship Program is now accepting applications from students pursuing a communications career. Up to \$10,000 in scholarships will be available and divided between final recipients. Applications are available on www.buenapark.com or at Buena Park City Hall, 6650 Beach Boulevard, and are due on Thursday, April 2nd.
- Congratulated Carmen Koo and Deborah Diep for being honored with the Woman of Distinction Award by Senator Strickland and Senator Umberg, respectively.

2. PRESENTATIONS

2A. PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING APRIL 2026 AS FAIR HOUSING MONTH

Council Member Sonne presented a Proclamation recognizing April 2026 as Fair Housing Month to Fair Housing Foundation Community Engagement Liaison Martha Torres.

3A. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor Traut announced the public may at this time address the members of the City Council on any matters within the jurisdiction of the City Council.

Lisa Shiba, Buena Park resident, spoke regarding her concerns about SEAACA's response to a call for service she had made.

Linda Luistro, Buena Park resident, spoke regarding the petition to expand the Walmart located in Buena Park Downtown, and a request to improve visibility of road markings on Beach Boulevard and La Palma Avenue.

There being no additional requests to speak, Mayor Traut closed oral communications.

City Manager France provided an update about the future City Council discussion regarding the SEAACA contract for animal control services.

City Attorney Cardinale indicated that the notice distributed to residents are not affiliated with the City, and provided more information about a citizen initiative petition to rezone the Walmart at the Buena Park Downtown.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR (4A – 4I)

Mayor Traut announced that Consent Calendar Item Nos. 4A through 4I would be acted upon by one motion affirming the actions as recommended on the agenda and agenda bills submitted and inquired if anyone present desired to have any item removed for separate consideration. There being no requests for separate consideration, the following action was taken on Item Nos. 4A – 4I:

MOTION: Franco
 SECOND: Sonne
 AYES: Franco, Sonne, Ahn, Hoque, Traut
 NOES: None

MOTION CARRIED that all actions recommended on Consent Calendar Item Nos. 4A – 4I be approved.

Minutes

4A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Recommended Action: Approve the Minutes of the Special City Council Meeting of February 19, 2026; Special City Council Meeting of March 3, 2026; and, Special and Regular City Council Meetings of March 10, 2026.

APPROVED the recommended action.

Finance 75

4B. RESOLUTIONS APPROVING CLAIMS AND DEMANDS

Recommended Action: 1) Adopt Resolutions approving the Claims and Demands.

ADOPTED the following titled resolutions:

RESOLUTION NO. 15090

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA, ALLOWING CERTAIN CLAIMS AND DEMANDS IN THE SUM OF \$1,653,686.97 DEMAND NOS. 434889 THROUGH 435109

RESOLUTION NO. 15091

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA, ALLOWING CERTAIN CLAIMS AND DEMANDS IN THE SUM OF \$19,441.37 COVERING RETIREE PAYROLL ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2026

RESOLUTION NO. 15092

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA, ALLOWING CERTAIN CLAIMS AND DEMANDS IN THE SUM OF \$1,192,854.05 COVERING REGULAR PAYROLL ENDING FEBRUARY 27, 2026

Reports & Studies 129

- 4C. TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2026
Recommended Action: Receive and file the reports.

APPROVED the recommended action.

Proclamations 119

- 4D. PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING APRIL 2026 AS FAIR HOUSING MONTH
Recommended Action: Approve Proclamation.

APPROVED the recommended action.

Contracts 70 C-3641 Public Works Proj. 125 PW-988

- 4E. FINAL PAYMENT TO J&A ENGINEERING, DBA J&A FENCE, FOR THE EHLERS CENTER SECURITY FENCE PROJECT
Recommended Action: 1) Accept the project as complete and approve a final payment to J&A Engineering, dba J&A Fence, in the amount of \$69,200; and 2) Direct the Public Works Department to file a Notice of Completion.

APPROVED the recommended action.

Contracts 70 C-3659 C-3501 C-3321 C-3326 C-3660 C-3661 C-3662

- 4F. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENTS WITH BKF ENGINEERS; COAST SURVEYING, INC.; HUNSAKER AND ASSOCIATES IRVINE, INC.; KDM MERIDIAN; MARK THOMAS & COMPANY, INC.; TOWILL, INC.; AND FUSCOE ENGINEERING, INC., FOR ON-CALL SURVEYING SERVICES
Recommended Action: 1) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with BKF Engineers to provide on-call surveying services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 2) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Coast Surveying, Inc. to provide on-call surveying services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 3) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Hunsaker and Associates Irvine, Inc. to provide on-call surveying services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 4) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with KDM Meridian to provide on-call surveying services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 5) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Mark Thomas & Company, Inc. to provide on-call surveying services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 6) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Towill, Inc. to provide on-call surveying services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 7) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Fuscoe Engineering, Inc. to provide on-call surveying services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 8) Authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to make any necessary, nonmonetary changes to any of the agreements; and, 9) Authorize the City Manager and the City Clerk to execute the agreements.

APPROVED the recommended action.

Contracts 70 C-3663 C-3333 C-3330 C-3664 C-3665

4G. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENTS WITH AESCO, INC.; MTGL, INC.; NV5, INC.; SMITH-EMERY LABORATORIES; AND, TWINING, INC., FOR ON-CALL GEOTECHNICAL SERVICES

Recommended Action: 1) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with AESCO, Inc. to provide on-call geotechnical services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 2) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with MTGL, Inc. to provide on-call geotechnical services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 3) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with NV5, Inc. to provide on-call geotechnical services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 4) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Smith-Emery Laboratories to provide on-call geotechnical services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 5) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Twining, Inc. to provide on-call geotechnical services without a guaranteed minimum and a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000; 6) Authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to make any necessary, non-monetary changes to any of the agreements; and, 7) Authorize the City Manager and the City Clerk to execute the agreements.

APPROVED the recommended action.

NPDES 203 Contracts 70 C-3666

4H. AMENDED AND RESTATED NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (NPDES) STORMWATER PERMIT IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNTY OF ORANGE, ORANGE COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

Recommended Action: 1) Approve the Amended and Restated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Permit Implementation Agreement ("Agreement") between the County of Orange, Orange County Flood Control District (District), and participating Orange County cities (collectively called Permittees), and; 2) Authorize the Mayor to execute the Agreement and any related documents necessary to implement the terms of the Agreement.

APPROVED the recommended action.

Budgets 47 City Council 55

4I. APPROVE A BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION DAY PILOT PROGRAM

Recommended Action: 1) Approve a budget allocation in the amount of \$15,000 from the undesignated General Fund balance for this purpose.

APPROVED the recommended action.

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR

5. NEW BUSINESS (5A – 5D)

Contracts 70 C-3667 Public Works Proj. 125 PW-994

5A. RESOLUTION ADOPTING SPECIFICATIONS AND APPROVAL OF A CONTRACT WITH GOLDEN COAST CONSTRUCTION FOR THE 25-26 ANNUAL WHEELCHAIR RAMP PROGRAM PROJECT

Presented by Jason Tran, Associate Engineer

Recommended Action: 1) Adopt a resolution approving the specifications for the 25-26 Annual Wheelchair Ramp Program Project; 2) Award a contract to Golden Coast Construction in the amount of \$79,966.53; 3) Authorize contingency funds in the amount of \$12,033.47 in the same purchase order; 4) Authorize construction engineering in the amount of \$8,000; 5) Authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to make any necessary, non-monetary changes to the contract; and, 6) Authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute the contract.

Associate Engineer Tran reported on the 25-26 Annual Wheelchair Ramp Program Project which is the construction of 22 wheelchair ramps at various intersections along Beach Boulevard, Stanton Avenue, the intersection of Western Avenue and Ninth Street, and the intersection of Holder Street and Ball Road. This project will enhance pedestrian accessibility, elevate residents' quality of life, and strengthen the City's reputation. The project was advertised for competitive bids on February 12, 2026, and eight bids were received and publicly opened on March 5, 2026. The responsible bid was submitted by Golden Coast Construction of La Habra, CA., in the amount of \$79,966.53. It was recommended that the City Council award a contract to Golden Coast Construction in the amount of \$79,966.53; approve construction engineering funds in the amount of \$8,000; and, approve contingency funds in the amount of \$12,033.47. Construction is anticipated to begin May 2026 and completed June 2026.

MOTION: Franco
 SECOND: Hoque
 AYES: Franco, Hoque, Ahn, Sonne, Traut
 NOES: None

MOTION CARRIED to approve the recommended action and ADOPTED the following titled resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 15093

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING SPECIFICATIONS FOR 25-26 ANNUAL WHEELCHAIR RAMP PROGRAM PROJECT IN SAID CITY

Contracts 70 C-3668 Budgets 47

5B. APPROVE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH MARIPOSA LANDSCAPES, INC. FOR CITYWIDE LANDSCAPING SERVICES AND APPROVE A BUDGET AMENDMENT
 Presented by Joe Hunt, Public Works Manager

Recommended Action: 1) Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Mariposa Landscapes, Inc. ("Mariposa") for Citywide landscape maintenance services from April 1, 2026, through June 30, 2029, in the approximate amount of \$4,208,830; 2) Authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to make any necessary, non-monetary changes to the Agreement; 3) Authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute the Agreement; and, 4) Approve a budget amendment in the amount of \$24,000 for this purpose.

Public Works Manager Hunt provided a report regarding Citywide landscape maintenance services. Staff issued a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) for such service and received ten proposals in return. The proposals were subsequently reviewed by an evaluation committee of internal subject matter experts, in accordance with the criteria outlined in the RFP, and selected the top three companies wherein they were invited to present to the committee as well as partake in an oral interview. The committee unanimously recommended the top-ranked proposal as the best value to the City which was Mariposa Landscapes, Inc. Moreover, Public Works Manager Hunt explained the scope of work for the agreement including some enhancements from the original Citywide landscape maintenance services agreement. The agreement with Mariposa Landscapes, Inc. will commence on April 1, 2026, and continue through June 30, 2029 with two optional one-year extensions available upon mutual agreement.

MOTION: Traut
 SECOND: Hoque
 AYES: Traut, Hoque, Ahn, Franco, Sonne
 NOES: None

MOTION CARRIED to approve the recommended action.

Admin. Svcs. 112

5C. REORGANIZATION PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT'S BUILDING DIVISION AND APPROVAL OF A BUDGET ALLOCATION TO ADD ONE ADDITIONAL SENIOR BUILDING INSPECTOR/PLAN CHECKER POSITION
 Presented by Rebecca Valdez, Human Resources Manager

Recommended Action: 1) Approve reclassifying one Building Inspector position to Senior Building Inspector/Plan Checker position in the Building Division of the Community and Economic Development Department; and 2) Appropriate funds in the amount of \$30,000 annually from the undesignated general fund reserve to allocate funding for the reclassified Senior Building Inspector/Plan Checker position.

Human Resources Manager Valdez discussed the reorganization plan for the Community and Economic Development Department’s Building Division including the addition of a second Senior Building Inspector/Plan Checker to improve structural oversight and operational resilience. Expanding senior-level capacity mitigates single-point reliance and ensures service continuity during staff absences, peak workload periods, and emergency response situations. Moreover, from a service delivery perspective, strengthening in-house plan review capabilities supports timely permit issuance, shortens turnaround times, and helps uphold customer service standards. Retaining this expertise internally also minimizes dependence on external consultants and preserves institutional knowledge within the organization. The Human Resources Department recently completed a review of staff’s succession plan, department goals, and priorities. As a result, staff recommended the reclassification of one Building Inspector to the Senior Building Inspector/Plan Checker position to ensure the organizational structure provides for the delivery of exceptional services to the community.

MOTION: Traut
SECOND: Ahn
AYES: Traut, Ahn, Franco, Hoque, Sonne
NOES: None

MOTION CARRIED to approve the recommended action.

Contracts 70 C-3528

5D. AMENDMENT NO. 3 TO THE PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT FOR CITY-OWNED PROPERTY AT 7860 BEACH BOULEVARD
Presented by Matt Foulkes, Director of Community and Economic Development

Recommended Action: 1) Approve a Third Amendment to the Purchase and Sale Agreement with KB Acquisitions, LLC, for the sale of the City-owned property located at 7860 Beach Boulevard (the “Property”); 2) Authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to make nonmonetary changes to the agreement and associated documents that are reasonably necessary to facilitate the transaction; and, 3) Authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute the Third Amendment and associated documents needed to facilitate the closing in a form approved by the City Attorney.

Director of Community and Economic Development Foulkes reported on the amendment to the Purchase and Sale agreement with KB Acquisitions, LLC, for the sale of the City-owned property located at 7860 Beach Boulevard. As of the writing of the report, the Developer has satisfied the majority of conditions required to close escrow, including financial commitments. The remaining item is completion of the construction plans, which are in the final stages of the City’s building plan review. The City is currently reviewing the latest submittal and anticipates completing the plan check process within the next few weeks. The PSA schedule of performance has been updated to reflect the revised projected timeline for plan check completion. To allow sufficient time for the parties to finalize and approve the project’s building plans, the Developer has requested, and staff recommended, approval of a third amendment to the PSA for the sole purpose to authorize a final extension of the outside closing date and related updates to the project schedule. The City and Developer are confident that this final extension will allow the Developer to close escrow and, promptly thereafter, commence the construction of the Project. It was noted, however, that the City may terminate escrow if closing conditions are not met and retains the right to reacquire the property if the Developer fails to proceed with construction after closing.

MOTION: Ahn
SECOND: Sonne
AYES: Ahn, Sonne, Franco, Hoque, Traut
NOES: None

MOTION CARRIED to approve the recommended action.

6. PUBLIC HEARING (6A)

Block Grants 1913

6A. APPROVAL OF PROPOSED ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2026-2027 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM
Presented by Sarabeth Suarez, Housing and CDBG Analyst

Recommended Action: 1) Review and approve the proposed activities and budget for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program; and 2) Authorize the Economic Development Division to incorporate the approved activities and budget into the FY 2026-2027 Annual Action Plan.

Mayor Traut stated that this was the time and place for a public hearing to consider the review and approval of the proposed activities and budget for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.

Housing and CDBG Analyst Suarez discussed the proposed activities and budget for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The City published and posted a notice of CDBG funding availability to request proposals for FY 2026-27 and received seven funding requests from City departments and five funding requests from non-profit agencies for a total amount of \$1,146,885. An additional funding request for public infrastructure improvements was received; however, the applicant subsequently withdrew the request due to potential project timeline delays, and it was removed from further consideration. At its January 22, 2026 meeting, the CDBG Committee discussed the funding requests, staff recommendations, and site visit assignments. The Committee also discussed the Harm Reduction Circle Health Stabilization Program, noting similarities to the City's Homeless Outreach Program, and ultimately agreed not to recommend funding, favoring in-house service delivery for fiscal responsibility, oversight, and to avoid duplication of services. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has not yet announced the City's CDBG allocation; however, HUD requires that all grantees proceed with the budget process using an estimated allocation. In reference to the City's CDBG allocation for FY 2025-26, staff estimated the FY 2026-27 budget to include \$751,385 in grant funds and \$277,325 from prior years' unprogrammed funds for a total amount of \$1,028,710. The approved budget recommendation meets HUD's 20% administrative and planning funding cap and 15% public service funding cap, and will be proportionally adjusted by staff, at the City Manager's discretion, once the City's official CDBG allocation is received.

Mayor Traut opened the public hearing and inquired if anyone present desired to speak. There being none, Mayor Traut closed the public hearing.

City Attorney Cardinale announced Council Member Franco's recusal from voting on the approval of Giving Children Hope's proposal due to a conflict of interest, as he serves as a board member of Giving Children Hope.

MOTION: Traut
SECOND: Sonne
AYES: Traut, Sonne, Ahn, Franco, Hoque
NOES: None

MOTION CARRIED to approve the recommended action (Council Member Franco recused on the approval of the funding request for Giving Children Hope due to a conflict of interest.)

7. COUNCIL MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONFERENCE REPORTS AND CALENDAR REQUESTS

7A. REPORT

Council Member Ahn reported the following:

- March 13 BPSD Groundbreaking Ceremony: Beatty Middle School Gymnasium
- March 23 Tour of OCFA Station 61 with Congressman Derek Tran

Council Member Sonne reported the following:

- March 12-14 CivicWell Policymakers Conference
- March 17 BP Employees St. Patrick's Day Celebration
- March 18 OCPA 2026 Strategic Planning Workshop
- March 19 Swearing-in Ceremony for Captain Dieringer, Corporal Procel and Officer Lazaro
- March 21 51st Americana Awards Gala
- March 22 OCPA Legislative and Regulatory Committee Meeting

Council Member Sonne indicated that at its March 12 – 14, 2026 Civicwell Policymakers Conference, she attended sessions on Wildfire Resilience and Rebuilding Strategies; Transformative Neighborhood-Scale Energy Solutions; and, Building Bonds Between Housing and Climate Resilience. Additionally, Council Member Sonne provided an overview of OCPA's Renter Energy Efficient Program and encouraged residents to apply.

Council Member Franco reported the following:

- March 12-14 CivicWell Policymakers Conference
- INS Ice Beer Soft Opening
- Mayors of Ensenada and Tijuana Visit

Council Member Franco summarized key learnings from attending the March 12 – 14, 2026 CivicWell Policymakers Conference.

Vice Mayor Hoque reported the following:

- March 11 Press Conference with Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries
- March 14 Korean Resource Fair 2026
- March 14 OC Supervisor Katrina Foley's Fifth Annual Women Making a Difference Awards
- March 19 Swearing-in Ceremony for Captain Dieringer, Corporal Procel and Officer Lazaro
- March 20 Breakfast Club with Secretary Weber
- March 21 51st Americana Awards Gala
- March 24 Eid Recognition with Board of Supervisors

Vice Mayor Hoque provided an update about recent District 4 street improvements.

Mayor Traut reported the following:

- March 11 OCFA Budget and Finance Committee Meeting
- March 12 25th Annual Middle & High School Art Show Awards Reception
- March 14 OCFA Open House
- March 19 Brenner Park Design Meeting
- March 19 Swearing-in Ceremony for Captain Dieringer, Corporal Procel and Officer Lazaro
- March 20 Breakfast Club with Secretary Weber

8. RECESS/RECONVENE

Mayor Traut recessed the meeting at 5:53 p.m. and announced the meeting would be reconvened in the City Council Chamber. The meeting was reconvened at 6:04 p.m.

9. STUDY SESSION (9A – 9D)

9A. DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION REGARDING THE NORTH ORANGE COUNTY CHAMBER (NOCC) PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

Presented by Eddie Fenton, Assistant City Manager/Director of Human Resources

Assistant City Manager/Director of Human Resources Fenton presented the North Orange County Chamber (NOCC) partnership proposal, "Strengthening Business, Strengthening Our City." At its January 13, 2026 meeting, the City Council received a report and provided direction to negotiate the terms and conditions of the partnership outlined in the proposal and bring the item back at a future City Council meeting for consideration. Assistant City Manager Fenton discussed the NOCC's responses and counter-proposed conditions for City Council consideration. As stated by the NOCC, the City's investment delivers tangible value by not only supporting advocacy efforts but also by providing each licensed business with measurable digital tools and increased online exposure. In order for the program to be effective, the NOCC requires a commitment of \$100,000. Assistant City Manager Fenton stated that the proposed program has not been implemented in any other city; and the need is for a significant allocation of Economic Development Fund resources to subsidize chamber memberships. Should the City Council be uncomfortable with this amount, it is unlikely the NOCC would be willing to move forward with their program. In addition, the NOCC is proposing an opt-out rather than an opt-in approach, though neither option was discussed in detail on the January 13, 2026 City Council meeting. Staff sought City Council direction on aspects of funding, distribution of funds, progress reporting structure, opt-in vs. opt-out model, and whether the proposal applies to new NOCC members or new and current members.

Johny Hong, NOCC Member and Business Owner, spoke regarding the benefits of being an NOCC member and urged the City Council to consider the proposed partnership with the NOCC.

Isaid Arteaga, Buena Park Black Bear Diner General Manager, spoke regarding the benefits of being an NOCC member and the restaurant CEO's participation in the chamber's online initiative.

Council Member Franco spoke in support of the NOCC's proposal; and discussed the value in supporting and investing in local businesses in funding City programs and services. He recognized the NOCC's notable innovative approach in promoting businesses; and suggested the \$100,000 program cost be approved as a grant disbursed all at one-time, instead of as a pilot program. If the program does not succeed, no further investment will be made. Council Member Franco asked about expanding the program model to accommodate additional businesses, and the NOCC's ambassador program. As for the use of AI in marketing, this should not be the sole focus in promoting Buena Park businesses. Instead, Council Member Franco emphasized the value of the proposed program by the NOCC because it is not focused on one marketing approach but a well-rounded one.

Council Member Ahn discussed the various, recent City improvements supported by the City Council and expressed support and efforts in strengthening businesses in Buena Park. Additionally, Council Member Ahn spoke in favor of the partnership with NOCC for the proposed program especially because 1,000 businesses will benefit from the membership incentives for an entire year.

Council Member Sonne raised concerns about proceeding with the item for it is too costly to justify using taxpayer funds. Instead, Council Member Sonne expressed a preference for City businesses to join a chamber of their choice as it benefits them, and for the City Council to consider means to support local businesses in a way that exhibits equity and fairness. Council Member Sonne also raised concerns about lack of evidence on the benefits of listing a Buena Park business on NOCC's online directory; and the significant amount of money being asked to fund a program that has not been implemented in other cities.

Vice Mayor Hoque noted her comfort level in allocating \$25,000-\$30,000 for a program to support local businesses, prior to outsourcing for additional funding. Moreover, Vice Mayor Hoque discussed the value of advancement in technology through the years, and that it is worth exploring AI's potential in strengthening businesses in Buena Park.

Mayor Traut proposed an alternative program to partner with a local chamber to offer a full-priced membership to Buena Park businesses with an active business license, and discussed its eligibility requirements. The grant would be awarded to an eligible Buena Park business, covering up to \$600 for a membership with a local chamber of choice. Mayor Traut also suggested starting with \$5,000 to launch the one-year pilot program, with a budget allocation of up to \$30,000 contingent on its success; and \$5,000 for marketing purposes. Moreover, Mayor Traut asked about the NOCC's proposal as it relates to the immediate and direct benefits of a full-fledged membership in addition to the business listing on the e-directory. Mayor Traut also commented about optimizing the use of AI in strengthening Buena Park businesses online, and expressed interest in exploring more information on that aspect for future City Council discussion.

Andrew Gregson, NOCC President, highlighted the promotional and marketing initiatives carried out for NOCC members, and recent increase in their online reach. The NOCC uses search word optimization for various online search platforms which generated last month's boost in business searches on the NOCC website. Mr. Gregson provided information on the benefits of the NOCC's proposal in strengthening the business economy in Buena Park for the City to continue delivering great programs and services. The NOCC hosts workshops for their members' employees to help develop and improve their businesses. As for the expansion of the program model, Mr. Gregson explained that the NOCC could accommodate a few additions, but may require more funding for anything significant. Mr. Gregson also discussed the ambassador program wherein members advocate for NOCC's initiatives and assist in recruiting new members. With regards to the proposed option C, Mr. Gregson indicated that with such a small scale of a program, there would be no meaningful impact. The program model proposed by the NOCC was designed to reach a broader audience as opposed to a limited one.

Following the discussion, the City Council supported Mayor Traut's alternative proposal of a program to support Buena Park businesses by offering grants of up to \$600 for chamber membership of choice, starting with \$5,000 in funding and potentially expanding to \$30,000 based on success, and a budget of \$5,000 for marketing.

City Manager France indicated that staff will meet with NOCC to discuss utilizing the \$5,000 proposed budget to promote the new program.

RECESS/RECONVENE

Mayor Traut recessed the meeting at 8:05 p.m. and announced the meeting would be reconvened in the City Council Chamber. The meeting was reconvened at 8:22 p.m.

9B. DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION REGARDING THE INSTALLATION OF A LITERACY WALK AT HEROES PARK Presented by Maddie Villapando, Community Services Supervisor

Item taken out of order.

Community Services Supervisor Villapando reported on the installation of a Literacy Walk at Heroes Park to promote literacy, physical activity, and community engagement. The Literacy Walk is designed to enhance the park experience by integrating early literacy development with movement in an accessible outdoor environment. A pilot program will be implemented in District 4 beginning with installation at Heroes Park, to enable staff to assess community engagement, program effectiveness, and opportunities for potential expansion to additional park locations throughout the City. Moreover, the installation of a Literacy Walk would promote early childhood literacy, encourage outdoor physical activity, and provide a free and accessible educational amenity for the community. The City of Buena Park, in partnership with Centralia Elementary School District, encourage staff and students of San Marino Elementary School to use the Literacy Walk during school hours, providing teachers with an additional outdoor learning opportunity, maximizing its utilization and community impact. Community Services Supervisor Villapando discussed the display signs along the pathway that wraps around the playground area explaining the purpose and function of the Literacy Walk. Stories featured along the Literacy Walk will be rotated every other month, with seasonal themes during major holidays, and may include prompts that encourage physical activity. Furthermore, the total cost of the Literacy Walk, including materials and installation, is \$28,808.50. There is currently no budget allocated for this program. Therefore, staff recommended a budget allocation of \$30,000 to Account No. 11-6240-275130 for this purpose. It was noted that staff is also in the process of securing a \$10,000 grant from Providence St. Jude Medical Center to help offset project expenses.

Council Member Sonne requested there be books available in multiple languages.

Council Member Franco spoke in support of the installation of a Literacy Walk at Heroes Park.

Mayor Traut read a statement from Centralia Elementary School District Superintendent Martinez about the value and benefits of the Literacy Walk to the community.

Following the discussion, the City Council directed staff to proceed with the installation of a Literacy Walk at Heroes Park and approved a budget allocation of \$30,000 to Account No. 11-6240-275130 for this purpose.

9C. DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION REGARDING THE CITY OF BUENA PARK
CELEBRATION OF AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY
Presented by Jim Box, Director of Community Services

Director of Community Services Box provided a report regarding a request to explore the opportunity to host a community celebration recognizing the upcoming 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. Staff suggested incorporating this celebration to the City's Summer Concerts Program Series by making the opening night a patriotic kickoff event. In addition, staff is working with leadership at Knott's Berry Farm to secure the area in front of the historic Independence Hall replica as the event venue. Staff proposed hosting the event on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., as the kickoff event for the 2026 Summer Concert Series, with the event theme "Celebrating America – 250 Years!" Director Box explained the planned activities and programming for the said event which aims to foster a festive, community-oriented atmosphere that celebrates the nation's history while uniting residents and visitors for the launch of the City's summer programming. Parking and transportation logistics are currently being coordinated between Knott's Berry Farm and the nearby Buena Park Downtown located across Stanton Boulevard. Other parking options as well as shuttle service transportation are being explored. It was emphasized that the proposed "Celebrating America... 250 Years!" event would serve as a unique and meaningful kickoff to the City's Summer Concert Series while commemorating a historic milestone for the nation, and hosting the event at Knott's Berry Farm in front of Independence Hall would provide an iconic setting that aligns with the patriotic theme and enhances the community experience. Staff sought City Council direction with the planning and coordination of this event.

The City Council discussed organizing a Mayor and Vice Mayor art contest for the youth wherein the winners will be recognized at the community celebration event; plans for accommodating parking for event attendees; advertising the event as a Citywide special event rather than as part of the Summer Concert series; adding a drone show for the event; and the cost for coverage of the sound system, lighting equipment, and rental of 10x10 booths, tables and chairs.

Director Box stated that staff and the Cultural Engagement Commission will work together to sponsor the art contest. The event could also be advertised as a Citywide special event rather than a Summer Concert at the park. At its next site visit, Council Members are invited to participate in assessing parking conditions and booths set up for the event. As for the anticipated cost for the proposed event, it was noted that certain items are already owned by the City, which would help reduce overall costs. However, staff expressed interest in purchasing items consistent with the event theme as well as a portable stage which will not be provided by Knott's Berry Farm.

City Manager France indicated that an aerial show would be a significant added cost; however, staff could discuss such recommendation with Knott's Berry Farm.

Following the discussion, the City Council directed staff to proceed with the planning and coordination of the event.

9D. DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION REGARDING ASSEMBLY BILL AB 2463
(PETRIE-NORRIS)
Presented by Jessica Fewer, Senior Management Analyst

Senior Management Analyst Fewer provided reported on AB 2463 (Petrie-Norris) which is a proposal to change the method used to determine allowable profits for electric and gas utilities. AB 2463 does not directly relate to City operations and oversight, and was brought before the City Council for further discussion. At this time, the California Public Utilities Commission

(CPUC) determines profit levels using financial models that assess the risks utilities assume when investing in infrastructure. The bill requires the CPUC to reevaluate its models and establish a more transparent, consistent framework for setting utility profits based on market conditions and risk. The bill also directs the CPUC to adjust utility profits when circumstances change; emphasizes the need to evaluate current adjustment mechanisms to confirm their effectiveness and to prevent utilities from earning full profits on projects where they did not assume the complete financial risk; and, promotes linking a portion of utility earnings to performance metrics such as reliability, safety, and prompt service. Furthermore, AB 2463 aims to protect ratepayers from overpaying by aligning utility profits with actual risk and performance, ensuring earnings are fair and investments remain attractive.

The City Council spoke in support of the item and approved the Mayor to sign the letter of support for AB 2463.

10. CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager France reported on the following:

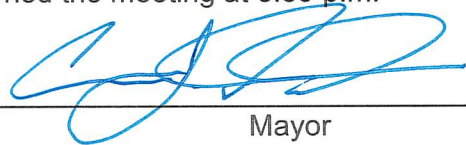
- 2026 Police Appreciation Luncheon, April 23, 2026, 9:30 a.m., at the Heritage Hall.
- Tentative schedule for the Arbor Day event is May 2, 2026.

11. COMMISSION & COMMITTEE UPDATES

Director of Government and Community Relations/City Clerk Vicuña reported three vacancies for District 2 for the following Commissions: Planning Commission, Cultural Engagement Commission, and Traffic and Transportation Commission. Interested residents may contact Council Member Franco, submit an application online, or contact the City Clerk's Office for more information.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Traut adjourned the meeting at 8:59 p.m.



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk