



FAMILY & HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
GUS VELASCO NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
Wednesday, January 19, 2022
5:45 p.m.

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Executive Secretary Ed Ramirez called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – No flag present.

3. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Gilbert Aguirre, Shamsheer Bandari, Bonnie Fox, Mariam Herrera, Peggy Radoumis, Laurie Rios, Dolores Romero, Martha Villanueva and Hilda Zamora

Members Absent: Christina Colon, Dolores Duran, Gaby Garcia, Elena Lopez,

Council Liaison: Annette Rodriguez, Mayor

Staff: Ed Ramirez, Family and Human Services Manager,
Executive Secretary
Jose Carrillo, Community Services Supervisor

Agency Representative: None.

Guest:

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Peggy Radoumis and seconded by Laurie Rios to approve the Minutes of February 19, 2020. The motion was carried unanimously.

6. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

Annette Rodriguez announced that the Government is providing four free Covid-19 tests per household. To request your kits log onto covidtests.gov, where you will fill out a brief form with your information and the tests will be sent to your home address.

Mayor Rodriguez reported that the parking lot and Kiosk renovation project have been completed and the site looks beautiful. Mayor Rodriguez encouraged members to drive through and see the new changes.

The Chevron gas station is now open serving gas. Chevron was replacing four existing gas dispensers with new diesel fuel dispensers. The gas station is open to the public, however renovations to the inside of the store are still ongoing.

Committee members were informed of the water bill scam that has been ongoing since December of 2021. Scammers are calling stating that your water bill is due, asking individuals for a credit card or their bank information. Members were told not to provide any personal information over the phone as scammers do this to obtain your personal information and use it for fraudulent activity.

Lastly, Mayor Rodriguez shared that on November 29, 2020, a special City Council meeting was held at the Activity Center to address the drive-by shooting, which occurred near Los Nietos Park. Residents were given the opportunity to voice neighborhood safety issues. As a result of the meeting, several crime prevention measures were taken. Temporary traffic barriers were put in place, Whittier Police Department has increased their patrol, and the City of Santa Fe Springs will be fixing and installing additional lighting and cameras on Danby Avenue in hopes of deterring criminal activity in the future.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. Ramirez reported on the following:

Review of Advisory Committee By-laws – Mr. Ramirez introduced new member Shamsher Bhandari. Mr. Ramirez provided an overview of all City By-laws approved by City Council that began in January 2021. The overview included that all appointments to commissions and committees shall be made in January. The term of service for any individual appointed to a commission or committee shall be two years with members who were appointed in January 2021 will expire at end of December 2022. There are no longer excused absences and members may miss no more than 3 absences; if absent 3 times, the member will resign and be eligible to re-apply after 6 months. Mr. Ramirez also shared that if a member is more than 15 minutes late to meetings, the member will be marked absent. The major change on the ordinance to the Family and Human Service Advisory Committee (FHSAC), is now a member of the FHSAC is required to sit on the Heritage Arts Advisory Committee, who is nominated and elected by the FHSAC advisory.

Mr. Ramirez gave a brief overview of the Heritage Arts Advisory responsibilities and all committee members were provided updated copies of the by-laws and ordinances.

- a) **Introduction of Jose Carrillo, Community Services Supervisor** – Mr. Ramirez introduced Mr. Jose Carrillo, Community Services Supervisor to the Family and Human Service Division. Mr. Carrillo started with the City on August 2, 2021, coming from the City of Bell where he held various roles including working with Older Adults. Mr. Carrillo holds a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from the University of La Verne and is two classes shy of obtaining his Master’s in Business Administration. His responsibilities include supervising the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center, Heritage Park, Clark Estate, and all facility rentals at each facility. His main office location will be located at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center.

8. DIVISION PROGRAM/PROJECT UPDATES

A. Family and Human Services Division & Program Updates

Mr. Ramirez provided an overview of the past two years during the Covid-19 pandemic and shared all program modifications that were made within the FHS Division to ensure services continued for the community.

Home Delivered Crafts and Senior Buzz– A weekly home craft kit and a modified by-monthly publication of the Senior Buzz filled with word search games, puzzles, and delicious recipes were delivered by staff to seniors during the stay-at-home order. The program began with 160 participants which quickly grew to 250 participants.

Two Virtual Programs – Two virtual programs were developed; a Virtual Bingo, which included prizes, and a Zoom and Tea, a socializing meeting that kept 13 to 15 older adults connected weekly during the stay-at-home order. Unfortunately, over time the participation dwindled, so both the virtual programs concluded in the summer of 2021.

Buddy Hop System– On June 5, 2020, the Buddy Hop System was developed with the intention of matching two seniors so they could make a new friend and socialize during the stay-at-home order. Ice breaker questions were provided so they could ease into a conversation. However, participation dwindled and concluded in late 2020.

Fitness Room Gym – The fitness room closed during the pandemic and reopened on November 1, 2021, with 50 seniors renewing their memberships, when the spike in Covid-19 occurred the number of participants utilizing the fitness room dwindled.

National Senior Health Fitness Day – On May 26, 2021, the National Senior Health and Fitness Day was held at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center as a drive-through event with 140 participants. Participants received a goodie-bag filled with informational materials, stress balls, pedometer, and many other goodies. All participants were grateful for the items and expressed that they can’t wait to come back to the GVNC.

Exercise Classes – In June 2021, The Family and Human Services Division reinstated two outdoor exercise programs. The Moving' and Groovin' class was held at Los Nietos Park picnic area with an attendance of 35 Older Adults on Mondays and Wednesdays. There was also City Strollers which was held at Heritage Park. Staff kept a record of the 16 participants that lapped the park. Each month from June through August, a walker with the most laps received a \$30 gift card to sketchers from TEAM UP medical/Medicare representatives that frequent our senior activities.

SASSFA Meal Program – During the Safer-at-Home protocol, SASSFA changed their delivery of hot meals and provided pre-packaged frozen delivered meals. With the City facility closures, all meals were delivered to both the existing homebound participants and congregate meal participants. The delivery of meals increased to 96 meals per day. In 2021, SASSFA continues to provide pre-packaged frozen meals to both homebound and congregate meal participants. Lunches are delivered Monday through Thursday to now 101 senior participants. At the time of this report, city staff is working closely with SASSFA to determine when SASSFA will return to in-person lunches in 2022.

HERITAGE PARK AND CLARKE ESTATE PROGRAMS

Pioneer Living Day – In June 2020, the Pioneer Living Day (formerly Children's Day) was held at Heritage Park as a drive-through event, which provided 56 families with a Colonial Craft Kit. The kit included a festive collection of colonial-era art crafts, activities, coloring pages, and other activities free of charge. In 2021, the event remained as a drive through event and 37 families participated.

Drive-in Movies and Summer Concert and Movie Series – The 2020 Summer Concert and Movie Series was reconfigured to the Summer Drive-In Movie Series and comprised of 6 movies between the months of July and October. The event took place in the parking lot of Little Lake Park on Friday evenings and utilized a 45-foot inflatable screen and radio audio to entertain over 1,200 city residents across the event series. In 2021, the series returned to its traditional delivery with approximately 2,500 guests attending the series across all nine weeks of programming. The highlight of the series was the Mariachi Ausente performance which attracted about 500 guests. Attendance for Summer Series increased significantly after the pre-registration requirement was lifted after the July 16th movie showing of Onward, and people were free to attend without registering in advance. In addition, the participation of fashion vendors from the Abigail Barraza Foundation and food vendors helped make the concert/movie series flourish.

Día De Los Muertos – The 2020 Día De Los Muertos event was modified into a virtual celebration throughout the month of October and comprised of an at-home sugar-skull craft and community ofrenda (altar) showcase. Families who preordered sugar skulls attended the drive-thru style event and had their orders delivered to their cars directly while enjoying the festive decorations surrounding the drive-thru area. A total of 153 skulls were sold to members of the community, and another 80 skulls were donated to the GVNC for distribution to older adults, making for a total of 233 skulls distributed. The event also featured an online

community showcase video that was released on October 31st. The video featured photographs of ofrendas submitted by members of the community, as well as photographs of decorated sugar skulls in celebration of Día De Los Muertos. Over 40 photographs were submitted in total by various members of the community to be shared in the virtual showcase.

Las Posadas

The annual Las Posadas cultural event in 2020 was modified to a drive-thru celebration kit distribution that provided 60 families and 149 children with holiday-themed crafts, coloring pages, pre-packaged treats, and a copy of “The Night of Las Posadas”, a book by Tomie DePaola about the story of Joseph and Mary’s journey from Nazareth through Bethlehem. Additionally, a pre-recorded reading of “The Night of Las Posadas” was developed in-house by staff and posted to the City’s social media platforms for the community to enjoy at their leisure. In 2021, the event returned to its annual in-person procession.

FAMILY SERVICES / CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

The annual Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program began in February 2021. The program was modified to a drop-off procedure to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Remarkably the new process was well received, and the number of clients completing their tax returns surpassed the number of tax returns complete with the traditional in-person process. A total of 400 tax returns were completed.

Back to School Backpack Supply Program

The annual Backpack Program was held on August 7, 2020, at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center. The giveaway was an outdoor drive-through event and held in the parking lot of the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center. With the challenges of the safer at home order, facility closures, and minimal staffing, the Family and Human Services Case Workers worked directly with the school districts in the community. This was done to identify youth in need of school supplies. New in 2020, school-aged students were provided supply caddies to help organize their supplies at home while remote learning. Local businesses, City Council, and employees donated items for the program. Overall, almost 200 school-aged children received school supplies for the academic year and we continue to serve families. On August 6, 2021, the FHS Division, in partnership with the Rotary Club, provided a modified Back to School Backpack Program drive-thru event. Backpacks filled with school supplies and were provided to 115 Santa Fe Springs children. In addition, \$9,750 was received in monetary donations from City businesses and school supplies from individuals and companies.

Utility Assistance

The Family & Human Services Division continued to partner with United Way and Southern California Edison to provide utility assistance to low-income families. The FHS Division through this partnership and funding, processed 214 applications, totaling \$33,593.36 in utility assistance grants during FY 2020-2021 in spite of the overcoming challenges of servicing virtually, by phone or email,. The Division continues to provide these services and is now available for in-person appointments.

Gus's Food Pantry and Community Closet

Gus's Food Pantry and Community Closet located at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center was used by 100 clients during the safer at-home order. Clients were able to obtain food, clothing, and hygiene products. In addition, items were donated to the local school districts and food banks. Both the pantry and community closet continue to be available to the community.

Covered California

As a Certified Application center, in 2020 the Family and Human Services Caseworkers worked virtually and provided access to affordable healthcare to 11 families and individuals through Covered California during the Fiscal Year. Open enrollment for 2021 began in November and is available through January 31, 2022. Clients can contact the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center to make an appointment.

Cedar Sinai Virtual Nutrition Workshops

The Family & Human Services Division in partnership with Cedars Sinai presented a six-week workshop series on Healthy Habits for Families from March 10, 2021, to April 7, 2021. The virtual nutritional workshops discussed subjects on portion control, physical activity, chronic disease management, and calorie & label reading. There were 19 participants in the program. Staff is currently identifying new workshops for the 2022 year.

Neighbor Connect

The Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center introduced a new way of connecting with neighbors. Neighbor Connect allows residents to offer a helping hand during the Coronavirus pandemic. Residents can request a "Neighbor Connect Packet," which is a set of colored cards to place on your window. These cards indicate if you are doing well, or if you need help. Each colored card has a different meaning. The Green Card means "I am doing okay". For example, "I am doing fine, and have what I need to be well." The Yellow Card means "I have a non-emergency matter and I need help to resolve it." Example, "I am feeling very isolated and can use someone to talk to." The Red Card means "I have an urgent, non-emergency matter, and I need help resolving it soon." For example, "I am running low on medication and have no one to help me pick it up."

By placing the colored card on the window, your neighbors can either come by to check in on you or call the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center to have a staff member check in on you. This is not for emergencies, but it is a way for the community to come together to help one another during difficult times. The FHS Division plans to continue this program to help maintain communication with those homebound individuals who may need assistance.

Breast Cancer Screening

In partnership with Alinea Medical Imaging, the Department of Community Services offered a free Mobile Breast Cancer Screening at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center Parking Lot on Friday, October 1st from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Approximately 20 ladies participated in the screening. During their visit, the Abigail Barraza Foundation provided each participant a goodie bag, and Starbucks donated tea.

Free Flu Clinic

The Department of Community Services in partnership with the Los Angeles Department of Public Health held a free flu vaccination clinic on October 13, 2021. Public Health administered 66 flu vaccines to a mixture of children, teens, adults, and seniors. Community Services will continue to work with the Department of Public Health to schedule future flu clinics at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center.

Booster Shots at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center

Through the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center offered booster vaccines on Friday, December 10th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The County offered 50 Pfizer and 50 Moderna vaccines. A total of 60 Individuals registered and received a booster vaccine. Family and Human Services staff is working with the County to potentially offer additional booster vaccines to the community.

Thankful Neighbor Basket Program

On November 24, 2020, the Thankful Neighborhood Basket program provided Thanksgiving Baskets to 134 low-income families and older adult residents. With the safer at-home order the event was modified to a drive-through event. On November 23, 2021, FHS continued to offer a drive-through event, which served 112 families.

Neighborly Elf Christmas Basket Program

On December 19, 2020, the Neighborly Elf Program provided 149 food baskets to low-income families and older adult residents. The program was modified to a drive through event with an uptick of Covid-19 cases increasing at the time. The event featured décor as they entered the parking lot and participants were able to wave to Santa Clause on his Christmas Float Sleigh as they exited the parking lot. The City received a generous donation of gift cards which were given to families in the following denominations:

Kids ages 10 and under received a \$25.00 gift card; Youths ages 11-18 received a \$50.00 gift card, and each family received a grocery gift card in the amount of \$25.00.

On Saturday, December 18, 2021, the Family and Human Services Division hosted the annual Neighborly Elf Christmas Basket program at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center. The program consisted of a modified in-person event where participants were greeted with a winter wonderland and took a photo with Santa Clause and Mrs. Clause. Once the families received their food basket, toys, and gift cards they had an opportunity to complete a fun craft and receive a cup of hot chocolate. A total of 144 families and seniors were registered and 127 picked up their items during the event.

STAFFING UPDATES

New Program Coordinator

Edwin Vargas was promoted to Program Coordinator in the Family and Human Services Division in August 2021. Mr. Vargas began his career with the City of Santa Fe Springs in 2005 as a Program Leader I in the Parks and Recreation Services (PRS) Division. In 2013, He was promoted to Community Services Program leader II in the FHS Division and a Community Services Program Leader III in 2015 in PRS. He was promoted to Community Services Specialist in 2019 and served as Acting Program Coordinator from October 2019 through May 2020, and then again from February 2020 to present in the FHS Division. Mr.

Vargas holds an AA Degree in Social and Behavioral Science from East Los Angeles College and plans to further complete his Bachelor's degree. Edwin's major duties include programming Heritage Park and Clarke Estate, facility rentals, weddings, and special events.

Community Services Specialist

With the promotion of Edwin Vargas, the vacant Community Services Specialist position is currently being processed. We hope to have the Community Services Specialist begin sometime in January 2022. The position will include duties for Heritage Park and Clarke Estate, facility rentals, weddings, and special events.

New Program Leaders / Park Rangers

The Family and Human Services Division hired 8 new Program Leader I's in 2021 and is currently backfilling 4 additional vacancies. This includes staff for the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center, Heritage Park, and Clarke Estate. Three new Park Rangers were hired to help secure and monitor Heritage Park and Clarke Estate.

Annual In-Service Training

The Community Services Department hosted its annual In-Service Training on June 11, 2021, via Zoom. This year we hired the newest staff members in recent history, with over 40% of our workforce being new to our organization. Part 2 of this training was held on Thursday, August 12, 2021, and featured a guest speaker that spoke on Compassion Fatigue and Dealing with Burnout.

OLDER ADULT SERVICES UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Older Adults services plan to reintroduce many of our existing in-person programs in 2022 to include newly created programs. They are:

Juice Up and Slim Down

Participants will be able to add juicing to their New Year's resolution list and lose some of those holiday pounds while learning about the advantages of juicing fruits and vegetables. The course will take place on Wednesdays starting January 5 for 4 weeks. Registration is required and is currently available at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center.

Master Your Cell Phone

This class will help you master the usage of your cell phone. The items covered in the sessions will include texting, photo-taking, emailing, social media, and more. The class began on January 6, 2022. Registration is required and is currently available at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center.

Painting Like Picasso

Are you looking to take up another hobby? If so, the staff has created a class just for you. You will learn the painting basics and discover your inner artist. The class began on January 4, 2022. Registration is required and is currently available at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center.

Shamrock 5K Walk/Run

The annual Fun Walk/Run 5K is making a return in 2022 and will be held on March 12, 2022. This year's theme is Shamrock 5K. New this year is a Toddler ¼ Mile Dash for kids 5 and under. Fees for this activity are as follows:

5K Earlybird Fee (by February 6, 2022)	Adults- \$10	Children- \$3
5K Regular Fee (after February 7, 2022)	Adults- \$15	Children- \$5
Toddler ¼ Dash Earlybird Fee (by February 6, 2022)		Children- \$2
Toddler ¼ Dash Regular Fee (after February 7, 2022)		Children- \$4

*Fees do not include processing fee, which is paid directly to the software provider.

9. **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

10. **NEW BUSINESS**

Nomination and Election of Committee Officers - Members conducted nomination and election of Committee officers for the positions of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Heritage Arts Advisory Committee Liaison for Fiscal Year 2022 via zoom with the following result:

- a) **Nominees for Chairperson** are Peggy Radoumis, accepted; Janie Aguirre, accepted; Peggy Radoumis accepted; Hilda Zamora, declined;

In a majority zoom vote, the Committee elected Peggy Radoumis as Chairperson for Fiscal Year 2022.

- b) **Nominees for Vice-Chairperson** are Janie Aguirre, accepted;

In a majority zoom vote, the Committee elected Janie Aguirre as Vice-Chairperson for Fiscal Year 2022

- c) **Nominees for HAAC Liaison** are Mariam Herrera, accepted; Peggy Radoumis, accepted;

In a majority zoom vote, the Committee elected Mariam Herrera as HAAC Liaison for Fiscal Year 2021/2022

11. **FUTURE AGENDA UPDATES** – ED RAMIREZ

None.

12. MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS – JANIE AGUIRRE

Mayor Rodriguez announced the Santa Fe Springs Woman's club is hosting their annual quarter mania event on Sunday, March 13, 2022, 10:00 a.m. more information is available by contacting the Woman's Club members or visiting their social media pages.

Mr. Carrillo gave a brief update that the Santa Fe Springs Metro Station located at 12800 Imperial Hwy. The testing site is a drive-through Covid-19 testing site that can accommodate up to 1000 people daily.

Member Villanueva had a question regarding the SASSFA lunch program.

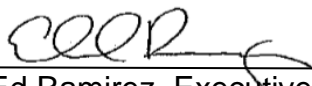
Elena shared the passing of Hilda Zamora's grandson.

13. ADJOURNMENT – JANIE AGUIRRE

Executive Secretary Ed Ramirez adjourned the meeting in memory of Mrs. Zamora's Grandson at 7:35 p.m.



Prepared By: Virginia Magana,
Administrative Assistant



Ed Ramirez, Executive Secretary