

**MINUTES OF THE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2025
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 Padilla led those present in the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Richard Escalante, Vice-Chairperson Rosa Rangel, Commissioners Hector Martinez, Darlene Ferraro, Laurie Milhiser, Arturo Padilla, Diane Wells and City Council Liaisons Bill Ruh and Corysa Martinez

Excused: None

Also Present: Assistant City Manager/Director of Human Services Marcia Richter
Community Services Supervisor Jordi Ubaldo
Community Recreation Coordinator Angela Franco
Administrative Specialist Abigail Perales

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice-Chairperson Rangel made the motion to approve the minutes from the Community Activities Commission Special Meeting on June 11, 2025. Commissioner Padilla seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes.

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

OLD BUSINESS

A. 2025 Home Beautification Program

The winners of the 2025 Home Beautification Program were announced at the City Council Meeting on Monday, July 21, 2025 and were presented with a framed certificate and a gift card to a Montclair business or restaurant of their choice. The winners of the program included:

Home of the Year – Traditional
10000 Vernon Avenue

Home of the Year – Drought Tolerant
9154 Ramona Avenue

Chairperson Escalante shared that all the paperwork was submitted on time and no one was excluded out of any of the homes that the Commissioners submitted. Chairperson Escalante commented that the winners acknowledged the awards and were very proud. He expressed that the Commissioners and staff did a great job making sure that everything went well.

Ms. Richter mentioned that this year's Home Beautification was one of the best events we've had, as everyone turned in their nominations on time and there were no issues with duplicate entries. She shared that last year's two winners have received letters about removing their yard signs. The previous winners have until September 25, 2025 to contact Public Works to schedule the removal; however, staff will contact them to help schedule their appointment if necessary. This year's two winners have already responded, and their signs are ready to be delivered and installed in their front yard by the Public Works Department. Commissioner Milhiser mentioned that someone in her neighborhood had won years ago and was very proud and excited about the award. She went on to say, you couldn't miss the sign because it was installed in a place that was visible for everyone to see. She expressed that this is what makes her feel good about doing programs like this because she likes to see people's hard work being recognized and this is what makes the Home Beautification a really great program.

B. Human Services Staff Luncheon

The Human Services Staff luncheon, hosted by the Commissioners, was held on Thursday, July 10, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. in the Senior Center in appreciation of staff's hard work throughout the year. Food was prepared by Mr. Ruben Ortiz and was provided by the Community Activities Commission.

Chairperson Escalante stated the CAC appreciated the Human Services staff assisting at the lunch. He also said the CAC provided to-go containers to be able to feed many of the staff members who had to immediately return to their work stations.

Ms. Richter informed the Commissioners that she heard positive feedback and that the staff really enjoyed the lunch. She thanked the Commissioners for their time and funds in coordinating the event. She mentioned it is very nice to be recognized and everyone was very thankful.

Commissioner Milhiser asked why the luncheon is usually held on a Thursday and Ms. Richter explained that Thursday works best because it's the end of the work week for most staff and Tuesdays were challenging because of early dismissal at the school sites and Monday is a difficult day to hold events in general. Commissioner Milhiser said she would try to attend next year's staff event.

Ms. Richter shared that everyone enjoyed the traditional BBQ with hamburgers and hot dogs, and there were no complaints. Commissioner Padilla suggested recognizing Mr. Ruben Ortiz with a city certificate because he volunteered to grill the food. Ms. Richter recommended, because the Commissioners invited him to volunteer it would be best if they purchased a thank-you card for him. The Commissioners agreed and said they would like to show their appreciation. Chairperson Escalante offered to buy the appreciation card and have all the Commissioners sign it for Mr. Ortiz. Commissioner Padilla added that he is always willing to help the community and volunteers at the food pantry at Our Lady of Lourdes Church. Ms. Richter also suggested that they should give his contact information to Ms. Franco and she will add him to the list for the Volunteer Recognition Program.

Chairperson Escalante again thanked the staff for helping with the event setup and the slideshow.

NEW BUSINESS

A. 2025-2026 Tentative Calendar of Events

Ms. Richter reviewed the Tentative Calendar of Events to discuss events listed that will involve the Commission's participation.

Ms. Richter explained some of the events are mentioned earlier in the CAC meetings to start planning and discussing further details.

The Holly Jolly event will remain on Thursday, December 4 from 3:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The event is beginning earlier so the children have extra time to enjoy the snow activity that is planned. The tree lighting will still take place at 6:00 p.m. as usual. This event will be discussed more during the October Community Activities Commission meeting.

Halloween Spooktacular

This year's Halloween Spooktacular will be held at Montclair Place on Saturday, October 25, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Ms. Richter invited Mr. Ubaldo to present an overview of the event to the Commission.

Mr. Ubaldo shared plans for the upcoming Halloween event, which will include a new activity called the haunted train ride. There is also a planned costume contest for ages zero to six and seven to twelve with the same categories as last year: scariest, most unique, cutest, and best in family. Additional activities include carnival games, inflatable games, Trick-or-Treating with participation from some businesses inside the mall, face painting, and a balloon artist. Ms. Richter mentioned that the details for the train are still being finalized.

Chairperson Escalante asked if parking spaces and a breakroom would still be reserved for the event. Mr. Ubaldo confirmed that both will be provided, and it will be the same breakroom as last year. Ms. Richter added that pizza and refreshments will be available for staff and volunteers.

Chairperson Escalante also asked if the Commission will be handing out buckets and prizes like last year and Ms. Richter informed the Commission that the buckets were part of a grant program and they were all distributed at the event. We may distribute something different for this year's event, it depends on the programs available.

Commissioner Ferraro asked if there would be any changes to the costume contest judging. Mr. Ubaldo said they would continue using the number system from last year since it worked well. Ms. Richter added that the number system helps in case of a tie. Commissioner Milhiser stated she thought being on the floor with the contestants made a big difference last year. Ms. Richter reminded Commissioners of the email about the 2024 Halloween Spooktacular's costume contest where an individual complained about a store bought costume won over a homemade costume, which they thought was unfair and Ms. Richter commented that we can't please everyone, but we can do our best with the judging. Commissioner Milhiser mentioned that judges should take into account the effort families put into their costumes. Vice-Chairperson Rangel suggested emphasizing that the contest is meant to be fun and that everyone is a winner. Ms. Richter agreed and added that all participants receive candy for participating. She said they will include that message in the DJ's script to promote a fun and inclusive atmosphere.

B. Military Banner Programs

Ms. Franco explained the flyer was updated and applications opened September 2, 2025. Information is posted on social media and applications can be downloaded online or in person at the Recreation Center. Staff will be reaching out to previous banner participants via phone calls, emails, and letters. The deadline to submit an application for new and returning applicants will be Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. The City website will also be updated with this information, along with the Human Services Brochure.

Ms. Franco reported that this year started with thirty seven military banners: two are "All Veterans" banners, five are for veterans, and thirty are for active-duty service members. Last year, six banners were removed, and eight new applications were received which were three veterans and five are active duty military banners.

Chairperson Escalante mentioned that he had heard our previous Mayor Paul Eaton was possibly a veteran and may need to be included on the Veteran's Memorial Wall. Ms. Richter clarified that it is the family's responsibility to submit the request and that she would look into the specifics of his service.

Council Member Ruh mentioned residents have expressed appreciation for the program, often thanking him and the City for honoring military service.

Commissioner Milhiser expressed she was surprised and impressed by how many banners are displayed, especially considering Montclair is a small city. Ms. Richter stated Montclair was one of the first cities to put the program in place. Ms. Richter added that banners are inspected annually to check if they are torn or faded and banners are automatically replaced after three years. Commissioner Milhiser mentioned the City recognizes each Banner recipient when they are taken down and she is not aware of other cities doing this recognition.

Council Member Ruh asked how long the Military Banner Program has been in place and Ms. Richter mentioned that it likely started around the year 2000.

Commissioner Padilla shared he once had a banner, which he now displays at home, and expressed the quality is amazing.

ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Ms. Richter reminded the Commissioners that the Health Fair will be on Thursday, October 2 in the Community Center from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Chairperson Escalante reminded the Commissioners Soroptomist is hosting Casino Night on Saturday, October 18 in the Community Center from 5:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Ms. Richter reminded the Commissioners the Chamber of Commerce is hosting Taste of Montclair on Thursday, September 25 in the Community Center at 6 p.m. Ms. Perales will email a flyer with more information to the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Escalante adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Abigail Perales
Administrative Specialist