

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MONTCLAIR
CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2019, AT
5:30 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 5111 BENITO
STREET, MONTCLAIR, CALIFORNIA

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Dutrey called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Dutrey; Mayor Pro Tem Raft; Council Members Ruh and Martinez

City Manager Starr; City Attorney Robbins; City Clerk Phillips

III. PUBLIC COMMENT — None

IV. INTERVIEW APPLICANTS TO BE CONSIDERED TO FILL AN UNEXPIRED TERM ON THE CITY COUNCIL ENDING IN DECEMBER 2020

Mayor Dutrey asked his Council colleagues to provide questions they wish to be asked of all interviewees, if any.

Council Member Ruh stated he would like all applicants to state whether, if appointed to fill the vacancy, they would run for the seat in the next election, be it a Special Municipal Election held in 2019 or the General Municipal Election in 2020.

No additional interview questions were put forward by the City Council.

Mayor Dutrey announced each of the thirteen applicants would have five minutes to present an opening statement, and then may be asked to answer questions by any or all members of the City Council in addition to the interview question put forward by Council Member Ruh.

1. **Mr. Victor Mendez** introduced himself as a Deputy Sheriff with the **Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department**. He emphasized the importance of integrity in his professional and personal life.

Mr. Mendez stated he would run for election, should he be appointed to the seat.

Mayor Dutrey noted that Question # 9 was missing from **Mr. Mendez's** application. He asked **Mr. Mendez** what his top three priorities would be, should he be appointed.

Mr. Mendez stated his top priorities are (1) integrity, including accountability and transparency, based on his experience prosecuting officials in the City of Bell corruption scandal several years ago; (2) crime prevention and police response times; and (3) traffic control, including the many accidents and parking issues throughout the City.

Council Member Martinez asked if **Mr. Mendez's** status as the President of his Homeowners' Association, as noted in his application, would present any conflicts of interests, should he be appointed, and how he would handle those issues.

Mr. Mendez stated he would recuse himself should he feel there are any conflicts with his personal economic interests present in any decisions that come before the Council.

2. **Mr. Charles F. Krewina II** stated he grew up in the City of Montclair, attending local schools in Montclair. He discussed his journey of becoming a professional chef including cooking in the **San Bernardino County Courthouse** and graduating from **Le Cordon Bleu**. He emphasized the values and leadership skills his career has instilled in him, and stated he feels this is an opportunity to make a mark in the community.

Mr. Krewina stated he would run for election if he is appointed.

Council Member Martinez thanked **Mr. Krewina** for applying and

requested he remain involved with this great community regardless of the outcome of this process. She commended him for overcoming his life circumstances and becoming a successful and admirable young man.

Council Member Ruh asked if, as a professional chef, **Mr. Krewina** would be able to meet his obligations to the City Council by attending regular meetings twice a month as well as any other meetings as requested.

Mr. Krewina stated he owns his own business and therefore would be able to work his schedule around his obligations to the City Council.

3. **Ms. Josie Garcia** stated she ran for City Council in 2014, and was excited to apply when she saw there was an opportunity for appointment. She stated she is a longtime resident and business owner, working in real estate, and is a mother to two daughters who she and her husband raised in their home in Montclair. She noted she has 20 years of experience in commercial real estate and obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from **California Polytechnic University, Pomona**. She noted her top issues are economic development to bring in business, education, and community development. She expressed her support for building the **Gold Line** to Montclair, which is essential for the revitalization of the mall and north downtown area of the City. She stated she believes building relationships and taking care of the businesses in the City will encourage the businesses to give back to the City and to the community in more meaningful ways. Having been involved with her daughters' sports endeavors throughout their childhood including **Montclair Little League** and cheerleading, she sees the benefits of kids staying active and feels it is important for the City to provide more support and opportunities for the less fortunate in the community to have their children participate. She stated she believes that nurturing children through activity and education will empower the youth to succeed, volunteer, and make Montclair a better city.

Ms. Garcia stated she would be honored to run for the seat in an election.

Council Member Ruh asked **Ms. Garcia** how many Council meetings she has attended in the past year.

Ms. Garcia stated she has attended one meeting.

4. **Mrs. Ginger Eaton** stated she and her family moved to Montclair in 1965 and she felt safe in and loved her community. She noted she worked as a grant writer to keep the **Chaffey Museum** open after Proposition 13 eliminated its funding, was a member of the **Montclair Community Collaborative** when it founded the *Online to College* (now *Montclair to College*) Program, and serves on the **Reeder Heritage Foundation** board to promote the region's past through historic preservation of the Reeder family home and orange grove, with the goal of converting the property into a living museum. She stated she feels well-equipped to be an asset to the Council, and would not seek election in 2020 for a full term, but she would be honored to be appointed to complete the partial term.
5. **Ms. Cinty Katherine Sanchez** stated she has been a Montclair resident for two years, received her Associate of Science Degree in Psychology from **Mt. San Antonio College**, and currently works for **Upland Unified School District**. She noted that when she lived in the City of Ontario, she volunteered for her church and the **Ontario Chamber of Commerce**. She stated she loves the community atmosphere in Montclair and wants to contribute to the City. She stated she does not intend to run for an election, but saw this appointment process as an opportunity to offer her service to the City.

6. **Ms. Sousan Elias** listed her professional qualifications as a para-legal, a loan document signing agent, a Notary Public, a business owner, and a band promoter. She stated she has lived in Montclair for seven years, and is familiar with the Planning Commission and City Council review and approval processes from her own experience opening a brewery in the City. She noted she would like to help the City become more business-friendly and address traffic issues. She stated she would run for election, should she be appointed.

Mayor Pro Tem Raft stated she was impressed and agrees with **Ms. Elias's** suggestion to have a hotel business opening in or around the mall, which was part of one of **Ms. Elias's** written responses in her application.

Council Member Ruh noted in one of **Ms. Elias's** questions, she stated she would support the legalization of cannabis in the City to increase tax revenue. He asked whether **Ms. Elias** would approve of such businesses operating near her home.

Ms. Elias stated she would support businesses near her home, and is confident in the coming years cannabis will no longer be a cash-based businesses due to the sway of public opinion in favor of legalization and recreational use.

7. **Mr. Loren Martens** stated he has been a resident of Montclair since 1956, when the City was incorporated, and was a part of the **Montclair Police Reserve Association**. He stated he also supports the idea of a hotel business for north Montclair. He noted he is an avid railroad historian and over his career had attended meetings with **Gold Line** officials and made recommendations for the route of the **Gold Line** to the **Ontario International Airport**. He stated he would run for election if appointed.

Council Member Martinez asked if **Mr. Martens** has ever run for an elected position.

Mr. Martens stated he has run for both City Council and **Monte Vista Water District Board**, and has applied for Council appointment to the Planning Commission.

Mayor Dutrey asked how **Mr. Martens** was involved in the incorporation of the City.

Mr. Martens stated he went door-to-door to promote the City's incorporation so the mall could have a sewer system. He noted the measure failed the first election but passed the second time it came on the ballot.

Council Member Ruh asked if, looking back 60 years, **Mr. Martens** would have done anything differently for the City.

Mr. Martens stated he is proud the City has retained its local Fire and Police Departments, and that he would like to see the City continue forward in this direction.

8. **Mrs. Laurie Milhiser** stated she began her career at the City of Montclair as a clerk typist and continued to work in local government for over 40 years. She expressed that she feels she owes her career to Montclair for helping to spark the love for her chosen career. She noted she staffed the Community Activities Commission when it was first established, and now serves as Chair of the CAC. She noted she loves the City and has lived here for 37 years, even though it meant long commutes to work throughout her career. She stated the current conflict existing on the City Council worries her, and she is hoping to be the compromise candidate, with no intention of running for election. She stated she has no interest in serving on the City Council long-term, and would only serve through the end of the unexpired term, fully intending to go back to the CAC after the term ends.

Council Member Martinez asked **Mrs. Milhiser** to expand on comments in her application regarding character assassination:

“...until the Council resolves its current dysfunction and agrees to prioritize the interests of the city over personal differences, bitterness, and character assassination none of these will receive the appropriate attention.”

Mrs. Milhiser stated she hopes that elected officials will discuss character issues professionally and publicly and not assassinate the character of their colleagues behind the scenes.

Council Member Martinez asked **Mrs. Milhiser** to explain what she meant by “rubber-stamp Council.”

Mrs. Milhiser stated she does not feel the Council should blindly follow the direction provided by staff, but should ask questions and explore alternatives.

Council Member Ruh stated **Mrs. Milhiser** clearly has extensive government experience and is familiar with how government works, what governing means at all levels, and understands intergovernmental relations.

9. **Mr. Benjamin Lopez** stated he has continued to run for Council and won't give up. He expressed his motivation to seek a Council seat extends from his desire to serve the residents. He is supportive of the **Gold Line**, North Montclair Downtown Specific Plan, the success of **Montclair Place**, encourage Montclair youth to attend college, and support Police and Fire who want to work for the City. He stated he feels he could represent everyone, even the fifty percent of residents who are renters. He added in the last election he was only short 360 votes of winning a seat on the Council, and that he does plan to continue running for Council whether or not he is appointed. He noted he is self-employed and has the flexibility to serve the City whenever he is needed.

Council Member Martinez expressed admiration for **Mr. Lopez's** tenacity. She expressed concern regarding **Mr. Lopez's** repeated misrepresentation of himself as a Commissioner for **San Bernardino County Fourth District Supervisor Curt Hagman**.

Mr. Lopez stated **Supervisor Hagman** and his staff all have referred to those appointed by **Supervisor Hagman** to any Board as a “Commissioner.” He added Supervisor Hagman had appointed him to serve on the **West Valley Mosquito and Vector Control Board** as the County's representative.

Mayor Pro Tem Raft stated she is also a *trustee* on the **Vector Control Board**, and no other trustees refer to themselves as Commissioners.

Mr. Lopez stated he has emails that confirm that he is addressed by **Supervisor Hagman's** office as “Commissioner.”

10. **Mrs. Tenice Johnson** stated she raised her family in Montclair. She noted she is currently an Ambassador of the **Montclair Chamber of Commerce** and was recognized as Montclair's *Woman of the Year* in 2014. She stated she believes in working for the people and once heard a memorable saying that denotes how successful people are able to walk with equal grace among paupers and kings. She stated if she is appointed she would run at the General Election in 2020, but not if there is a special election sooner.

Council Member Ruh asked if **Mrs. Johnson** is currently being paid by the Chamber to work there and if she would quit if she is appointed.

Mrs. Johnson stated she began volunteering for the Chamber several months ago but was recently offered paid part-time employment, which she accepted. She said she would be willing to return to a volunteer status but does not see any conflicts other than for budgetary matters related to Chamber activities.

Mayor Dutrey asked if Mrs. Johnson is aware of the City's current state of finances.

Mrs. Johnson stated her understanding is that the City's finances are doing well with a healthy reserve, and that the rising costs of **CalPERS** has been a challenge to the City and that the City may need to look at alternative retirement plans. She noted she feels recent developments in north Montclair and around **Montclair Place** are having a positive impact on the economy and she supports the City's direction to transform north Montclair into a transit-oriented district. She stated she feels the area is being designed to attract younger generations to start their lives, careers, and families in Montclair.

11. **Mr. Edgar Gallegos** introduced himself as a resident of the southern part of Montclair. He asserted that his early career in customer service at **Sears** and later working for the **Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department** has instilled in him good values, and that he believes he is a representative of the current demographics of the City and of the younger generations the City wants to attract. He stated he is pleased to see a new grocery store will soon be opening in his part of the City, and that he would aim to attract more needed businesses to the area. He stated he would run for office in an election, should he be appointed.

Council Member Martinez asked **Mr. Gallegos** to state his position on the legalization of commercial cannabis within Montclair's boundaries.

Mr. Gallegos noted many illegal dispensaries have operated near his home and he does not feel the City of Montclair is the right place for such businesses.

Council Member Ruh asked how **Mr. Gallegos** would propose to attract younger residents and commuters to Montclair.

Mr. Gallegos stated he feels more restaurants and dense, lower-cost housing could achieve that goal.

12. **Mr. Joseph Nicoara** stated he studied hotel and restaurant management at **California Polytechnic University, Pomona**, and has worked in many industries from grocery to security, with his most recent employment with the Department of the **Navy**. He noted in the community he is known as "Coach Joe" due to his many years coaching soccer. He stated he supports after school programs, considering **Montclair High School's** teen pregnancy rate is among the highest in the nation. He also stated he would like to see traffic issues addressed due to the number of accidents he has seen occur on Central Avenue.

Council Member Ruh asked how many meetings **Mr. Nicoara** has attended in the last year.

Mr. Nicoara stated this is the first meeting he has attended. He noted he would run for election if he is appointed.

13. **Mr. Sergio Sahagun, Sr.** stated he was born and raised in the area and purchased his home in Montclair in 1993, where he raised his five children. He noted he has been serving on the Planning Commission for over twenty years, is a past Board Member of the **Montclair Chamber of Commerce**, served on the **Neighborhood Partnership** and Measure T Oversight Committee, and currently serves on the Measure K Oversight Committee. He stated he is a member of the Knights of Columbus of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. He voiced wishing to address concerns regarding traffic around the I-10 freeway overpass.

At 7:11 p.m., Mayor Dutrey called for a short recess.

At 7:24 p.m., Mayor Dutrey called the meeting back to order with all four members of the City Council in attendance.

Mayor Pro Tem Raft requested the City Council adjourn the meeting to tomorrow night at the same start time to discuss and consider nominations.

Mayor Dutrey asked if any applicants would be unable to make it should the City Council meet tomorrow to continue this process and potentially ask additional questions of candidates if necessary.

Mr. Nicoara stated he may have a conflict but would try to make it.

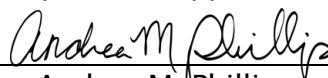
Mayor Dutrey proposed a process consisting of four rounds, wherein each round the Council will take turns making nominations and voting until a nominee receives three votes, beginning with Council Member Martinez first, Mayor Pro Tem Raft second, himself third, and Council Member Ruh last; and if no candidate's nomination that round is successful, beginning another round starting with Mayor Pro Tem Raft and ending with Council Member Martinez, and so on, until four rounds have been completed. If that point is reached without consensus on a nominee, the Council can then discuss what to do from there.

Moved by Mayor Dutrey, seconded by Council Member Ruh, and carried unanimously that the City Council continue this item to an adjourned special meeting at 5:30 p.m. the following evening.

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:32 p.m., Mayor Dutrey adjourned the City Council to a special meeting on Wednesday, February 6, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

Submitted for City Council approval,



Andrea M. Phillips
City Clerk