

Lakewood Youth Council Meeting Agenda
Thursday, January 22nd, 2026 6:00pm
Lakewood City Hall

Members in Attendance: Alessio Matera, Mel Diemert, Ceci Whiteamire, Sean Miller, Danica Herberger, Maria Zajac, Era Lulo, Caden Sandoval, Marin Petti, Cora Barcelona, Archer Brandon

Members Absent: Porter Gilliland, Gian Frederick, Brad Krichbaum, Landon Vincel

Meeting called to order by Mel Diemert at 6:06.

Sean Miller moves to approve the minutes from December meeting. Era Lulo seconds. Minutes approved.

Maria Zajac presented current progress on the bike rack project and asked if anybody had any thoughts for a forthcoming bike/transportation survey. It was decided that it would be bike-specific. Maria Zajac proposed that she would draft a letter for free bus passes for youth, and the council agreed. Maria Zajac also asked if there could be a solution for many sidewalks being unshoveled/iced over during winter.

Era Lulo presented an idea about promoting youth bands. This includes possibly having youth bands perform at community events and venues (Lakewood Public Library, Lakewood Park) and having a Battle of the Bands for training, visibility, and opportunities for scholarships from local music schools. This could include partnering with Beck Center or Lakewood Alive or local adult bands for mentors. An idea was put out to send a survey to Lakewood youth to see how many bands would be interested. Alessio Matera asked for a mock-up of a poster and a survey to be created by next month, where the council can decide how to publicize.

Era Lulo proposed a Small Business Summer Program for youth with potential financial advisors to teach youth how to run a business. Ms. Chodzin suggested writing a letter to the recreation department. Alessio Matera reminded the council of Cora Barcelona's idea of a job board, and Ms. Chodzin suggested a possible connection to the Chamber of Commerce. It was decided that Era Lulo will contact the Recreation Department and/or the Chamber of Commerce about the summer program. Cora Barcelona will contact the Chamber of Commerce about a job board.

Maria Zajac talked about a potential recommendation letter to City Council to ask them to use small businesses instead of chains for what they buy whenever possible.

Sean Miller gave an art commission update. Maria Zajac learned from the mayor that more bike racks will be up in the Spring/Summer. Sean Miller shared an email she received after asking the mayor if implementing artwork on these bike racks would be feasible. All of the contacts she had heard from agreed with this proposal and asserted that they would see what could be done.

Sean Miller proposed a Pride Event. Sean Miller thought it would be good to reach out to the organizers of last year's event (which was cancelled due to thunderstorms) and ask if there were plans for the future. The council agreed that Sean Miller should reach out to them.

Mel Diemert asks for new business. Marin Petti asked what the council's role would be with youth protests. Ms. Strebis said a good avenue would be to partner with another group. The council talked about ICE terrorizing Cleveland and the importance of voting in November, educating people about their rights, and using whistles to warn people. Alessio Matera asked if we can put together a campaign encouraging young people to vote, and Maria Zajac and Cora Barcelona expressed interest. There was brief discussion about what type of committee this would fall under. It was decided that people will come with ideas for this potential new advocacy committee at the next meeting, where the council will vote. Era Lulo updated the council that the Mental Health Directive is finished and asked for people to add feedback if needed in the coming months. Archer Brandon spoke about practices (murals on crosswalks, painted bike racks, plastic dividers, curb bump-outs) that can slow cars by up to 30% and therefore reduce automobile accidents. Maria Zajac updated everybody that she has been mapping the bike racks and noticed some areas of interest.

Meeting adjourned by Mel Diemert at 7:24.