

**MINUTES OF THE  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2021  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
MONTCLAIR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES COMMISSION**

**TELECONFERENCE  
7:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Padilla called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

Chairperson Padilla led those present in the salute to the flag.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Excused:** None

**Also Present:** Director of Human Services Marcia Richter  
Administrative Specialist Renee Walker  
Senior Recreation Specialist Mayra Cano  
Information Technology Specialist Edmund Garcia

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Ferraro made the motion to approve the minutes from the Community Activities Commission meeting on November 4, 2020. Vice-Chairperson Escalante seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes.

**ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

None

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. *Military Banner Programs***

The deadline for new banner submissions was Thursday, November 12, 2020. Ms. Cano received twelve Military Banner applications for current members of the armed forces and two Military Banner applications for veterans. Ms. Cano is still in the process of verifying the information in the Military Banner applications received.

Ms. Cano stated that four Military Banners will be presented to recently discharged members of the armed forces. The Military Banner Presentation will take place at the virtual City Council meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Vice-Chairperson Escalante volunteered to read the script that corresponds to the slideshow presentation.

Since it will not be possible to present the banners to the recipient or their family in-person during the City Council meeting, Ms. Richter asked the Commission if they would like to set up a date and time to deliver the banners with Mayor Dutrey and the City Council. The Commission agreed to present the banners to the recipient or a family member with the Mayor and City Council Members at a later date.

Ms. Richter also noted that staff members plan to update the guidelines for the Military Banner Programs and will present the revised program guidelines to the Commission for review at a future meeting.

### **B. *Holiday Event***

The Drive-Thru Holiday Event was held on Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. and over 500 people attended the socially-distanced event. Ms. Richter commented that she received many positive reviews from the attendees and believes that this event may have been a light for many people during a dark year. City Council Liaison Ruh agreed that guests seemed happy and appeared to enjoy the event. Commissioner Padilla noted that the community Christmas tree in front of the Youth Center was well decorated and looked great.

Ms. Richter expressed gratitude to the staff members who assisted at the event and helped to keep some of the traditions alive. She explained to the Commission that staff members dressed as elves were stationed at the event entrance to check-in guests by asking for the names of the children present and an email address; this information was entered into a spreadsheet program called Google Sheets. When the guests drove through the photo station at the event, staff members were able to use the information collected at check-in to email the photo to the guests. Additionally, staff members were able to tell Santa Claus the names of the children in the vehicle so he could talk to them as they passed by him and Mrs. Claus in the sleigh.

Letters to Santa were accepted during the drive-thru event. Ms. Walker estimates that 150 letters were mailed to Santa Claus during the event and that an additional 50 letters were dropped off at the Recreation Center the week following the event.

Vice-Chairperson Escalante expressed concern that some of the children in attendance were being driven through the event without wearing a seatbelt. He commented that the parents may not realize the child is unbuckled and may proceed to exit the event without securing them in their seat. Vice-Chairperson Escalante suggested stationing a Commissioner at the end of the event or designating a safety officer to remind parents and children to wear their seatbelt.

### **C. *Holiday Home Decoration Contest***

Nineteen homes were nominated for the 2020 Holiday Home Decoration Contest. On Monday, December 21, 2020, Mayor Dutrey, City Council Liaison Ruh, and Chairperson Padilla visited the three contest winners at their residence to present them with a framed certificate and prize; each winner received a \$50 gift card to a Montclair restaurant or business of their choice.

Chairperson Padilla said that the contest winners seemed excited to have the Mayor personally visit their home and present the award to them. He added that the homeowners appeared to be happy that the City was still able to hold the Holiday Home Decoration Contest during the pandemic.

Ms. Richter noted that the day after Christmas she went to view Christmas lights around the community, but when she visited one of winning homes from the 2020 Holiday Home Decoration Contest she was surprised to see that all of the holiday decorations had been removed. She asked the Commission if contest winners should be asked to display their holiday decorations through New Year's Day. Chairperson Padilla stated that it would be a good idea to ask the contest winners to display their Christmas lights throughout the holiday season in order to give community members an opportunity to view the homes; he suggested adding this information to the contest entry form. City Council Liaison Ruh noted that the Commission can encourage the homeowners to keep their decorations up until a specific date, but added that they ultimately cannot control when the winners remove their holiday decorations. It was decided that the suggestion would be added to the Holiday Home Decoration Contest entry form.

### **D. *Community Benefits Funding Program***

Ms. Richter stated that invitation packets have been mailed to the twelve agencies invited by the Commission. The agency information, budget, and funding requests are due by Thursday, January 28, 2021 in order to be considered for funding.

Ms. Richter stated that there are still tentative plans to host an in-person hearing for the Community Benefits Funding Program, however, the details regarding in-person agency presentations are subject to change based on COVID-19 restrictions at the time of the event. If in-person meetings are still discouraged at the time of the scheduled hearing, then the presentations will likely take place via teleconference.

The following twelve agencies received an invitation packet:

1. AgingNext
2. Anthesis
3. Care & Company
4. Christian Development Center
5. Family and Collaborative Services Montclair
6. Food for Humanity
7. Foothill Family Shelter
8. Hope Through Housing Foundation
9. Montclair Meals on Wheels
10. OPARC
11. Project Sister
12. Visiting Nurses Association

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### ***A. Volunteer of the Year***

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Volunteer of the Year Program was postponed. At the CAC meeting on September 2, 2020, the Commission agreed that combining the 2020 and 2021 award ceremonies would allow the 2020 nominees to be properly honored. Ms. Richter informed the Commission that staff members have suggested solely honoring the 2020 volunteers instead of accepting Volunteer of the Year nominations for 2021 as well. She stated that individuals may not have been able to volunteer throughout the past year due to the pandemic and the stay-at-home order.

Commissioner Milhiser agreed that it would be best to proceed with only honoring the volunteers nominated for the 2020 Volunteer of the Year Program. She stated that she likes the idea of honoring volunteers for their hard work and dedication to the community, but expressed concern about selecting just one volunteer as the Volunteer of the Year. Commissioner Milhiser commented that it may be unfair to select one individual as a standout volunteer because it should not be a competition. She noted that some of the people nominated may have less free time than others, but that should not diminish their value as a volunteer; she also suggested restructuring the program to recognize all volunteers equally. Chairperson Padilla and Commissioner Ferraro agreed with Commissioner Milhiser. Commissioner Milhiser made the motion to proceed with honoring the volunteers nominated for the 2020 Volunteer of the Year Program without accepting nominations for the 2021 Volunteer of the Year Program. Commissioner Ferraro seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously to only honor the volunteers that were nominated last year.

**B. Memorial Day Program**

The Memorial Day Program is tentatively scheduled to be held on Monday, May 31, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Memorial Garden adjacent to City Hall.

Ms. Richter stated that one Memorial Wall plaque was purchased last year and will be presented during this year's program if the COVID-19 restrictions allow for an in-person event to be held. Ms. Richter informed the Commission that applications for Memorial Wall plaques will be available in the 2021 Winter/Spring brochure and on the City website. The Commission agreed that if any plaques are purchased for the 2021 Memorial Day Program, they will be presented with the plaque that was purchased last year.

Ms. Cano will contact the Montclair veterans who will be receiving their military banner after the Military Banner Presentation at the City Council Meeting on Monday, January 19, 2021. She will ask if they are available to lead the Pledge of Allegiance during the Memorial Day Ceremony.

**ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairperson Padilla adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Walker  
Administrative Specialist