



CITY OF SANTA FE SPRINGS  
SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
GUS VELASCO NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER  
Tuesday, January 11, 2022  
9:30 a.m.

**MINUTES**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Janie Aguirre called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Hilda Zamora

3. ROLL CALL

*Present:* Gilbert Aguirre, Janie Aguirre, Dolores Duran, Bonnie Fox, Sally Gaitan, Elena Lopez, Paul Nakamura, Yoko Nakamura, Dr. Linda Vallejo, Martha Villanueva, Hilda Zamora

*Members Absent:* Lorena Huitron, Nancy Krueger Josephina Lara, Astrid Shesterkin

*Staff:* Ed Ramirez, Family and Human Services Manager  
Jose Carrillo, Acting Community Services Supervisor

*Council Liaison:* None

*Agency Representative:* None

*Senior Club Representatives:* None

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Linda Vallejo and seconded by Sally Gaitan to approve the Minutes of the March 10, 2020, meeting. The motion was carried unanimously.

6. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT – None

## 7. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. Ramirez welcomed the committee members back from a 22 month break and informed the committee that the meeting was initially scheduled as an in-person meeting; however, due to the recent Omicron out-break, the Senior Advisory Committee will continue their meetings via zoom until further notice. Members will be kept apprised.

- a. ***Committee and Commissions Ordinance and Resolution – Update*** – In March of 2020 Mr. Ramirez reported that there were updates to all City Advdsiosry by-laws. On January 29, 2020, the City Council adopted Ordinance Nos 1111 and 1112, including Resolutions Nos 9657 and 9651, covering all committees. Mr. Ramirez gave members a summary of the changes made.
- b. ***Introduction of Jose Carrillo, Community Services Supervisor*** – Mr. Carrillo was hired on August 2, 2022, as the new Community Services Supervisor for the Family and Human Services Division. He was previously employed with the City of Bell and the City of South El Monte, where he also worked with the Older Adults and is experienced with the senior programs and advisories. He attended the University of La Verne, where he received his Bachelor's of Art in Business Communications and is a few classes away from receiving his Masters in Business Administration (MBA). Mr. Carrillo will supervise the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center, Heritage Park, Clarke Estate, and all facility rentals from each location. Mr. Carrillo will be the Executive Secretary to the Senior Advisory Committee beginning in February and will be staff support to the Family and Human Services Advisory Committee.

## 8. DIVISION PROGRAM/PROJECT 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 Department and FHS Division to ensure services continued for the community. In 2020, bingo went virtual and staff created a Sip & Tea virtual program, staff delivered home crafts and modified the Senior Buzz to go out bi-monthly. Documents were initially mailed to 160 lunch program participants and the Senior Advisory Committee members and quickly grew to well over 265 seniors. A Buddy Hop system was developed for members of the community to be paired with someone else they did not know. This provided someone keep to in touch with during the "Stay at Home Order" and make new friends.

The Fitness room was closed during the pandemic and remained closed through the majority of 2021. On November 1, 2021, the Fitness Center reopened with 50 seniors renewing their memberships.

On May 26, 2021, a drive-thru fitness goodie bag giveaway took place in recognition of the National Senior Health and Fitness Day, with 140 participants in attendance. The goodie



bags contained helpful information and fitness items, stress balls, pedometers, and other goodies.

In June of 2021, the Movin & Groovin class resumed at Los Los Nietos Park every Monday and Wednesday with 35 participants. The City Strollers walking group was created in 2021 at Heritage Park where participants walked through throughout the park from June through August. The TEAM-UP Medical Group provided a \$30 gift card to the individual who walked the most laps.

During the Safer at Home Order, SASSFA changed their hot meals to pre-packaged frozen meals, initially delivering to 96 homebound and congregate meal participants. In 2021 SASSFA continued to provide lunches and on Monday through Thursday during the pandemic, which now includes approximately 101 senior participants. SASSFA will continue to provide this type of lunch format until further notice. Members will be kept apprised.

### **Heritage Park**

In June of 2020, Heritage Park hosted their annual Pioneer Living Day, which was recognized as the "Colonial Craft Pick-Up," in which 52 pre-registered families participated. This craft pick-up was a drive-through event at Heritage Park which included a collection of colonial-era crafts, projects, and activities free of charge. In 2021, the program continued the same process with 37 participants.

In 2020, the Concert and Movies series at Heritage Park was converted to a six drive-in movie series held at Little Lake Park on Fridays in July and October, with 1,200 participants. In 2021, the movie/concert series was brought back to Heritage Park and had approximately 2,500 participants in attendance. The Abigail Barraza Foundation was on-site with other vendors during the concerts to help promote breast cancer awareness.

In 2020, Dia De Los Muertos was celebrated virtually and there were 153 participants who purchased their sugar skull crafts to do at home. In addition, 40 community residents submitted photos of their Ofredas (altars) that were showcased on the City's website for the community to view. Heritage Park donated 80 skulls to the Older Adult Services at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center. In 2021, Dia De Los Muertos reverted to its traditional in-person setting that included entertainment, artisan, and food vendors.

In 2020, the annual Los Posadas event was offered as a modified drive-through celebration kit distribution. The drive-thru event provided 60 families and 104 children with a book titled "The Night of Las Posadas" by Tomie DePaola, holiday-themed crafts, treats, and coloring pages. A prerecorded reading of "The Night of Las Posadas" was posted to the City's social media platforms for the community to enjoy. In 2021, the Las Posadas event procession



returned to an in-person event with entertainment, crafts, and food vendors. There were approximately 400 participants in attendance.

### **Family Services/Case Management Services**

In February of 2020, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) was modified to a new drop-off procedure for taxes preparation, which was well-received. As part of this program, there were 400 tax returns completed. This is the highest number of tax returns to be completed. For the 2021 tax season starting in February 2022, staff will implement the same modified drop-off format.

The Annual Back to School Backpack Supply Program was held on August 7, 2020, at the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center. Due to the safer at home, a drive-thru event took place and 200 school-aged children were provided backpacks, school supplies, and an organized supply caddy while studying at home. In 2021, the Family and Human Services Division in partnership with the Rotary Club provided 115 school-aged students with school supplies. In addition, local business, and individuals, donated \$9,750 in monetary donations for this program.

In 2020/21 the Family and Human Services Division in collaboration with the United Way provided Edison and Gas assistance to 214 applicants by phone and email totaling \$33,593 in application completions. Also, the caseworkers serviced 100 clients during the Stay-At-Home order providing individuals with items from the food pantry. Due to the Stay-At-Home order, a surplus of items in the pantry were donated to other food banks and schools.

In 2020, the Case Workers assisted eleven clients with Covered California with their medical insurance. Covered California's 2021 open enrollment concludes on January 31, 2022.

In 2021, the Family and Human Services Division, in collaboration with the Cedar Sinai Center, hosted a six-week virtual nutrition workshop for healthy habits. This new virtual nutrition program workshop was developed in partnership with the Cedar Sinai Center presenting Healthy Habits for families on March 10h and April 7; 20 participants were in attendance.

The Neighbor Connect Program was developed for individuals who are homebound or home alone and are in need of assistance. Santa Fe Springs residents can call in to request a packet of three signs that will be delivered to their home by a caseworker. The red card means urgent non-emergency matter; the yellow card means non-emergency matter, and the green card means "I'm doing fine and have what I need". This allows neighbors to see that someone is in need of a helping hand. There are currently 13 participants.



On October 1, 2020, the Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center partnered with Alinea Medical Imaging Center to provide a free breast cancer screening event to 20 participants. The Abigail Baraza Foundation handed out free goodie bags and information materials. Starbucks was also on-site providing free tea from 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

The Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center, in collaboration with the Los Angeles Department of Public Health, hosted a free flu shot clinic on October 13, 2021, and administered 66 flu vaccines to all ages. Staff plan to continue with the flu clinic in the future. On December 10, 2021, a booster shot Covid vaccination clinic was on-site and administered 50 Pfizer and 50 Moderna vaccinations from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

On November 24, 2020, The Thankful Neighbor Basket program was modified to a drive-thru give-away that assisted 134 low-income residents. On November 24, 2021, the event was offered in the same format and provided 149 food baskets to families.

On December 19, 2020, the Neighborly Elf Christmas Program provided 149 food baskets to low-income families and older adult residents. The program was modified to a drive-thru 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. Due to a generous donation from the business community, gift cards were distributed to families in the following denominations: children ages 10 and under received a \$25.00 gift card; youth 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. After the families received their food basket, toys, and gift cards, they completed a fun craft and received a cup of hot chocolate. A total of 144 families and seniors were registered and 127 picked up their items during the event.

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. He then was promoted to a Community Services Program Leader III in 2015 in PRS. Continuing on his career path, 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 complete his Bachelor's



degree. Edwin's major duties include programming at Heritage Park and Clarke Estate, facility rentals, weddings, and special events.

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.

The FHS 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.

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 held three new classes That began the first week of January 2022. The classes included Juice up and Slim Down, Master Your Cell Phone and Painting with Picasso. The classes were four-week classes and meet every Thursday. New sessions will continue in February. In addition with the current uptick of the Omicron Variant, Karaoke and Black and White dance were canceled.

The Activenet software is being utilized to register all activities. Information will be entered and will remain on the system for easy enrollment for upcoming activities. A membership module will be added in the near future.

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

Ed Ramirez reported on the following:

***Nomination and Election of Committee Officers FY 2021/2022*** - Members conducted nomination and election of committee officers for the positions of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for Fiscal Year 2021/2022 via zoom with the following result:

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

In a majority zoom vote, the Committee elected Janie Aguirre as Chairperson for 2022.

- b) **Nominees for Vice-Chairperson** are Sally Gaitan, accepted; Bonnie Fox, declined;

In a majority zoom vote, the Committee elected Sally Gaitan as Vice-Chairperson for 2022.

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – JOSE CARRILLO

- a) Committee members requested that staff inquire on the possibility of having the Social Security Office send out an employee who can give a presentation at a future meeting.
- b) Committee members requested to have the Whittier Police Department send out an officer to discuss the Los Nietos shooting incident.

12. MEMBERS COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS – JANIE AGUIRRE

- Janie Aguirre would like for everyone to take care of themselves and get their booster. Janie Aguirre stated that many people have been wearing their masks below their noses.
- Bonnie Fox stated that the blue and yellow masks are safer than the cloth masks.
- Linda Vallejo stated that you can test your mask for safety; if you can blow out a candle with your mask on, it is not safe.
- Hilda Zamora stated she did not receive her Senior Advisor Committee roster and asked to have all information updated.
- Linda Vallejo asked that the City Council Liaison be reminded to attend future committee meetings.
- Gilbert Aguirre inquired about whether the Zumba class and the Safe Neighborhood meetings will resume at a later date.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Janie Aguirre adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

The Next Meeting of the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee will be held via Zoom teleconferencing on February 8, 2022.

  
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Prepared By: Virginia Magana

  
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Ed Ramirez, Executive Secretary