

**MINUTES OF THE
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2021
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 Padilla called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Vice-Chairperson Escalante 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, and City Council Liaison Bill Ruh.

Excused: City Council Liaison Corysa Martinez

Also Present: Director of Human Services Marcia Richter
Administrative Specialist Renee Walker
Senior Recreation Specialist Mayra Cano
Director of Community Development Michael Diaz
Associate Planner Silvia Gutierrez

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Wells made the motion to approve the minutes from the Community Activities Commission meeting on September 1, 2021. Commissioner Rangel seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes.

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

OLD BUSINESS

A. Home Beautification Program

Community Development Director Michael Diaz and Associate Planner Silvia Gutierrez were invited to discuss their suggestion that the Community Development Department provide the CAC with a list of homes each year that would qualify for the Home Beautification Award.

Mr. Diaz stated that he hopes to make the process smoother by decreasing the likelihood that homes with code violations and without the required permits will be nominated for the Home Beautification Program. He stated that his goal is not to eliminate the Commission's nomination process but to aid the Commission by offering his expertise and knowledge about homes that may be contenders and to bring forward exemplary renovation projects for the CAC to consider. Mr. Diaz noted that it might be difficult for Commissioners to know which properties have code violations, which renovation projects require a permit, and which drought tolerant landscapes comply with state guidelines regarding the ratio of artificial turf to organic material.

Mr. Diaz also explained that the Code Enforcement and Planning Divisions work together to transform properties throughout the City and he believes these properties may be worth consideration in the Home Beautification Program. He noted that providing the CAC with a list of homes to consider would allow the Commissioners to be the true judges of each project because they can evaluate each home objectively. City Council Liaison Ruh stated that he wants to include more cost effective renovations in the nomination process for the Home Beautification Program. Mr. Diaz responded that many improvement projects do not require a permit and are still able to create a noteworthy façade.

Additionally, Mr. Diaz suggested that the Commission consider introducing a new category in the Home Beautification Program for small businesses that have made improvements. Chairperson Padilla informed Mr. Diaz that Congresswoman Norma Torres currently has a program to recognize small businesses and added that it would be a nice gesture if the City offered recognition as well. Commissioner Wells suggested adding a new category titled "Best Project of the Year." Commissioner Rangel commented that it would be a great way to recognize more people in the community.

Chairperson Padilla stated that he was unaware of the requirements and guidelines for drought tolerant landscapes. Mr. Diaz informed him that a permit is not required to install a drought tolerant landscape, however, a plan must be approved by the Community Development Department prior to starting the renovation. City Council Liaison Ruh noted his disappointment regarding the regulation that artificial turf must be limited to thirty percent of a residential landscape and stated that he will contact the proper authorities to express his concern. Ms. Gutierrez explained that state guidelines require residents to provide a sufficient water infiltration system using live, organic material for rainwater percolation. Mr. Diaz added that the ordinance may also limit artificial turf to thirty percent of a residential landscape in order to decrease the likelihood that it will become unattractive or possibly a code violation if it is not properly maintained.

Ms. Richter asked the Commission if they would like to have a subcommittee formed to review the current Home Beautification Program and suggest improvements. The Commission agreed that they would like to appoint a subcommittee at the November meeting. Ms. Richter outlined the discussion this evening included: 1) The Commission would continue to nominate two homes each for the award; 2) A new addition to the program may include receiving nominations from the Community Development Department of recently improved homes that may receive a “Best Project of the Year Award”; 3) Add an award recognizing a small business that has made improvements.

Mr. Diaz concluded by saying their role is to assist us in implementing the Commission’s program and Ms. Gutierrez thanked the Commission for inspiring the community to improve their homes and yard by providing this program.

Chairperson Padilla thanked Mr. Diaz and Ms. Gutierrez for attending and presenting at the meeting.

B. Outdoor Halloween Spooktacular

Ms. Richter reminded the Commission that the Outdoor Halloween Spooktacular will take place on Saturday, October, 30, 2021 from 5:00 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Alma Hofman Park.

The event from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. will feature games, arts and crafts, food trucks, and a costume contest, followed by a special screening of the Halloween movie, Hocus Pocus from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. All games and activities will end at 7 p.m. so attendees can enjoy the movie.

The Commission is asked to arrive to the event by 5 p.m. and were reminded that they will serve as the judges for the costume contest which will likely be held around 6 p.m. Chairperson Padilla asked where they should plan to meet and Ms. Richter suggested the basketball court. Vice-Chairperson Escalante asked what dress attire is recommended and Ms. Richter said they are welcome to wear a Halloween costume or their new CAC shirts they received tonight, whichever they will be most comfortable wearing that evening.

C. Military Banner Programs

Ms. Cano stated that the subcommittee met on Wednesday, September 22, 2021 to review the Military Banner Program guidelines and application form for active military and veterans. The subcommittee included Chairperson Padilla, and Commissioner Rangel; unfortunately Commissioner Ferraro was unable to attend. At the subcommittee meeting staff presented the proposed new guidelines and application forms that had been prepared and fully detailed by Ms. Walker and Ms. Cano. Chairperson Padilla and Commissioner Rangel made suggestions to both the guidelines and applications and a final version was completed. Ms. Richter said the new guidelines clearly state that proof of Active Duty status can be provided in two ways by the honoree or their representative; either by a copy of the front of their military ID card, or via a website available to active military or a family member to confirm active duty. Commissioner Milhiser asked if it was clear in the paperwork if proof of active duty wasn’t provided their banner would be removed and Ms. Richter and Chairperson Padilla confirmed that information is included in the guidelines and the application form that they sign and

submit. Ms. Cano also stated that at the end of September she mailed out the new guidelines and application to all of the fifty-six banner recipients. She has already received three responses and the deadline to submit the application for the both the Military and Veteran banner program is Wednesday, November 10, 2021.

Chairperson Padilla confirmed he made contact with the military recruitment office and they are willing to assist us in confirming an honoree's military status if necessary.

NEW BUSINESS

A. *Holly Jolly Holiday*

Ms. Richter shared the Holly Jolly Holiday is the new name for what used to be called the Holiday Tree Lighting event. She explained that due to COVID-19 instead of holding the event near the Youth Center for the tree lighting and having a portion of the program inside that this year will also include a tree lighting but will take place completely outdoors in Alma Hofman Park. The event will take place on Thursday, December 2, 2021, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The Community Center back doors will be open for the Mayor to welcome the community and light the tree. Ms. Richter stated that when standing in Alma Hofman Park there is a great view of the lighted tree and it will still be impressive. Once that is complete the doors will close and then there will be some magical lights, the doors will reopen and Santa and Mrs. Claus will appear and go to the sleigh.

The plan is to have Santa and Mrs. Claus in the sleigh on the basketball courts and the children will be able to sit on a bench near the sleigh to have their free photo taken, however, this year they won't be able to sit on Santa's lap and directly talk to him. Children will be encouraged though to write a letter to Santa and we will plan to respond to the letters that include their complete address, as we have in previous years. Ms. Richter stated the event will also include packaged cookies and hot cocoa free for the children but due to the higher expense of prepackaged food, the adults will be able to purchase their refreshments. Children will receive a hand stamp after receiving their free goodies.

Commissioner Milhiser asked if Santa and Mrs. Claus has been arranged and Ms. Richter confirmed that newly retired Rob Pipersky and his wife Ester have agreed to be Santa and Mrs. Claus. If Ester is unable to attend, she said her daughter will assist at the event.

Commissioner Milhiser also asked if the event would be cancelled if it rains and Ms. Richter confirmed the event would unfortunately have to be cancelled if that occurs. Commissioner Milhiser suggested that all publicity for the event state "weather permitting" and Ms. Richter confirmed that would be included.

Chairperson Padilla asked if coffee would be available for sale and Ms. Richter said it would likely be available for purchase. Commissioner Rangel asked who makes and how much coffee is usually distributed at the event and Ms. Richter answered that the City makes the coffee and

over 600 cups have been given at past events. Chairperson Padilla said he would check with the manager of the Starbucks on Holt Blvd. to see if they would be willing to donate coffee.

Holiday Home Decoration Contest

The Holiday Home Decoration Contest application submission deadline for the community is Friday, December 3, 2021 at 6 p.m. The entry form will be available on the City's website.

The deadline for Commissioners to email their two nominated homes to be included in the contest is Sunday, December 5, 2021. Next month Commissioners will be mailed a map and a list of the previous winners that are not eligible this year to be nominated.

Once all the nominations are received the Commissioners will be mailed another map with all nominated homes marked and numbered, a packet of pictures showing each nomination with their address and assigned number, and a judging score sheet listing each nomination by address and number. Commissioners are asked to drive around individually to view each home and give it a rating between 1 and 10 (10 being the highest). The Commission members will submit their judging score sheets via email by Monday, December 13, 2021. Staff will tally the judging score sheets and the winners will be announced at the December 20, 2021 City Council meeting. Commissioner Rangel volunteered to read the script announcing the winners at the City Council meeting.

ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Ms. Richter stated that two new polo shirts, one black and one tan, as well as a zip-up hoodie were distributed to the CAC Commission members tonight. Commissioner Milhiser thanked staff for including this purchase in the budget.

Chairperson Padilla announced that our next meeting will be Wednesday, November 3, 2021 at 7 p.m. Ms. Richter reminded the Commissioners that the November meeting is when the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission will be elected.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Padilla adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Walker
Administrative Specialist