



Altadena Town Council

Meeting Minutes – September 16, 2025

Start time – 7:05 pm, End time – 8:59pm

1. CALL TO ORDER – meeting called to order at 7:00pm – Victoria Knapp, Chair

1.1 Pledge of Allegiance – Hayden Meadows, Student Honoree

1.2 Roll Call - Kim Yu, Recording Secretary

1.2.1 The following Councilmembers were present: Victoria Knapp, Nic Arnzen, Milissa Marona, Dorothy Wong, Isis Moulden, Pat Sutherlen, Reggie Wilkins, Kim Yu, Diane Marcussen, Japhena Musson, Jon Carmody, Sylvia Vega, Justin Marahmas, Vi-Yvette Stewart Gordon

1.2.2 There were two excused absences: Darlene Greene, and Connor Cipolla

1.3 Approve August 19, 2025, Meeting Agenda - Nic Arnzen, Vice Chair

1.3.1 Meeting agenda was approved with the following changes: 2.5 – Strike Corresponding Secretary, add 3.4 – Dorothy Wong, update 5.1 – Mark Mariscal for CCAR, 5.3 – Regina Kenji, Strike 6.3, and add 8.3-4603.01.

1.3.2 Motion – Arnzen, second – Vega, all approved

2. OFFICERS' REPORTS

2.1 Chair - Victoria Knapp

2.1.1 Update on rebuilding efforts – 251 permits issued, 333 waiting for response from property owner, 177 new foundations poured

2.1.2 LTRG – Long Term recovery Group – will officially open on October 7

2.2 Vice Chair - Nic Arnzen

2.2.1 Recognized National Hispanic Heritage month

2.3 Recording Secretary, Approve August 2025 meeting minutes - Kim Yu

2.3.1.1 Minutes approved with no corrections.

2.3.1.1.1 Abstained due to absences – Vega, Marahmas, and Stewart-Gordon

2.4 Treasurer - Milissa Marona

2.4.1 Opening balance: \$7609.00

2.4.2 Spent \$455.26 and received \$102.00 in donations from the last meeting

2.4.3 Closing balance is: \$7256.25

3 PUBLIC SAFETY REPORTS

3.1 Altadena Sheriff's Station - Captain Ethan Marquez

- 3.1.1.1 Crime continues to be on a downward trend
- 3.1.1.2 Current crime strategy – deputies in plain clothes or undercover
- 3.1.1.3 Bus Pull on August 23
 - 3.1.1.3.1 Sergeant Lew from Temple Station joined – it was his idea to partner with Altadena Station to do the bus pull
 - 3.1.1.3.2 Raised \$22,000.00 and proceeds were awarded to the Altadena Eaton Fire Relief Fund – going directly to fire survivors.
- 3.1.1.4 Councilmember Wong expressed concerns over people trying to scam our neighbors and to be careful out there with your identity.
 - 3.1.1.4.1 Sheriffs – report all crimes to the station.

3.2 California Highway Patrol - Officer Bay

- 3.2.1 6 crashes in August – 1 DUI, 1 Hit and Run, 1 major injury with e-bike (Washington and Altadena Dr.)
- 3.2.2 Continues to partner with the Sheriffs with crime suppression.
- 3.2.3 Enforcement on cars passing school buses – its back to school – making sure children get to school safely

3.3 L.A. County Fire - Asst. Fire Chief Pat Sprengel

- 3.3.1 221 incidents – 161 Medical – 127 transported, 4 fires – 2 vehicles files and 2 trash fires, 1 hazardous condition and 6 traffic accidents.
- 3.3.2 Clear up miscommunication recently reported on a CBS news story: It is untrue. LA County Fire does not advocate for residents to stay behind to fight fires.
 - 3.3.2.1 Residents are encouraged to evacuate and be prepared to do so and practice ready set go.
- 3.3.3 Forestry – Councilmember Dorothy Wong
 - 3.3.3.1 Thank you USACE for their assistance in moving the cabins

*Note – we moved 5.1 up to this point the in meeting. Please go to section 5.1 in these minutes for that report

4 COMMUNITY REPORTS

4.1 CCAR – Community Coalition for Altadena Recovery – Mark Mariscal

4.1.1 Coalition for Altadena Recovery (CCAR) was formed, bringing together long-established local groups to provide rapid feedback to the supervisor on land use, zoning, and rebuilding challenges.

4.1.1.1 Business Support: CCAR held a small business roundtable to hear directly from owners about pre- and post-fire challenges. The goal is to ensure small businesses get resources, outreach, and ongoing support alongside residential recovery.

4.2 Altadena Rotary Club – Mark Mariscal

4.2.1 Small grants are being given out to organizations that are doing work in the community \$100-\$5k range – neighborhood gathering grants are also available

4.2.2 October 4 – next pancake breakfast, January 4, 2026, will collaborate with sheriffs to put together 5k/10K run, January 7 – 1 year mark – will have a big gathering – stay tuned.

4.3 LA County Department of Public Works – Regina Kenji – Parkway trees

4.3.1 Altadena had 16,300 parkway trees pre-fire; as of September 2025, about 15,000 remain.

4.3.2 1,300 trees removed due to fire damage (hazardous, unstable, or no regrowth after six months).

4.3.3 Arborists monitored ~3,000 damaged trees in April; ~200 still under observation.

4.3.4 346 stumps from fire and windstorms scheduled for removal by end of October; 60 additional trees to be removed next week.

4.3.5 Tree planting on hold at fire-damaged or vacant sites until rebuilds complete.

4.3.6 Residents can request new trees through the Parkway Trees website.

4.3.7 Q&A: Data by census tract not yet available; palm trees under routine maintenance, no large-scale removals planned.

4.4 LA County Department of Public Works – Alicia Ramos – Equity Framework

4.4.1 Provided update on the Public Works Equity Framework, a countywide effort developed over three years to guide more equitable decision-making in projects, programs, and services.

4.4.2 Originated from an August 2021 Board of Supervisors motion supporting Public Works' goal to reduce or eliminate disparities across LA County communities.

4.4.3 Framework research included policy review, investment and maintenance analysis, alignment with county equity goals, and

extensive community and stakeholder engagement (interviews, tabling events, and surveys).

4.4.4 Six key themes identified:

4.4.4.1 Community engagement & partnership – desire for ongoing communication and collaboration.

4.4.4.2 Use of data – make information more accessible and actionable.

4.4.4.3 Workforce diversity & inclusion – ensure staff skills reflect community needs.

4.4.4.4 Policy & practice consistency – apply best practices uniformly across departments.

4.4.4.5 Inter-agency collaboration – improve coordination among county, city, and state entities.

4.4.4.6 Organizational culture – model equity internally within Public Works.

4.4.5 The draft Equity Framework and supporting materials (fact sheet and QR code) are available online. Public feedback is encouraged through the provided website and email link.

4.4.6 Council requested to post the framework link on the ATC website for community access.

4.5 Library – Nikki Winslow

4.5.1 Library hours were presented, closed 10/13 for staff development day

4.5.2 Looking for participants in the mural project for the Bob Lucas Library

4.5.3 Main Library construction update – EIR will be coming soon after which a 45 day public comment period will begin.

4.5.4 For a complete list of all library activities and event calendar please visit their website.

4.6 Parks and Recreation – Guillermo Portillo

4.6.1 Parks program overview was shared

4.6.2 Community meeting on 9/18

4.6.3 Supervisor Barger approved funding for extended pool season

4.7 Eaton Canyon Nature Center – Ranger Richard Smart

4.7.1 Eaton Canyon is closed for the rest of this year and all of 2026 due to safety reasons and to give nature time to heal

4.7.2 September community meeting at Loma Alta Park on 9/27

4.8 Eaton Fire Collaborative – Bree Jensen

4.8.1 Organically built – 150 organizations participating

4.8.2 Opening the Collaboratory – 540 W. Woodbury on October 7th

4.9 Owen Brown Committee – Chris O’Malley

4.9.1 Documentary in progress

4.9.2 Join the committee at the Altadena Library on 9.25 from 7-9pm – more info on the Altadena Heritage website

5 SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

5.1 LA County Assessor – Post-Fire Property Relief Programs – Assessor Jeff Prang

5.1.1 The Assessor explained his office is responsible for identifying and valuing taxable property—not for collecting property taxes (which is done by the Treasurer and Tax Collector).

5.1.2 Following the fire, the office acted immediately to establish property-tax relief pathways and has processed approximately 18,000 of 24,000 impacted parcels (about 75 percent). Over \$12 billion in assessed value reductions have been applied.

5.1.3 Breakdown of damage: ~11,000 homes destroyed, 2,000 partially damaged, 5,000 with smoke damage, and about 6,000 still under review.

5.1.4 The Assessor reviewed available programs:

5.1.4.1 Misfortune & Calamity (M&C): For damage $\geq$ \$10,000 (including smoke). Assessed value is lowered until rebuild; pre-fire tax base restored after reconstruction. Current filing window 12 months (proposed extension to 24 months). Documentation may be uploaded online.

5.1.4.2 Substantially Equivalent Rebuilds: Assessment based on square footage of replacement structure; height or materials do not affect tax base. Any area added beyond prior square footage is assessed at market value.

5.1.4.3 Base-Year Transfer Options: Prop 50 (LA County, 5-year window), Prop 171 (to 14 counties), Prop 19 (statewide 2-year window for equal-or-lesser-value replacements).

5.1.4.4 Decline-in-Value: If current market value drops below assessed value, assessment can be temporarily reduced; Assessor pursuing legislation to apply reductions for fire damage as of the 1/1/2025 lien date.

5.1.4.5 Residents are urged to update mailing addresses through the Assessor’s e-Services portal to receive refund checks and notices promptly. Returned refunds are being researched and reissued when possible.

- 5.1.4.6 Homeowner Alert Program: Allows owners to register email addresses for title-fraud alerts within 48 hours of any recorded deed activity.
- 5.1.4.7 Legislative items underway:
 - 5.1.4.7.1 Extend M&C filing period to 24 months.
 - 5.1.4.7.2 Extend ownership/heirship correction window to 3 years (common issue in multigenerational Altadena properties).
 - 5.1.4.7.3 Align “substantially equivalent” tax standard with the Governor’s 110 percent build-back allowance (AB 1253 did not pass this session).
- 5.1.4.8 During Q&A:
 - 5.1.4.8.1 Confirmed that M&C can be submitted online and reduces taxes accordingly.
 - 5.1.4.8.2 Refund checks are reissued as addresses are updated.
 - 5.1.4.8.3 “Substantially equivalent” focuses on square footage only.
 - 5.1.4.8.4 Pre-fire assessed value is retained for rebuilds regardless of modern code upgrades.
 - 5.1.4.8.5 Recent letters from the Assessor’s Office likely concern address updates, documentation requests, or tax bill proration explanations.
- 5.1.4.9 Actions / Follow-Up:
 - 5.1.4.9.1 Assessor’s Office to provide slides for posting on ATC website.
 - 5.1.4.9.2 Council to share Assessor links for address updates, Homeowner Alert sign-up, and M&C filing information.
 - 5.1.4.9.3 Assessor exploring a public status lookup tool and plain-language guides for key programs.

6 COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1 Land Use Committee – Diane Marcussen, Chair

6.1.1 No update.

6.2 Election – Isis Moulden, Chair

6.2.1 Expanded voting dates

6.2.2 Welcome packet online – applications are due October 17

6.2.3 Looking for volunteers to help out

6.2.4 Council voted on the proposed election rules

- 6.2.4.1 Passed with Councilmember Sutherlen opposing and Councilmember Marona abstains.

6.3 Legislative – Milissa Marona

6.3.1 Strike

6.4 50th Anniversary – Chair Knapp

6.4.1 October 11, 2025 from 12pm-4pm

6.5 Education – Councilmember Moulden, Chair

- 6.5.1.1 ATC Partnership with Penn on September 24 – choosing your elementary school event

6.5.2 Communication – Nic Arnzen

- 6.5.2.1 Working with Altagether.org as the most effective way to get information out currently

6.5.3 50th anniversary – Victoria Knapp, Chair

- 6.5.3.1 Save the date for 10/11/2025.

6.5.4 Education –Isis Moulden

- 6.5.4.1 School is back for PUSD. Chair Moulden encouraged neighbors to join the local PTA.

6.5.5 AEFRR – Milissa Marona

- 6.5.5.1 2nd round of grants of \$500-\$1000 on 9/30

- 6.5.5.2 Applicants who did not receive them should have gotten an email. Hoping to get a third round of grants out depending on if more donations are coming for the fund.

7 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- 7.1 Jodie McGloughlin – Announced an open house on October 4 (12–4 PM, Loma Alta Gym) to gather community input on reimagining Altadena’s **commercial** and public spaces. Partnering with SWA Design Firm; feedback will shape a design brief for the County and Supervisor’s Office. Website with QR code launching next week – contact: info.altadenasteadfast@gmail.com.

7.2 Natalie Hoursloot – Foothill Municipal Water District

Presented the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, developed with local water agencies to reduce risks from fire, floods, and earthquakes.

Encouraged residents to complete the public survey (QR code provided; results due Spring 2026).

ATC will share the survey link on its website.

Council also noted openings for members to join the Foothill Water District tour (RSVP due next day).

8 CENSUS TRACT REPORTS

8.1 4602 – Nic Arnzen

8.1.1 None

8.2 CT4603.01 –Wong

8.2.1 California Department of Forestry is having a Zone Zero meeting at the Pasadena Convention Center on 9/18 and the Oak Tree Ordinance update meeting has been moved to October 2nd.

9 ADJOURN – 8:59pm