

**CITY OF DUARTE  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Regular Meeting  
February 8, 2021

7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS:**

**PRESENT:** Elisabeth Dugan, Barbie Bylsma-Houghton,  
Anne Wilkins, Jennifer Luna-Nguyen, Kirsten  
Nielsen, James Finlay  
**ABSENT:** Jim Dinsmore  
**STAFF:** Manuel Enriquez, Department Director  
**AUDIENCE:** None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**OATH OF OFFICE:** Swearing in of new Parks & Recreation Commissioner, James Finlay  
Enriquez administered the Oath of Office to James Finlay.

**APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES:**

Wilkins moved, and Finlay seconded to approve the March 2020 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**ITEMS OF  
BUSINESS:**

A. Briefing on the Parks and Recreation Department Response to COVID-19

Enriquez gave an overview as to what the Department has been up to over this past year with a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation included a timeline of event adjustments/cancellations. Some information included:

March – May

- The CPRS Conference was cut short.
- Spring classes/special events were cancelled.
- Facilities were closed and rentals suspended.
- Easter event was converted to a Bunny Ride Around the City.
- Trails and playgrounds closed.
- The City News transitioned to digital publication.
- Parks and Recreation launched the Virtual Recreation Center on the City's website.
- Added a once-a-week drive through frozen meal program at the Senior Center in addition to the monthly food bank program.

Enriquez asked commissioners if they had any questions.

Nielsen mentioned that the one problem she sees is there are a lot of seniors that don't have a computer in order to view digital newsletter.

Enriquez replied he is aware of the problem and that the department is currently handing out hard copies at the lunch giveaway/drive thru program to offer another way for seniors to receive information.

Bylsma-Houghton asked how many part-time employees were furloughed or given other assignments due to cancellations.

Enriquez stated that they haven't had to furlough any yet. Some have reduced hours or limited availability due to personal situations that have affected them during the pandemic. Some have also been reassigned to help at the Foothill Unity Center weekly.

Enriquez continued presenting the timeline of events.

#### June – August

- Summer classes converted to virtual classes with fees adjusted.
- The Fitness Center reopened – including swimming, but then shortly after the Fitness Center closed again.
- The revised order allows lap swim only, which has become very popular.
- Duarte offered its first Virtual 5K Run & Walk, which was very successful.
- Duarte submitted a pre application in partnership with Nature for All for the planning of the reopening of the Fish Canyon Falls (to the Wildlife Conservation Board) but we were not invited to continue the application process due to amount of competitive applications they received.
- The Mayor's Youth Council recruitment began - electronically.
- Held a Virtual Lego contest.
- Virtual Fun & Games launches for seniors 55+.
- The department/City facilitated its first city-wide food distribution at Encanto Park where food was distributed to over 1,200 families.

Enriquez asked commissioners if they had any questions regarding this portion.

Finlay asked if there was any feedback from grantors with regards to strengthening the grant application.

Enriquez replied that they were not given any feedback. In going over application with Nature for All, there were modifications made that should increase chances for Prop. 68 funding.

#### September – November

- Fall classes continued in a virtual setting with a slight increase in registration.
- Staff created a Slumber Party Box for youth and families, which were pretty popular.
- Tennis/Pickleball courts reopened for in-person, 1 on 1 play only.
- Golf instruction was also able to resume, but there hasn't been much interest.
- Field rentals resumed with only condition play allowed for youth only.
- Held our annual Unity March where everyone was masked up, practiced social distancing, and followed public demonstration guidelines.
- James Finlay did a great job as emcee.
- Held Duarte Family Feud Fun event virtually, where for the most part it was successful with few technical hiccups.
- Held a virtual pet costume contest and a virtual pumpkin carving contest. Prizes were given and both contests were very successful.
- The City's AmeriCorps Cohort held its annual Make a Difference Day with families registering online for local service projects that could be done as a family on their own.
- The annual Halloween Howl was converted to a Drive-Thru event.
- Enriquez thanked commissioners who participated and estimated that between 600-800 kids participated in the drive thru.
- There was only one complaint from a grandmother with three grandchildren who were turned away by a deputy. Staff reached out to the family and gave them some special goodies.

- Veteran's Day was held virtually this year. Residents were asked to submit photos of veterans who have served or are currently serving in the armed forces.

Enriquez asked commissioners if they had any questions regarding September through November.

Nguyen stated that she purchased a Slumber Party Box and that she thought it was great. She also mentioned that she shared the idea with her daughter's PTA as an option for the children as they go through this pandemic.

Nguyen also stated that she liked the timeline Enriquez presented.

#### December – February

- The City of Duarte and AmeriCorps held its annual Holiday of Promise in partnership with Foothill Unity Center and the Duarte Community Service Council. There was a great turnout with over \$9,000 raised.
- Santa's Mailbox was held and was a big hit this year and every letter was answered by Santa.
- Virtual winter classes are in progress.
- The Teen Center held its annual Winter Holiday Presentation virtually this year – available on the City's YouTube Channel.
- Our first Holiday Home Decorating Contest was held this year and was a success – lots of submissions.
- Santa's Hotline was busy again this year.
- We held our first Santa's Sleigh Ride Thru Duarte this year, which included a Santa Sleigh tracker. It was spread over a 3-day span and it went very well. There was a snow machine and T-shirts given to children. It was a very well received event.
- The Prop 68 – Fish Canyon Falls planning grant was submitted in January. Enriquez worked with the City of Azusa, Vulcan, and Nature for All, along with adding letters of support, to fine-tune the application. We hope to hear if we've been selected by summer.
- The MLK Event/Essay Contest was held in a virtual setting this year and went well with speakers and a virtual performance by Duarte Dance.
- Last week the City's AmeriCorps program, with the help of DUSD, held its first virtual Groundhog Job Shadow Day. There were 30-40 students that logged on and 24 business partners that offered two morning breakout sessions for students.

- Cupid's Treat Box will be a spinoff of the Slumber Party Box with a heart-felt theme for the month of February.
- Lastly, Enriquez is super-proud of what Parks and Recreation has pulled off so far during this pandemic. Thankful for the support of staff, council, commissioners, and residents.

Enriquez asked commissioners if they had any questions regarding December - February.

Nielsen announced that she hadn't seen anything about the Holiday Home Decorating contest.

Enriquez stated that due to timing, it couldn't be posted in the Newsletter. Winners were notified, given a sign and a nice gift.

Nguyen also mentioned not seeing any winners posted in our contests and was wondering if there's a better way to publicize them and offered suggestions.

Enriquez will contact the PIO in the City Manager's office. For the Pumpkin and Pet contests, videos were packaged and posted on social media. A list of all winners was announced at the end of each video.

Dugan asked if Parks and Recreation had its own social media.

Enriquez replied that he has not had any discussion with the City Manager's office at this time, who manages social media. The City has recently contracted with Tripepi Smith who will be heading up all city communications and he will have a discussion with them and report back at a later date.

Wilkins mentioned she worked as a CERT member for the Halloween Howl and that CERT members have discussed having the event at another park, so it doesn't affect local businesses.

Wilkins suggested adding a day to the Santa Sleigh Ride, so the time doesn't conflict with the little ones' bedtime. She also gave kudos to all the department has done during the pandemic.

Enriquez replied that the department did consider the timeframe in scheduling the event and will re-evaluate the time for future drive around events.

Dugan mentioned the Touch-A-Truck Parade, which she had forgotten about and was surprised by the event.

Nguyen suggested alternating routes each year.

Nguyen also received feedback from residents regarding fee classes and its effect on parents who have more than one child in the same class.

Enriquez has not heard anything from the Supervisor in charge of classes, but mentioned we do still have the Financial Assistance Program for low-income residents.

B. Prop 68 Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program – 4th Round

Enriquez gave an overview of the status of Round 4. Some information provided included the following:

- This grant application is similar to the Splash Pad/Playstructure replacement application submitted in round 3.
- We are allowed to resubmit the application this current round.
- Our hope is that with this being the 4<sup>th</sup> round, more spots will be open as many have already been awarded.
- There is more money available this round than in previous round.

C. Rivers & Mountains Conservancy – Prop 68 Small Grants Program

Enriquez said that this is for the Fish Canyon Trail, mentioned during briefing, and that he has been working with Nature for All to hopefully move the project forward and get the trail back up and running.

ITEMS FROM  
STAFF:

1. Staff also updated commissioners with the following information:
  - The City Newsletter is now digital.
  - We have refrained from producing the Senior Center and Teen Center newsletters due to these Centers being closed.
  - The department has had a personnel change. Teesha Tarr, the Fitness Center Supervisor who served us over 30 years, retired in December.

ITEMS FROM  
COMMISSIONERS:

Bylsma-Houghton:

- Wanted to thank Enriquez for the opportunity to go to the CPRS Conference even though it was cut short. Wanted it on the record that she feels it is vitally important for commissioners to participate along with staff. Asked if there was any information available regarding this year's conference.

Enriquez replied that there will not be an in-person conference, but a virtual one will be offered. He will forward information to commissioners.

- Grateful parks are back open for children to play. Especially Orange Blossom Park after working so hard to complete it.

Luna-Nguyen:

- Announced she was glad to see everyone, even if remotely.
- Asked if any mental health services have been offered to seniors or the community in general.

Enriquez replied that the City continues to offer services on our website under our COVID 19 portal and the City Newsletter. AmeriCorps has a program that reaches out to seniors with a friendly phone call (People Helping People).

Nielsen

- Thanked Enriquez for the good job he's done during the pandemic.

Wilkins

- Also wanted to thank Enriquez for doing an amazing job.
- Disappointed the Cesar Chavez event won't happen at Westminster Gardens this year.

Enriquez announced he was grateful for a letter he received from Westminster Gardens expressing appreciation for all the work that has been done over the years.

Finlay:

- Expressed he has also been impressed and happy with all the activities that have been offered during this time. He

finds it fun and motivating to see the level of creativity.

Dugan

- Announced it has been great, but really thankful the parks are open again.
- Inquired as to whether masks should be worn on the trail, even with social distancing.

Enriquez replied that there could be some confusion with messaging, but that they should wear a mask and practice social distancing unless they have a health reason to not wear a mask, then they should be practicing social distancing.

ADJOURNMENT: Bylsma-Houghton motioned, and Nielsen seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson  
Dugan

ATTEST:



Pamela Romero, Secretary