

**MINUTES OF THE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2023
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MONTCLAIR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES COMMISSION**

**THEATRE CONFERENCE ROOM
9955 FREMONT AVENUE, MONTCLAIR, CALIFORNIA
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

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

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Vice Chairperson Escalante led those present in the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Diane Wells, Vice Chairperson Richard Escalante, Commissioners Darlene Ferraro, Edwin “Alex” Hernandez (arrived at 7:34 p.m.), Laurie Milhiser, Arturo Padilla, Rosa Rangel and City Council Liaisons Bill Ruh and Corysa Martinez

Excused: None

Also Present: Assistant City Manager/Director of Human Services Marcia Richter
Administrative Analyst Adriana Navarrete-Campos
Community Recreation Coordinator Angela Franco

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Padilla made the motion to approve the minutes from the Community Activities Commission meetings on November 2, 2022 and December 12, 2022. Commissioner Ferraro seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes.

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Richter reminded the Commission about the email they received from City Clerk Andrea Myrick regarding the required Ethics and Sexual Harassment Prevention Trainings. Ms. Richter informed Chairperson Wells and Commissioners Ferraro, Hernandez, Milhiser, and Padilla that they need to complete the Ethics Training. All Commissioners will need to complete the Sexual Harassment Prevention Training.

Ms. Richter stated that in order for the certificate to be valid they must spend two hours on each of the trainings. Commissioner Rangel believes she is up to date on both trainings and Ms. Richter suggested she contact City Clerk Myrick to confirm receipt of her certificates from a prior training.

OLD BUSINESS

A. *Military Banner Program*

Ms. Richter informed the Commissioners that the Military Banners Presentation will take place at the City Council meeting next week on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Chairperson Wells volunteered to read the script for the PowerPoint Presentation and also agreed to meet staff members, Administrative Analyst Adriana Navarrete-Campos and Community Recreation Coordinator Angela Franco, in the Council Chambers at 4:00 p.m. to practice reading the prepared script.

Ms. Franco provided an update on the Military Banners and said a total of 41 military banner applicants have been contacted. Of those, 32 applicants returned proof of active duty status and one is pending confirmation. Six banners will be removed of those service men and women who have been honorably discharged and two banners will be removed at the request of the applicants because they did not want to provide proof of active duty status. Ms. Richter thanked Commissioners Padilla and Ferraro for their help in contacting the families regarding their family member's military banner.

B. *Holly Jolly Holiday*

Holly Jolly Holiday took place on Thursday, December 1, 2022 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Montclair Youth Center.

Chairperson Wells stated that it was a fun event for the community and she especially admired the lighted tree, as well as Santa and Mrs. Claus. Ms. Richter expressed her appreciation for staff member, Senior Center Recreation Coordinator Deondra Gutierrez, who agreed to be Mrs. Claus when we had a last minute change. Ms. Richter explained that unfortunately, Ester Mitre had to cancel her participation and so a staff member, Senior Citizens Supervisor Celeste Dunlap, agreed to be Mrs. Claus but started feeling ill in the afternoon so Ms. Gutierrez played the role instead. Ms. Richter also thanked Vice Chairperson Escalante who volunteered to be Santa Claus.

Vice Chairperson Escalante stated he enjoyed being "Santa" and he thought the "Photos with Santa" station ran very smoothly.

Ms. Richter shared some statistics from the event including Commissioner Padilla's count of 396 attendees who entered the "Photos with Santa" station. Ms. Richter also thanked Ms. Franco for taking the 195 photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus and Ms. Navarrete-Campos for her help in responding to the 153 Santa letters that were received. Finally, it was estimated about 35-40 volunteers and staff members helped with the Holly Jolly Holiday including the Montclair High School Jazz Band and Key Club students. Ms. Richter thanked

Ms. Navarrete-Campos for also helping coordinate all the event activities since the scheduled staff member was unfortunately ill that day.

Commissioner Milhiser was pleased with the number of volunteers that helped at the event and expressed that City Staff are always so creative and helpful and that makes these types of events special for the community.

Commissioners discussed that the attendance was a little lower than in past years and attributed that to the colder weather and a recent surge in COVID illnesses. Ms. Richter mentioned that the event was partially indoors and outdoors and some residents may not have been comfortable with some indoor settings. She mentioned that staff designed an outdoor area for families to take more photos with holiday inflatables and a snow machine. Commissioners commented that it was a nice community event.

C. *Holiday Home Decoration Contest*

Ms. Richter reminded everyone that nineteen entries were judged this year for the 2022 Holiday Home Decoration Contest which included eight nominations from the public of which two of those had already been nominated by the Community Activities Commission. The three winning families attended the December 19, 2022 City Council meeting. Commissioner Rangel read the script while a PowerPoint presentation showed photos of each decorated home. Each family received a framed certificate and \$50 gift card to the restaurant or business of their choice. The winners included:

Welcome to Snowman Land
10169 Camulos Avenue

Once Upon a Christmas Time
10990 Kimberly Avenue

Journey to the North Pole
10040 Marion Avenue

Commissioners Milhiser and Padilla commented that they enjoyed being able to caravan together as a group this year to judge the homes and that it went smoothly.

Ms. Richter thanked Commissioner Rangel for reading the script for the Holiday Home Decoration Contest presentation. Ms. Richter also commented that when staff took photos of the winning homes that the homeowner on Marion Avenue came out and explained the design of his decorated home to them. Ms. Richter mentioned how helpful it was to hear the description from the homeowner to prepare the script and hoped we can have those discussions with future contest winners.

Vice Chairperson Escalante commented that there are many beautiful decorated homes in our community including a past winner, Mr. Murray, located at 9015 Helena Avenue. Commissioner Milhiser agreed and commented Montclair has many beautifully decorated

homes making it difficult to select just three. She stated how nice it is that previous winners continue to put the same amount of effort into decorating their homes each year.

Ms. Richter asked if the Commission had any suggestions for the Holiday Home Decoration Contest. Vice Chairperson Escalante mentioned it would be nice to give an award, recognition, or certificate each year to Mr. Murray for his continued efforts. Commissioner Padilla expressed concern that it might complicate the program and awarding him every year could be viewed as favoritism and might cause complaints. Commissioner Rangel commented that it seems Mr. Murray's home is on a different level and suggests the Commission give a special recognition just for him but added she believes Mr. Murray is aware that he will win every three years. Vice Chairperson Escalante suggested the Murray's home be publicized in the local newspaper to give him a special acknowledgment. Ms. Richter stated that the decision of submitting their address to the newspaper should be up to the owner and that the added attention might create some problems to the surrounding residents because the home is located in a cul-de-sac. Vice Chair Escalante agreed the added traffic might be a problem for the residents nearby. Ms. Richter commented that the owner seems happy to be recognized every three years. Commissioner Padilla mentioned that he has spoken to Mr. Murray and was told decorating his home is a hobby that he looks forward to doing every year. City Council Liaison Ruh mentioned when he spoke to Mr. Murray that he starts planning his decorations as early as August because he wants it to be different each year and enjoys doing it for the community.

D. Community Benefits Program

Ms. Richter stated that the invitation packets have been mailed to the thirteen agencies invited by the Commission. The agency information, budget, and funding requests are due by Thursday, January 26, 2023 in order to be considered for funding and no applications have been received as of today. Ms. Richter reminded the CAC that \$30,000 is available to be distributed to agencies this year.

These are the thirteen agencies who received an invitation packet:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. AgingNext | 7. Food for Humanity |
| 2. Anthesis | 8. Foothill Family Shelter |
| 3. Assistance League of the Foothill Communities | 9. Hope Through Housing Foundation |
| 4. Care & Company | 10. Montclair Meals on Wheels |
| 5. Christian Development Center | 11. OPARC |
| 6. Health and Wellness Services - Montclair | 12. Project Sister |
| | 13. Visiting Nurses Association |

Ms. Richter explained that the Commission will receive the agency packets before the hearing in March so they can review. Chairperson Wells asked the Commission to be sure to read

through the packets before the hearing and to plan to ask questions of the agencies. She encouraged the questions asked could be about what challenges their organizations may have, or how they use volunteers, or what resources they may lack. Commissioner Rangel agreed that showing interest and asking questions will prepare the agency representatives for future presentations. Commissioner Milhiser expressed that some of the agencies might have better oral presentations because they are accustomed to preparing and presenting grant applications. Chairperson Wells stated that she is most interested in hearing about their volunteers and more personal stories about positive experiences in their agency.

Commissioner Milhiser again shared with the Commission that she is an active member of the Assistance League of the Foothill Communities (ALFC) and wanted to propose that she recuse herself from the Community Benefits Hearing to avoid any conflict of interest with the process. Commissioner Milhiser stated she is not on the ALFC Board and has no influence on the agency’s decision making for projects or fiduciary matters. She said that she is a volunteer and works about forty hours per month in their thrift store. Chairperson Wells also shared that she volunteers for Meals on Wheels; she packages and distributes the food but has no influence on any decision making of that non-profit.

Ms. Richter explained that both are volunteers in their respective agencies and have no influence on their fiduciary actions. City Council Liaison Ruh agreed that the level of decision-making would be the determining factor in their participation in the process.

Ms. Richter suggested the Commission vote on whether Chairperson Wells and Commissioner Milhiser should recuse themselves from the Community Benefits process. The following action took place:

ACTION – Old Business – Item D	
ACTING:	Community Activities Commission
MOTION:	To approve the participation of Chairperson Wells and Commissioner Milhiser in the decision making for the Community Benefits Funding Program.
MADE BY: SECONDED BY:	Commissioner Padilla Commissioner Ferraro
AYES: NOES: ABSTAIN: ABSENT:	Escalante, Ferraro, Padilla, Rangel None Milhiser, Wells Hernandez
RESULT:	Motion carried 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS

A. *Volunteer Recognition Program*

Chairperson Wells reminded the Commission that this year the event will be different because instead of a Volunteer of the Year we will be hosting a Volunteer Recognition Program honoring all volunteers equally.

Ms. Richter announced the Volunteer Recognition Program will be held during the National Volunteer Awareness month and is scheduled to be a presentation at the City Council meeting on April 17, 2023.

Ms. Richter shared a draft letter and application that will be sent to the organizations in our database which includes all Montclair churches, schools, nonprofits, and agencies that have received community benefits funding. The application gives the agencies the opportunity to nominate one volunteer and Ms. Franco will be helping with receiving and processing the applications. Commissioner Milhiser mentioned the new format will make it easier for agencies to complete the application and may increase participation.

Discussion among the Commission included the following:

- Application deadline would be the end of February so at the March meeting we will know the number of applications received and how many volunteers would be recognized.
- Depending on the number of applications received logistically the program might not be able to be held during a City Council meeting and may need to be held in a different location perhaps on the patio of the Recreation Center like at our last event.
- In the past the Commission helped in getting donations to include in gift bags for those being recognized but that might not be feasible if there is a large number of applicants. Whether or not gift bags will be prepared will be discussed at the March meeting.
- The theme of the event was decided to be “Shining a Light on Volunteers”.
- Ideas to use battery candles or glow sticks were suggested to tie in with the theme.
- A gift for each volunteer could include a battery operated candle and certificate.
- Use Spring colors with an emphasis on the colors yellow and light orange.
- Refreshments to include as in previous years; sparkling cider, cake, fresh strawberries, and cheese/crackers.

City Council Liaison Ruh shared a poem with the Commission that might tie in nicely with the chosen theme. The poem he read was “Help me to change just one life, help me inspire one soul, help me to light just one little candle, then I would truly be whole.” Commission members agreed it would be a good addition to the program. Ms. Richter suggested the poem be attached to the candle being given to the volunteers. Commissioner Milhiser suggested City staff use their creativity in planning more details of the event.

B. Memorial Day Program

The Memorial Day Program is scheduled to be held on Monday, May 29, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Memorial Garden adjacent to City Hall. The Commission is asked to arrive by 4:00 p.m.

Ms. Richter stated the Veterans Memorial Wall Plaque Application and Memorial Day flyer will be posted on the City website and promoted through a glossy postcard mailed to all Montclair residents. Commissioners were encouraged to inform Ms. Richter if there is any individual or family they think might be interested in purchasing a plaque for the Veterans Memorial Wall.

Commissioner Milhiser mentioned that the Memorial Day event is remarkable, unique and believes no changes are needed this year. She stated that other agencies schedule their programs at an earlier time but says that the evening start time for our event seems to work for our community. Commissioner Milhiser also commented the BBQ hot dog refreshments make it feel like a picnic in their hometown. City Council Liaison Ruh and Commissioner Padilla both concurred that the evening event is likely more convenient for families and the weather is usually more pleasant. By consensus, the Commission agreed to keep the event similar to last year including the band.

Commissioner Padilla will reach out to the honorably discharged Veterans who will be attending the Military Banner Presentation next week to see if one of them will be able to lead the flag salute at the Memorial Day event. He offered to do the flag salute if necessary.

Ms. Richter suggested having the National Anthem sung by the young lady who sang it at the recent swearing-in ceremony for the Mayor and Council Members. She is a friend of Mayor Dutrey's daughter and had recently participated in a singing talent contest program on television. If she is not available, Vice Chairperson Escalante commented he has another contact who could sing the National Anthem and Chairperson Wells suggested perhaps the band who will be attending could be asked to perform the National Anthem like last year if needed.

Chairperson Wells asked about the booklet of poems so they could choose their poem for the event. Ms. Richter informed her the packet could be included in their February meeting packet. Chairperson Wells suggested that the poems be chosen at the next meeting and Ms. Richter asked the Commission members to submit any new poems they may have to her by January 25, 2023 so they can be included in the poem packet.

ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

None

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Wells adjourned the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Franco
Recreation Coordinator Community