

**MINUTES OF THE
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2024
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MONTCLAIR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES COMMISSION**

**MONTCLAIR CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
5111 BENITO STREET, MONTCLAIR, CALIFORNIA
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Escalante called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Martinez led those present in the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Richard Escalante, Commissioners Hector Martinez, Laurie Milhiser, Arturo Padilla, Diane Wells and City Council Liaisons Bill Ruh and Corysa Martinez

Excused: Vice-Chairperson Darlene Ferraro, Commissioner Rosa Rangel

Also Present: Assistant City Manager/Director of Human Services Marcia Richter
Community Services Supervisor Jordi Ubaldo
Administrative Specialist Krystal Rabino

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Milhiser inquired why City Attorney Diane Robbins and Deputy City Clerk Krystal Roman were not listed under the “Also Present” portion of Roll Call. Ms. Richter informed her that staff is usually included in the minutes if they stay for the entire duration of the meeting, but this information can be added to the minutes. Commissioner Padilla made the motion to approve the minutes from the Community Activities Commission meeting on September 4, 2024. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes with the suggested addition of attendees.

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Richter announced that the Commission received a thank you post card from OPARC and an invitation to their Sensory Garden Open House on October 17, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. The post card and invitations were circulated for CAC members to review. Ms. Richter mentioned that the

Commissioners can RSVP to Ms. Rabino to inform OPARC on their behalf, or they can contact OPARC directly. Ms. Richter suggested that the Commissioners wear their Community Activities Commission shirts and name tags to these type of events. Commissioner Padilla asked Ms. Rabino to RSVP for the event on his behalf. Commissioners Wells, Milhiser and Martinez are not able to attend the event. Chairperson Escalante mentioned he will confirm his attendance closer to the October 14 deadline.

Mr. Ubaldo distributed a copy of the Human Services Fall 2024 brochure to all Commissioners.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Candidates' Forum

Ms. Richter reminded the Commission that the City Council Candidates' Forum is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, October 16, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Commissioners are asked to arrive at 6:30 p.m. which is when the candidates will be arriving to draw their seating arrangements randomly. All four of the City Council candidates have RSVP'd to the event. Ms. Richter also mentioned that staff has secured Tim Walborn as the moderator. She explained that Chairperson Escalante would traditionally sit next to Mr. Walborn since he will be introducing Mr. Walborn and handing him the question cards. Commissioners were assigned the following duties:

Commissioner Padilla volunteered to help with time keeping; Commissioner Wells volunteered to help distribute and collect question cards; Commissioner Martinez volunteered to help at the refreshment table; and Commissioner Milhiser volunteered to be a greeter at the event.

Chairperson Escalante mentioned that the Commissioner's participation is important.

Commissioner Wells inquired if the refreshments can be picked up on the way into the forum and Ms. Richter confirmed that they can be picked up before the forum. Chairperson Escalante asked if Ms. Richter would like the Commission to wear their polo shirts and Ms. Richter replied that their polo shirts would be preferred.

B. Halloween Spooktacular

Ms. Richter invited Mr. Ubaldo to the podium to give the Commission an overview on the Halloween Spooktacular. Mr. Ubaldo reminded the Commission that the Halloween Spooktacular will take place on Saturday, October 26, 2024 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Montclair Place. He explained that the event will be held on both the first and second levels of the mall. This year, staff has created a new dark room where there will be glow in the dark elements and neon lights. This room will be interactive for both parents and their children. Due to safety concerns, there will be no bouncers this year, and in their place will be inflatable games as well as a haunted maze, costume contest, DJ and other activities. Commissioner Milhiser mentioned that she is pleased the City has steered away from bouncers. She explained that she did not appreciate them as a parent or a grandparent, because they are extraordinarily difficult to supervise and not safe.

Commissioner Milhiser asked when the Commissioners should arrive at the event and Mr. Ubaldo informed her that the Commission should arrive by 5:00 p.m., similar to last year. This will ensure that the Commissioners can park, check in, get snacks, complete a walkthrough of the event, and familiarize themselves with the information booth. The costume contest will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Chairperson Escalante asked if there will be a time limit for the dark room. Mr. Ubaldo mentioned that there will be activities in the room, and once the participants have completed the activities, they will have to get back in line. Chairperson Escalante inquired if staff will be assisting with the flow of participants through the room and Mr. Ubaldo confirmed that staff will be in the room to guide the attendees.

Ms. Richter asked Mr. Ubaldo if he had created a map for the event. Mr. Ubaldo stated that there is no map yet, but it will be the same as last year and will be emailed to the Commissioners before the event. Chairperson Escalante asked if there is general parking this year, and Mr. Ubaldo assured him that the Commissioners will have VIP parking. Commissioner Wells asked if the parking lot will be labeled on the map and Mr. Ubaldo confirmed that it will be labeled.

Ms. Richter mentioned that at last year's October meeting, it was suggested that the Commissioners walk down from the stage in order to see the costumes better and to guide the winners to the stage. She also wanted to give an update on the idea of a first and second place winner that was spoken of at the last meeting. Ms. Richter spoke to staff and the Women's Club of Montclair about this idea and it was determined that if a child does not win a first or second place prize, it may make them feel worse than if there was just one prize to win.

Ms. Richter recognized the difficulties that the Commissioners have choosing one winner, and suggested the Commission try Rank Voting. She explained that in the past, the Commission has divided the categories and she suggested that this year the entire Commission judge each category. With Rank Voting, each person will choose their first pick and they will be tallied. If there is a tie, the Commission will vote again for their first choice and since there are seven members in the Commission, there should not be a tie. She also explained that the costume contest took a minimum of 45 minutes last year and she does not want to make it any longer. Commissioner Milhiser stated that Rank Voting may take a bit longer, but it may be easier because it eliminates the discussion while trying to decide. Commissioner Wells explained that sometimes she needs to discuss with other Commissioners to figure out what the costumes are and Ms. Richter mentioned that this type of discussion is still welcome. The Commission agreed to try Rank Voting.

Commissioner Martinez asked how many people usually participate in the costume contest and Mr. Ubaldo informed him that there are around 30 to 50 participants. Commissioner Martinez mentioned he would have liked to give all participants a prize, but there are too many. Ms. Richter explained that the participants will still get candy while playing games even if they don't win the contest. Commissioner Milhiser mentioned that not all kids show up to participate in the costume contest and may not know it's occurring due to the

volume of people at the event. She explained that those who want to participate will be looking for the contest so there are not as many kids as you think would participate.

City Council Liaison Ruh recalled when the event was held at the City facilities, that the winner's name and city they resided in was announced to the audience. He explained that we do not have to announce the last name, but announcing the first name and where the participant is from may be a nice touch as it kept the program very local. Ms. Richter mentioned that names are not announced to protect the children's identity. Commissioner Padilla mentioned that the child protecting laws have changed, but agreed that it was nice at the time of the program and maybe announcing only the city would be appropriate. Chairperson Escalante added that when he is taking photos he notices that some people do not want to take photos to protect themselves.

City Council Liaison Ruh stated that he has heard residents say that they preferred the event when it was held at the City facilities because it was focused on Montclair. Ms. Richter replied that the event simply outgrew the Community Center. Commissioner Milhiser added that she is overjoyed that the event outgrew the Community Center as the event has made Montclair a landmark that is otherwise overlooked by most. She congratulated Mr. Ubaldo for his accomplishment at last year's event and mentioned that no other city holds a Halloween program like Montclair. She compared its significance to Christmas Tree Lane in Pomona. Commissioner Padilla agreed that many people only know Montclair because of Montclair Place. Ms. Richter recalled that when the city of residence was announced, some complained to staff because winners were not from Montclair. City Council Liaison Ruh said he is willing to explain to the public if this became an issue again.

Commissioner Martinez asked what the preferred dress attire is for this event, and Commissioner Wells informed him that the Commission usually wears their Community Activities Commission shirts. Ms. Richter mentioned that the Commission can dress up in a costume, but they will need to be able to move around. She also mentioned that Commissioner Rangel has previously dressed in costume but she may not attend the event this year.

C. Military Banner Programs

Mr. Ubaldo provided the Commissioners with an update on the Military Banner Programs. He explained that two new Veterans banner and three new Active Duty Military Banner applications have been received. Seven current members have re-applied. Commissioner Milhiser inquired how many banners are displayed in the City and Ms. Richter informed her that there are currently around 70 banners. Ms. Richter also mentioned that letters and emails have been sent to previous applicants and staff is awaiting a response from quite a few participants.

Ms. Richter asked Mr. Ubaldo if the program is being displayed on the video board outside of City Hall and Mr. Ubaldo answered that the display should have been posted on the board today. He also informed the Commission that a social media post about the program was recently posted and he hopes it brings more attention to it.

Chairperson Escalante asked if the Space Force was added to the list of Armed Forces that can participate in the Military Banner Programs. Ms. Richter mentioned that anyone who is in the service can participate in the program. Commissioner Padilla added that the Space Force is currently a small branch so there may not be any applicants from that branch.

The deadline to respond will be by Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Staff will be making follow-up phone calls next week.

NEW BUSINESS

A. *Holly Jolly Holiday*

The Holly Jolly Holiday event will take place on Thursday, December 5, 2024 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Montclair Youth Center. Ms. Richter mentioned that Holly Jolly Holiday Committee is working on purchasing additional lights, decorations and inflatables in efforts to spruce up the event. Staff will also be purchasing refreshments and have secured the carolers and there will again be letters to Santa accepted. Ms. Richter recommended the Commission talk about who will serve as Santa and Mrs. Claus. Last year Police Reserve Ron Foss and Commissioner Rangel volunteered. Ms. Richter also mentioned that staff is currently working on establishing volunteers for the event.

Ms. Richter asked Mr. Ubaldo to inform the Commission about the new edition to the event as bouncers are no longer going to be used. She explained that although jumpers were the popular pick for the participants, they are an issue for insurance which will affect the Halloween Spooktacular as well. Mr. Ubaldo explained that the Youth Center staff parking lot will be filled with 30 to 35 tons of snow. There will be three sledding lanes for children and a 30 by 50 foot snow play area for families to enjoy as well as inflatable activities. Commissioner Milhiser was delighted by this addition since Southern California residents don't often see snow, but explained that staff needs to make parents aware of the snow so they can prepare their children with snow gear. City Council Liaison Ruh asked if there is a contingency in place in the case of rain and Ms. Richter answered that if it rains, we will not be able to have snow. Commissioner Milhiser remarked that this will not impact parking for families and Mr. Ubaldo agreed. Commissioner Milhiser also mentioned that staff needs to supervise the snow. Ms. Richter responded that Mr. Ubaldo has experience in organizing snow events like described.

Ms. Richter explained that if the community enjoys the snow, staff will begin looking into the possibility of holding both the Holly Jolly Holiday and Dashing through Montclair events together on a Saturday. The event would begin with Dashing through Montclair with the Police Department throughout the day until 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m., followed by the tree lighting. There would also be other fun activities for the community to participate in throughout the day.

Chairperson Escalante said he is looking forward to the event. Commissioner Milhiser mentioned that she can arrive as early as she is needed, but will need to leave the event no later than 7:15 p.m. Mr. Ubaldo explained that the Commissioners should arrive by 5:00 p.m.

to get settled, become familiar and ask any questions. Ms. Richter mentioned that assignments will be established at the November meeting. She asked if the Commission would like her to confirm Police Reserve Ron Foss for Santa. Chairperson Escalante responded yes and mentioned he will fill in if Mr. Foss cannot attend. Ms. Richter agreed and mentioned that if Mr. Foss is able to attend, Chairperson Escalante may be able to assist with taking photos instead.

B. Holiday Home Decoration Contest

The Holiday Home Decoration Contest application submission deadline for the community is Friday, December 6, 2024 at 6 p.m. The entry form will be available on the City's website and is also available on page 6 of the brochure.

The deadline for Commissioners to email their two nominated homes to be included in the contest will also be Friday, December 6, 2024 to ensure that staff has time to contact homeowners, purchase the gift cards, take photos and create the presentation. Next month Commissioners will be provided with a map and a list of the previous winners who are not eligible to be nominated this year.

Chairperson Escalante asked how many times a homeowner is allowed to win the contest. Commissioner Milhiser mentioned that there is no maximum amount of times someone can win. Ms. Richter added that there is no maximum wins, but a home can only win every three years. Commissioner Padilla mentioned that the list of homes not eligible this year will be distributed with the maps at the next meeting and Ms. Richter agreed.

Commissioner Milhiser mentioned that there is a house on Helena Avenue that wins every three years. City Council Liaison Ruh explained to Commissioner Martinez that this home includes a wonderful display and its own radio station that are in-sync. Commissioner Wells added that the Commission drives by the home every year they judge, even when the home is not eligible to win. Ms. Richter asked if the home is eligible to win this year and Commissioner Padilla stated that it is eligible and added that it is wonderful. Commissioner Martinez asked if this is the home displayed on the Holiday Home Decoration Contest page in the brochure and Ms. Richter informed him that it is not the same home. Commissioner Martinez mentioned that he cannot wait to see the display.

Commissioner Milhiser stated that there were previously issues with nominated homes not turning their lights on. She mentioned that staff was going to begin informing homeowners that they had been nominated. Ms. Richter stated that staff calls nominees based on information provided on their applications and informs them that their home will be judged. She mentioned that the homes nominated by the Commission receive a verbal or written notice that they have been nominated and when to turn their lights on.

Commissioner Milhiser mentioned that she was disappointed one year because two houses had their lights off. Ms. Richter responded that despite staff efforts, sometimes lights remain off. Commissioner Milhiser expressed that she is pleased we give them a chance. Chairperson Escalante recalled Mr. Ubaldo walking up to some doors during to judging to ask

homeowners to turn their lights on. Commissioner Padilla explained that the Commission has to be flexible with their choices, because one year he nominated a home and when the Commission judged it, all decorations had been removed. Commissioner Martinez asked if he should nominate an extra home in the case that this happens and Ms. Richter replied that there are usually enough homes nominated between the Commissions nominations and self-nominations and space is saved in case the Commission sees more homes they enjoy along the way. Chairperson Escalante added that sometimes, you may nominate a City employee's home and they wouldn't be eligible.

The details for the contest judging were covered as follows:

- The contest judging will be held on Wednesday, December 11, 2024.
- The Commission will meet in the Senior Center at 5:00 p.m. for the CAC meeting and dinner.
- Judging will begin at approximately 6:00 p.m. Commissioners will caravan to view the nominated homes and will score them on a scale of 1-10.
- Scoring and dessert will take place in the Senior Center at approximately 8:30 p.m.
- Winners from the judging will be presented with an award at the December 16, 2024 City Council Meeting.

ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

None

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Escalante adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Krystal Rabino', written in a cursive style.

Krystal Rabino

Administrative Specialist