



**CITY OF BELL GARDENS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**SENIOR CITIZEN COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

*Wednesday, February 09, 2022*

**Call to Order:**

Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez forewent the pledge of allegiance.

**Roll Call:**

Commission Secretary Miriam Vargas-Cervantes:

Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez	Present
Vice-Chairperson Tiffany Quintero-Maldonado	Present
Commissioner Ana Maria Sanchez	Present

**Reporting on Posting of the Agenda:**

Commission Secretary, Miriam Vargas-Cervantes stated that the agenda was posted in accordance with state law.

**Public Comments on Agenda Items:**

Commission Secretary, Miriam Vargas-Cervantes confirms there are no public comments.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez asked to motion the minutes from the special meeting of January 12, 2022. Vice-Chairperson Tiffany Quintero-Maldonado motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Ana Maria Sanchez seconded the motion to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

**New Business:**

- A. Department Updates-** Supervisor Diana Ortiz informs commissioners the City of Bell Gardens is hosting a new and exciting High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) program for those who want to achieve their fitness goals, or for anyone who enjoys exercising outdoors in a group setting. "HIIT In the Park" began this month and is being held on Saturday mornings at Bell Gardens Veterans Park with two sessions at 9:00 a.m and 10:00 a.m. The program is \$15.00 per person and space is limited to 16 people per session to allow for adequate social distancing. The classes have begun and had fifteen participants. If anyone else is interested in participating, please contact the Recreation Department. BG Hip Hop Dance Team, Fusion Dance, Folklorico, and I Can Dance have all returned to in person instruction. Ballet, Folklorico has taken a pause this month due to the health of their beloved teacher. A former student and lifelong Bell Gardens resident accepted the challenge to take over this 25-year-old program. Folklorico will be hosted at Bell Gardens Park, it was previously

hosted over at Ford Park. The Recreation Department is also offering the Creative Kids time program. A designated preschool program that can help children develop social skills by participating and interacting with other children of their age. Children can enjoy music, crafts, and outdoor play. It's a very fun learning program for our young children in our community. Registration is offered in person at Ford Park or Veterans Park. Registrations are currently open for Spring which begins on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Any parent of a young child who is 3 years of age can register now. Those children will meet Tuesday's and Thursday's of each week. All other the children who are 4 years of age will meet on Monday's and Wednesday's and Friday's. These classes are held at Bell Gardens Veterans Park. The Recreation Department continues to offer the after-school recreation and learning center. Being offered at the Neighborhood Youth Center and Veterans Park Game Room. They offer recreation play from 2:00-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Activities include outdoor games, tournaments, art, cooking, science and much more. A lot of fun educational activities for children. Tutoring is completely free for children K-8<sup>th</sup> grade. Free Wi-Fi access and physical activities are included. The supper meal program continues to operate at John Anson Ford Park, Veterans Park, and Neighborhood Youth Center. Grab and Go meals are being offered Monday-Friday from 3:00-4:00 p.m. The Department is happy to share 533,700 meals were served to the community and residents. Ensure there is food security to the Bell Gardens community. Diana Ortiz confirms being extremely proud and the city will continue to share meals. The Recreation Department has an update due to Covid-19 on January 18<sup>th</sup> Director Rozanne Adanto met with the Los Angeles County to discuss what the protocol should be with sport programs. It was determined due to the Omicron variant things are highly contagious. The Los Angeles Parks and Recreation decided to postpone all indoor sports programming. As of January 19<sup>th</sup>, Bell Recreation Department also followed that decision and postponed all indoor sports. That included youth basketball league and has been postponed for Fall 2022. Good news is that the Department is taking youth baseball registration up to March 4<sup>th</sup>. Registration for small fry will initiate soon and continue until March 11<sup>th</sup>. Residents can register at John Anson Ford Park or Bell Gardens Veterans Park. The utility assistance program that is being held at the Community Family Service Center has terminated due to the assistance of California Rent Relief taking over. The assistance is being provided by the State Rent Relief Program. Many people assume by the name of the program rent assistance is only being offered. However, utility is being offered for any assistance which includes water, electricity, gas and even internet is being considered an essential utility assistance. LACDA who funded through the CDGB program decided it was best to stop with the program to ensure there was no duplication of benefits. Diana Ortiz is happy to share all pending applications have been transitioned to the state program by CFSC center. The Community Family Service Center will initiate partnership with Job Corps on Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. Job Corps is the largest free residential career training program in the country that helps eligible young adults 16-24 years old with their education. The program is funded by the US Department of Labor which provides career technical training. Such as finance and business, healthcare and information technology and automotive and mechanic repairs. Really great resources that are coming to the Community Family Service Center. Job Corps will be on site at the CFSC which is located at Bell Gardens Veterans Park. Every 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month from 2:00-6:00 p.m. they will be available to any parent who is interested in receiving information for their child. Anyone who would like to get more information and see if they are eligible for the program can visit the CFSC every 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month. The CFSC department continues partnership with Pico Care pharmacy and continues to offer the Covid-19 vaccination clinic. On Monday's Pfizer is being offered for anyone who is 12 years old and above from 1:30-4:00 p.m. The Pfizer Pediatric is being offered on Wednesday's from 2:00-4:00 p.m. The Moderna is being offered anyone over the age of 18 years old on Thursday's from 12:30-2:30 p.m. Diana Ortiz confirms a recent partnership with Mexican

American Opportunity Foundation who is providing \$50.00 gift cards to anyone who is eligible to receive 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccine. No appointment is necessary to obtain a vaccine, scheduling an appointment on my turn is recommended but the clinic is accepting walk-ins. The Covid-19 testing continues at Bell Gardens Veterans Park a partnership with Sierra Bio Lab. Providing free testing Monday-Friday from 11:00-5:00 p.m. There was increase of testing in the last month that caused a few delays in obtaining results. The laboratory is back on track and residents can receive their results in 48 hours. Over 7,000 people have been tested at Bell Gardens Veterans Park since it first began. Lastly, the Family Service Center is providing consumer actions for any residents that are in need. Residents can be assisted with any type of applications such as, Cal Fresh, Utilities, Rent Relief and Section 8, Medical and Unemployment. In the month of January of 2021, the CFSC completed 462 action services. Supervisor Ortiz invites residents to contact the CFSC for any needs they may have.

- B. Senior Updates-** Supervisor Diana Ortiz confirms the Senior Center continues to welcome all Seniors over the age of 55 years of age to engage in all the activities. These activities include Billard, Lotería, gymnasium room and enjoy a movie day at the Senior Center. The Department has monthly birthday socials. Supervisor Ortiz is happy to announce the center will start offering Karaoke by a Senior volunteer. A variety of special programs are being offered at the center. It's currently being opened from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. and hopefully the department can extend the hours if Covid permits. Additional programming and partnerships will resume in the next few weeks should Covid cases continue to decline. Supervisor Diana Ortiz explains that the Senior Center is not only for Seniors that live in the facility. Invites Commissioners to take a tour of the center and meet the Staff. The Senior Center continues to ask all Seniors to show proof of vaccination and pre-register to all events. Diana Ortiz confirms the Senior Center will soon have more in person events and accommodate all the Seniors.
- C. Community Service Volunteer Program-** Chairperson Jabob Poliquin-Hernandez announces it has been something that has been in the works. Working with the High School and the City of Bell Gardens to offer painting with the Seniors. Chairperson confirms after a tour with Supervisor Diana Ortiz at the Senior Center, it gave him the opportunity to see what can be done. Mainly for High School students to volunteer and paint with the Senior Citizens and in return receive community service credit that they can then use towards a job or college application. Chairperson Poliquin-Hernandez is kindly asking if the Senior Center Department can appoint and set up a meeting with Principal Miranda, Assistant Principal and Activities Director Ms. Underwood and discuss the idea. Chairperson Poliquin-Hernandez is passionate about and have a set thing that people will associate the commission to the program. Chairperson states the City of Bell Gardens is very intergenerational and the idea of painting should be offered hopefully by the 2022-2023 school year.
- a. Supervisor Diana Ortiz-** Thanks Chairperson Jabob Poliquin and shared she has taken his comments appreciates the idea. Agrees with the intergenerational idea and highlights it's very important both for the youth and seniors. Supervisor agrees to working with the communication with Principal Miranda and possibly connect with an Art Instructor. Currently the Senior Center does have a volunteer program. Erica Rodriguez Coordinator of the Senior Center has done a wonderful job reaching out to schools and organizations. Coordinator Erica has a list of about 50-60 students that have done community services in the past events. Supervisor Ortiz confirms students

receive signed paperwork after volunteer hours. The Senior Center ensures keeping track of the hours to acknowledge all the students.

- b. **Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez-** Agrees with Supervisor Diana Ortiz and wants all the volunteers who have participated in the past merge into this new plan.

D. **Scholarship Program-** Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez proposes that the Senior Commission comes up with a scholarship fund. Potentially name it “Seniors for Scholars”. Chairperson states a lot of seniors are willing to work or attend school but because of Covid-19 they have been displaced. The idea would allow Seniors to reinvent themselves and obtain new skills. A scholarship program is a return investment to the City of Bell Gardens. The benefits of returning to the city with skills acquired will eventually be put in use to the community. Chairperson states the possibilities of several Senior Citizens wanting to return and complete a higher education.

- a. **Supervisor Diana Ortiz-** Emphasized looking into the program and do more research. A recent MOU has been signed with Rio Hondo Community College. Potentially coming on site at the Senior Center. Depending on the amount of interested Seniors, free classes will be offered. Senior Citizens who are interested in participating must register to the classes. Staff will assist anyone who needs help with registration. Courses will be completed free, such as ESL, Computer Literacy Classes, and Citizenship Classes. Different Physical and Art Courses will also be available. Supervisor Ortiz confirms looking into the Scholarship Program.
- b. **Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez-** Confirms Vice-Chairperson Tiffany Quintero-Maldonado has disconnected from the meeting. Chairperson Poliquin-Hernandez informs Senior Secretary Miriam Vargas-Cervantes a public comment has been submitted.
- c. **Supervisor Diana Ortiz-** Informs the Commissioners a few minutes will be given to allow Vice-Chairperson Quintero to connect using the zoom invitation to ensure the meeting has a quorum. Announces to Commission Secretary Miriam Vargas-Cervantes that Vice-Chair Quintero left the meeting at 6:29 p.m.
- d. **Commission Secretary Miriam Vargas-Cervantes-** Responds to Supervisor Diana Ortiz confirming the meeting has been paused at 6:29 p.m.
- e. **Vice-Chairperson Tiffany Quintero-Maldonado-** Informs the commissioners she experienced internet issues and will connect using her cellphone.
- f. **Supervisor Diana Ortiz-** Informs Vice-Chairperson Tiffany Quintero-Maldonado camera needs to be turned on to resume with commission meeting. Supervisor Diana Ortiz resumes the meeting at 6:38 p.m.
- g. **Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez-** Requests to know the date Rio Hondo Community College will attend in person at the Senior Center?
- h. **Supervisor Diana Ortiz-** Anticipates some time in March but does not have an exact date when will Rio Hondo Community College will initiate at the Senior Center. Currently working on some final details and will notify the commissioners and residents. Classes would take place at any city facility.

E. **Social Media-** Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez wants to ensure the Senior Center social media is up to date with events and posts. Suggested to maintain and have it current with recent events. Encourages the community that attend Senior Events allow them to submit photos. Chairperson Poliquin-Hernandez stated it's great to have events, but it needs to reflect on the

social media page. Highlights the community that does not have the opportunity to participate in all the events can still admire all the amazing events happening at the center.

- a. **Supervisor Diana Ortiz**-Informs the commissioners the City of Bell Gardens did have various social media pages. Recreation and Community Services department decided it would be best work with one page. The Department is in the process of developing a new Senior Center, currently in a transitioning period. Program Director Rozanne Adanto will resume her retirement next week. Recreation and Community Services department has a new Director by the name of Elizabeth Nava. She will be working closely with city staff to develop a policy to grow platforms.

F. **Utility Box Art Beautification**- Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez would like to push for the Senior Center department to paint and beautify the box located next to the center. Recommends for the seniors to participate, seniors or artist showcase their art. Chairperson highlights when there is beautification and dedication to the city, people are less likely to graffiti. Requesting to reach a local Bell Gardens artist who would like to participate.

- a. **Supervisor Diana Ortiz**- Confirms the utility box art beautification has been a topic with other commissions. Supervisor Ortiz gives some insight in how it will be funded. The Department is researching how to fund the beautification art box. It would cost \$3,000 that is with an outsource artist that will develop the art piece that would be added to the utility boxes. The idea of beautifying the boxes began with the Girl Scouts. Potentially painting the utility box located near Cesar Chavez Elementary School. A local artist developed a wrapping for the box. Unfortunately, the utility box was damaged and will be moved to another location. The department is coming up with ideas to implement art policies and how will it be funded. Art is very subjective, and the goal is to ensure there is an art policy in place.
- b. **Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez**- Suggested a future follow up to ensure this idea is not forgotten. Elizabeth Nava comes from the Recreation Community Services Department from Norwalk. Director Nava has tons of experience with Recreation and Social Services. The City of Bell Gardens staff is excited to have her come on board. Commissioners will have the opportunity to meet her in a future scheduled meeting. Invites all the Commissioners to visit the Senior Center and meet the seniors and learn more about future events.

### **Public Comments:**

Commission Secretary, Miriam Vargas-Cervantes confirms receiving an email from Helen Gonzalez however the message is unclear, and the content cannot be transferred. The resident has been invited to email the Community Family Service Center regarding any concerns or suggestions. Supervisor Diana Ortiz will address any concerns Helen Gonzalez may have regarding the Senior Citizen Commission meeting.

### **Staff Comments:**

Supervisor Diana- would like to invite the resident that submitted a public comment via email to please read the chat with her contact information. Unfortunately, she was not able to read the email that was submitted. Supervisor Ortiz informs Commissioners the Recreation and Community Services department has a new Program Director.

**Comments from Commission:**

Vice-Chairperson Tiffany Quintero-Maldonado- would like to thank everyone for all the work. Thanked Supervisor Diana Ortiz for all the updates. Appreciated everyone being patient while she struggled with internet technical difficulties.

Commissioner Ana Maria Sanchez-Thanked everyone for participation and everything that is being done for the Senior Community. Encourages everyone to continue to help the elderly.

Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez- expresses joy of being able to complete the meeting. Thanked Parks and Recreation for their continuous help. Thanked Supervisor Diana Ortiz for the Senior Center tour. Encourages fellow Commissioners and the community to visit the center. The possibilities are endless, and appreciates Karaoke is now taking place. Thanked Director Adanto for the years of service to the community. Special thank you to Commissioner Secretary Miriam Vargas-Cervantes for keeping everyone organized. Personally, would like to thank Senior Coordinator Erica Rodriguez and emphasizes her great work. Looks forward working with her and encourages Commissioners to visit the center and meet her in person. Chairperson Poliquin-Hernandez informed residents you don't have to live at the center to participate in all the events. Requests for Coordinator Erica Rodriguez to be present in the meetings. Personally, sends condolences to Councilmember Marco Barcena for the passing of his father. Beloved member of the Bell Gardens City Community a talented artist. He is happy to see the progress that has been made. Encourages everyone to attend the Senior Volunteer meeting at the Senior Center on February 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m.

**Adjournment:**

Chairperson Jacob Poliquin-Hernandez requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Ana Maria motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Vice-Chairperson Tiffany Quintero-Maldonado seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Recorded By: Miriam Vargas-Cervantes  
Miriam Vargas-Cervantes, Senior Citizen Commission Secretary