

**MINUTES OF THE  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2022  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
MONTCLAIR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES COMMISSION**

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

City Council Liaison Bill Ruh led those present in the salute to the flag.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Excused:** Commissioner Rosa Rangel

**Also Present:** Director of Human Services Marcia Richter  
Information Technology Specialist Edmund Garcia  
Temporary Employee Karina Romero

**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 3, 2021. Commissioner Padilla seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes.

**ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

None

## **OLD BUSINESS**

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

Ms. Richter announced that staff has been following up with the military banner recipients who had been non responsive to the letters we mailed. Staff called the contacts we had in the file several times and were not able to confirm their active duty so as of today there will be fifteen banners removed due to non-response.

Those who did follow up and confirm their active duty in the military total thirty-seven. We also received new applications from two new residents. Ms. Richter reported that a total of forty-three banners will be posted throughout the community; two of those banners will say “We Recognize All Veterans” and two have been purchased by family members to honor their relatives.

Four banners will be removed of those service men and women who have been honorably discharged. Ms. Richter had plans for the CAC to present these four banners to them at the next City Council meeting, however due to the Omicron surge, the City Council meeting will be done via Zoom. Ms. Richter suggested having Chairperson Wells and the Mayor deliver the individual’s banner to their home in the near future.

Ms. Richter commented that the updated application process was working well and it will be useful for staff coordinating the Military Banner Program.

### **B. *Holly Jolly Holiday***

Holly Jolly Holiday took place on Thursday, December 2, 2021 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in Alma Hofman Park.

Chairperson Wells congratulated staff on a beautiful event set-up.

Commissioner Milhiser apologized for not being able to attend the event.

Vice-Chairperson Escalante stated that the “Photos with Santa” station ran very well. He said the number of attendees seemed to be double from last year but the lines moved quickly, and the staff was awesome. There was a small issue with the camera’s photo memory card but staff was able to fix it quickly. He commended everyone’s help.

Ms. Richter estimated between 900-1100 cups of hot cocoa were served, which is double from past years events. Also, we typically receive 200-225 Santa letters, but this year we estimate responding to and mailing between 325-350 letters. An estimated 300 photos were taken at the event and overall attendance is estimated to be approximately 1200. Ms. Richter commented having the event in park worked well and had a phenomenal attendance.

Commissioner Milhiser asked if the Holly Jolly Holiday event will continue to be outdoors next year. Ms. Richter commented having the event outdoors can be problematic due to potential inclement weather, but that for everyone’s safety it would be best to have the event outside

until the pandemic is under control. Commissioner Milhiser stated that a large crowd is awesome and can be appreciated more outside rather than inside.

Chairperson Wells mentioned the only issue she noticed was that the tree lighting was not visible from around the corner because of the building. Ms. Richter said the tree lighting was visible from the park where the crowd was stationed at the beginning of the event and there was a video posted to Facebook by an attendee showing the actual tree lighting. Commissioner Padilla said he could see the tree lighting from the photo line and people around him also watched and expressed joy. Commissioner Ferraro stated she had a total view of it and it was awesome. She added having the event outside was a great idea, weather permitting, because it allowed for more people.

Ms. Richter informed the committee that Public Works and Human Services Departments will be meeting to discuss options for a new tree to be designated for the tree lighting. The current tree has grown so tall, and due to the rain in between the Holly Jolly Holiday and Christmas, some of the lights shorted out. The company who hung the lights was called and they fixed the problem, however, it was costly. Ms. Richter will keep the CAC updated to any recommended changes to the tree lighting when the new CAC year begins in September 2022.

Chairperson Wells looks forward to the next event.

City Council Liaison Bill Ruh stated it was a very well done event.

Ms. Richter informed the commission that Chairperson Wells will sign thank you cards for Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus on behalf of the CAC, and gift cards had been purchased for both Rob Pipersky and Ester Mitre.

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

Twenty-six entries were judged this year for the 2021 Holiday Home Decoration Contest. Fourteen entries were nominated by CAC members and twelve were self-nominations from the community. There were three winners; two of them were nominated by Commissioner Hernandez and one was a self-nomination. All three families attended the December 20, 2021 City Council meeting. There was a PowerPoint presentation by Commissioner Rangel and each winner received a framed certificate and a \$50 gift card to the restaurant or business of their choice. Ms. Richter commented that the winners were happy and pleased with their award. The winners of the contest are as follows:

Holiday Light Extravaganza  
4832 Rodeo Street

Simply Christmas  
9917 Pradera Avenue

Merry and Bright  
4352 San Bernardino Street

Commissioner Milhiser commented she hopes to be able to travel as a group next year to see and judge homes that decorate in between the nomination and judging period. She mentioned that many times there are beautifully decorated homes that are noticed after the original list has been prepared but are seen as we travel together to judge.

Ms. Richter added that the self-nomination winner had recently moved to Montclair in August and due to her husband's death, she decorated the home herself to honor him. Ms. Richter mentioned the winner was particularly happy her home was selected as a winner.

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

Ms. Richter stated that the 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 27, 2022 in order to be considered for funding. She reported that as of today one application has been received. Temporary employee, Karina Romero will start calling next Wednesday to remind the agencies to turn in their application. Ms. Richter reminded the CAC that \$25,000 is available to be distributed to agencies this year.

The following twelve agencies received an invitation packet:

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

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

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

Commissioner Wells mentioned that she and Commissioner Milhiser had met as a subcommittee with Ms. Richter to discuss the Volunteer of the Year Program. She invited Commissioner Milhiser to update the CAC on the subcommittee recommendations.

Commissioner Milhiser reminded the CAC that the subcommittee was formed to discuss the concern of how difficult it is for the judges to objectively evaluate one person's volunteer service over another. She added it becomes more about the nominator than the nominee. Commissioner Milhiser explained if the nominator is articulate and comfortable with writing then there is a nice nomination versus someone who is not as proficient a writer. She said the subcommittee suggested that all volunteers be recognized without having to pick one volunteer over another as Volunteer of the Year. Commissioner Milhiser suggested it not be a competition but rather an event that gives recognition to all volunteers nominated. Commissioner Ferrero, Commissioner Padilla, and Vice-Chairperson Escalante agreed with

Commissioner Milhiser's suggestion. Commissioner Hernandez also agreed and stated this could incentivize more people to nominate volunteers.

Commissioner Milhiser added that sometimes volunteers in the top three do not want to be recognized and it would be easier for those persons to accept the appreciation of the City Council and their agency if they are not singled out. Commissioner Padilla agreed. Commissioner Ferrero also agreed and stated she likes commending volunteerism over who is number one.

Commissioner Milhiser made the motion to change the format to *Volunteer Recognition* instead of *Volunteer of the Year*. Commissioner Ferrero seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously to approve the changing of the *Volunteer of the Year* to a *Volunteer Recognition Program*.

Chairperson Wells asked staff to update the letter that is sent out to non-profit agencies, recipients of the community benefits funding, schools, and churches in the community that describes the change to the program and invites volunteers to be recognized. Ms. Richter agreed that staff would work on the paperwork and would recommend that if a volunteer is nominated to be recognized that their recognition be limited to once every three years similar to other CAC recognition programs.

Commissioner Milhiser mentioned concern whether there would be volunteers to recognize this year due to the pandemic and lack of volunteer opportunities, for example, school closures. Ms. Richter and Chairperson Wells expressed concern over gatherings and uncertainty about holding a gathering in April due to the current surge of Omicron. Chairperson Wells recommended postponing the *Volunteer Recognition Program* until next year. Commissioner Padilla agreed with postponing the recognition and commented that volunteers who have been volunteering during the pandemic will most likely continue to volunteer this year and next. Commissioner Ferrero also agreed. Commissioner Milhiser suggested persons who volunteered during quarantine and are no longer volunteering could also be included. Commissioner Ferrero and Chairperson Wells agreed.

Commissioner Milhiser made the motion to postpone the *Volunteer Recognition Program* until next year. Commissioner Ferrero seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously to postpone the *Volunteer Recognition Program* until next year.

## **B. Memorial Day Program**

Ms. Richter announced that the Memorial Garden is in the process of being remodeled. A sculpture of bronze birds, that used to decorate a clock when the Montclair Plaza was first built, will be added to the redesign of the garden. There will also be a fountain where the Memorial Day flags are typically placed and also another area to continue the Veteran's Memorial Wall. The redesign and construction will likely not be done by Memorial Day and Ms. Richter suggested planning the event virtually again this year. She recommended that the following year this event could include a kick-off of the remodeled Memorial Garden.

Commissioner Padilla agreed with a virtual event this year. Information Technology Specialist Garcia informed the committee that the 2021 Memorial Day video had 157 views on YouTube. He stated he could help promote the event on social media to make it more prominent. Commissioner Milhiser commented that the event seems to do better virtually than in person.

Ms. Richter mentioned that a total of three plaques have been requested by family members to be added to the Veteran's Memorial Wall but they will be notified that this will occur at the 2023 event.

Ms. Richter also suggested the poem that is typically read at the event be discussed at the next CAC meeting and she will talk to staff about a schedule for filming the virtual event. Commissioner Wells stated she likes the current agenda of the Memorial Day program and recommends just updating with a new poem. Commissioner Milhiser commented the importance of being together to read the poem in order to have similar pacing.

Commissioner Padilla mentioned there is a Sergeant in the Army Recruiting Station in Upland that can provide a band member to perform Taps live and they are willing to help wherever needed for the event. Ms. Richter will ask Senior Learning Coordinator Darrell Hickey about the logistics of editing in a live performance and will update the committee at the February meeting. Staff will also look into scheduling a Veteran to lead the Pledge of Allegiance for the event.

#### **ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

None

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairperson Wells adjourned the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karina Romero