



**SCRIPPS MESA  
FIREWORKS**  
*A Neighborhood Celebration!*

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### **Scripps Mesa Fireworks Minutes 2025-07-23**

**Members present:** Michael Spencer, President; Pam Stevens, Secretary; Karin DeJauregui (aka Karin :D-J"); Andy Mercado; Linda Lewis; Morgan Nipper and her daughter, Zoe; Amy O'Connor, SMF Newsletter; Jennifer Dronick; Shane O'Garro (attended remotely via Google Teams); Kim Frame-Thomas (new); Tiffany Cuthbertson (new); Lauren Kleinschmidt (new); Nick Yates (new).

**Others present:** Jeff Stevens, MMTC Liaison and chair of July 3<sup>rd</sup> Independence Day Celebration & Fireworks "Watch Party"

**Members absent:** Lou Labaw, Treasurer; Neil Bradon; "Aloha" Kimi Williams, Aloha Scents

Scripps Mesa Fireworks President Michael Spencer called the meeting to order and welcomed the new members.

#### **Wrap-Up for July 3, 2025, Event:**

The event included an **Independence Day Celebration**, organized and hosted by the nonprofit volunteer civic group, the Mira Mesa Town Council, as a **Fireworks Watch Party** and Community Celebration at **Hourglass Park from 4pm to 9:30pm**. The event featured a Community Picnic on the fields with food trucks and food booths located nearby, a "Fun Zone" with activities for children, hosted by volunteers from "The Gathering" Church in Mira Mesa, a variety of booths by local community groups and businesses, located inside the fence along one edge of the fields, and a car show with various styles of cars, classic and modern, located in the parking lot for Hourglass Park next to the fields. The event concluded with a 17 ½ minutes long **Fireworks Show that started at 9pm**, set off from Wangenheim / Walker Park. The fireworks show was presented by **Scripps Mesa Fireworks**, the all-volunteer 501 (c)(3) non-profit group who raised all the funds to pay for the show and worked with the professional fireworks company, Pyro Spectaculars, who set off the fireworks display.

Jeff Stevens, MMTC liaison and chair of the 2025 Independence Day Celebration at Hourglass Park, reported on what went well and what were things which could be improved next year with that event. Jeff discussed highlights of the written report he submitted. Here is his full report:

"Thank you to everyone who participated in yesterday's Independence Day celebration! I thought the event went very well. Very good turnout and everyone seemed to be enjoying the event. Following are some notes on things that did and did not go well:

Things that went well:

1. Everything that was important.

2. There was a real spirit of camaraderie among everyone who had a booth. Attendance was good and grew steadily during event. People seemed to be having a good time!
3. Fireworks were excellent.
4. The children's activities area provided by The Gathering Church were a very nice addition to the event.
5. The car show was impressive and also a nice addition to the event.
6. "Surfin Santa" and "Hello Kitty" were hits and had lots of pictures taken with them.
7. "Orion Doodles" the face painter was another nice addition to the event.
8. Lots of people visited the booths.
9. Food booths and food trucks were very busy through the whole event.
10. MMGS snack bar was also very busy, but better prepared so not as overwhelmed as last year. This year they had hot dogs and hamburgers.
11. Dumpsters and portable rest rooms were delivered by noon.
12. Instawork workers did their jobs well.
13. First aid workers enjoyed the event and had little business, which is what we want from them. They provided a few band-aids for scrapes.
14. No parking signs that I put out early morning successfully preserved spaces for food trucks and food booths.

Things that could have gone better:

1. Pre-event communication with dumpster and restroom providers was not great. Getting insurance certificates from the security company was a chore.
2. Security guards were OK, but a bit lackluster and didn't introduce themselves until about an hour into the event. They did chase out one illegal hot dog vendor from the parking lot.
3. Dumpster inspector complained that the dumpsters were not identified by the company as trash, recycling and compostables. We explained that we were labeling them correctly, and that this was the process we had used in past years, but they wanted something in writing from Republic stating their uses and that we would be fined \$100.
4. The organic waste trash boxes and dumpsters were completely useless. They collected almost nothing and contributed to the waste with empty trash boxes and bags.
5. Also had some issues with the county health department inspector. Because we would be required to provide warewashing sinks if the event was longer than 4 hours, we restricted the food booths to a 4-hour period from 5 pm to 8:55 pm. The food trucks have internal sinks so did not have the same limitations. This just totally confused the health department even though we had cleared it with them by email from the first time we added a food booth. Not sure they will let us do that in the future. The food booths were careful not to set up until 5:00 pm, although they were not so careful to stop at 8:55 pm.
6. The health department inspector also found a problem with hot water in the Kona Ice food truck, which led to the Kona Ice person leaving to get something to fix that and the inspector babysitting the truck for some time while she did.
7. The health department inspector also wanted the MMGS snack bar to be added to our event. I had regarded them as independent, but the inspector said their permit is only to cook during baseball games so they should be considered part of our event.
8. Some of the food trucks and booths were slow getting food out. The food was very good, though.
9. No parking signs stopped working by 5 pm as parking got tight, so the space we had reserved for Kent Lee was occupied, but we found him another in the EV charging section.

10. Lots of cars trying to park in the Park parking lot. Word needs to get out better to park in the college lot and that they are not charging for parking (hopefully that continues in the future). Quite a traffic jam at the end of the event.
11. We were expecting the main gate on the east side to be opened by 4pm. When it was not, we contacted park and rec and found out that they only have keys to the smaller entrances and that that entrance is considered a vehicle entrance controlled by the college. Jesse Dawn managed to track down a college person who was able to open in by about 4:30, but by that time most of the booth materials had been brought in through the small gates or lifted over the fence. We had very resourceful vendors! [Pam's Note: Aloha Scents and Mira Mesa AYSO helped others, too!]
12. Sound was good almost up until fireworks but became soft and muffled from about the time pre-firework announcements started.

Thanks again for all your work on this event!" -- Jeff Stevens

The cost paid by the Mira Mesa Town Council to host the Community Picnic and Fireworks Watch Party on July 3, 2025, was approximately \$7,000, Jeff said. That covered permits and fees, as well as renting equipment such as porta-potties and dumpsters. There were three food trucks and three food booths, and Mira Mesa Girls Softball opened and staffed the snack bar as they do for games, selling hot dogs and hamburgers and other food and beverages. MMTC did not charge a fee to food vendors or other booth vendors to participate this year.

During discussion, an estimate was mentioned of 2500 – 3000 people in attendance at the park for the Independence Day Celebration as the time for fireworks drew closer.

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### **2025 Recap and 2026 Kick-Off for the Fireworks Show –**

#### **Michael Spencer, President, Scripps Mesa Fireworks:**

Scripps Mesa Fireworks, a non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation, spent approximately \$28,000 on the July 3, 2025, fireworks show.

All expenses for the 2025 show have now been paid (as of 7/13/2025), except for one bill of about \$700 yet to come in.

Scripps Mesa Fireworks currently has \$2,857 in the bank (as reported by Michael Spencer, since treasurer Lou Labaw could not attend tonight's meeting.)

After payment of the final bill of about \$700, Scripps Mesa Fireworks will start with approximately \$2100 to begin the fundraising cycle for the 2026 Fireworks Show.

Last year Scripps Mesa Fireworks started with about \$10,000 in the bank.

Michael Spencer said he has applied for a CPPS Grant, which could help pay expenses related to the fireworks show, such as security and clean-up, although not be used for the fireworks themselves.

Michael has asked Pyro Spectaculars, the professional fireworks company Scripps Mesa Fireworks has worked with for several years, both pre-pandemic and on the three fireworks shows Scripps Mesa Fireworks has now presented post-pandemic (on Sunday, July 2, 2023; Wednesday, July 3, 2024; and Thursday, July 3, 2025), for quotes on how much a fireworks show would cost in 2026, both for a show on Friday, July 3, and for a show on Saturday, July 4. July 4<sup>th</sup> will likely cost more than July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Michael will share those quotes with the SMF team when he gets them.

Michael has also done some preliminary checking on the costs of drone shows. Those still appear to be significantly more expensive than traditional fireworks.

Morgan Nipper said she and her husband, Neil Braden, brainstormed a fundraising schedule for the next year. That schedule is included at the end of these Minutes. Both Morgan and Pam Stevens mentioned Mitz Lee of the Mira Mesa Senior Center has proposed bringing back a Parade the morning of July 4<sup>th</sup>, on streets in central Mira Mesa a shorter route than the old Parade.

The next Scripps Mesa Fireworks meeting will be on Wednesday, August 27, at 6pm at Mira Mesa Presbyterian Church, 8081 Mira Mesa Boulevard. (Enter through door to “Youth Room,” facing gravel parking lot off Reagan Road.)

Respectfully submitted,

***Pam Stevens, Secretary, Scripps Mesa Fireworks***

619-742-2261 (mobile)

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#### **2026 SMF Fundraising / Schedule Rough Plan (from Morgan Nipper and Neil Braden)**

- **July**
  - 7/23 Kickoff and review
  - Scheduled monthly fundraisers to resume in September, ideally to occur on same date as SMF meetings.
  - Ideally make advanced meeting schedule, regular agendas and financial reports to publish and share,
  - Budget TBD, Michael has submitted quote requests
    - 3<sup>rd</sup>? 4<sup>th</sup>? Drone?
    - Add NEW banner printing costs, new banners with vendor logos will help us fundraise (generic with vinyl patch?)
  - Commit to be proactive and aggressive.
- **Aug**
  - August meeting, can date be 8/27/25?
  - 2026 sponsorship tiers / letter to be revisited.
  - Additional payment methods / crowd funding to consider?

- Prep end of year write off campaign for businesses, deadline for IRS 12/31/25.
- Plan for better collab with MMTC Park Party Committee, and possibly Senior Center Parade.
- **Sept**
  - Panda Express Fundraiser 9/24/25. Can meeting be same date?
  - Sponsorship letter in process.
  - Prep for Street Fair, volunteers, flyers, promo materials, raffle baskets etc. To be finalized.
- **Oct**
  - Rubio's Fundraiser 10/29/25. Can meeting be same date?
  - Mira Mesa Street Fair 10/4/25 - Suggest \$5 donation to get opportunity drawing ticket - will get contact names from this.
  - Sponsorship letter finalized
- **Nov**
  - Sponsorship Letters out *NO EXCUSES!*
    - Logos on banners if donated by April 1.
      - \$5K+ large logo, \$1K+ smaller logo (need sponsor titles)
      - NEW: Consider "naming rights" (XX presets) for donation over \$10K?
      - Social thank you's for all over \$500
  - Giving Tuesday
    - Fundraising blast (email an social) and letters to people who donated via letter in past
    - What can we do with surfing Santa, reverse Christmas in July?
- **Dec**
  - 12/2 is Givnig Tuesday, promote with campaign
  - Previously no meeting in Dec, should we reconsider?
  - Month long Regal movie ticket fundraiser, will promote as usual.
  - July in Chrstimas with Surfing Santa?
- **Jan**
  - No Jan meeting last year, should be reconsidered, 1/28/26?
  - Restaurant Fundraiser TBD
  - Plan a VDAY promo?
- **Feb**
  - Feb Meeting 2/25/26?
  - VDAY promo, plan for St. Pat promo?
  - Restaurant Fundraiser TBD
- **March**
  - March meeting 3/25/26?
  - St. Pat promo?
  - Spring promo?
- **April**
  - 50% Deposit/Sponsor Banner Cutoff
  - April meeting 4/29/26?
  - Restaurant fundraiser TBD
- **May**
  - Banners printed and put up *NO EXCUSES!*
  - May meeting 5/27/26?
  - Restaurant fundraiser TBD

- **June**

- June Meeting 7/24/26?
- Restaurant fundraiser TBD
- Submit event details to various media outlets, tv, news, radio, socials (confer with MMTC)
- Finalize day of plans, flyers, promo materials, donation cans, volunteers to approach attendees

- **July**

- Any improvements needed for day of
- Girl scout pre-walk was amazing, can we do again? Can we get the local news there?
- No restaurant fundraiser, will resume in Sept
- Wrap up / Kick off meeting 7/29/26?