

Claremont Community & Human Services Commission

League of Women Voters of Mt. Baldy Area

Observer Report by Barbara Rugeley

June 2018 to May 23, 2019

Purpose of the Commission

The Claremont Community and Human Services Commission advises the City Council on matters of maintenance of City property and on programs for its citizens.

Commission Members (6 of 7)

Lee Kane, Chair; Nancy Brower, Vice Chair; Phyllis Munson, Rachel Forester, Dirk Silva, Deborah Scott-Toux.

Resignations: Jed Leano (Elected to City Council), Lynne Marsenich, Angela Bekzadian-Avila.

Staff

Human Services

Anne Turner, Director 2014-

Community Services

Jeremy Swan, Interim Director, Apr. 2019-

Chris Paulson, Director, Nov. 2018- Feb. 2019. Appointed Interim Assistant City Manager.

Roger Bradley, Director, Apr. 25, 2016- July 2019. Took another job.

David Roger, Deputy Director.

Lisa Marrujo, Administrative Assistant, through Feb. 2019.

Michele Gonzalez, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Attendance

Regular meetings are held the 1st Wednesday monthly in City Council Chambers. Of the 10 meetings held, I attended 6; one was covered by a substitute. There are usually 4 to 10 in the audience, plus staff.

Overall Assessment

The agency is following good government standards. It operates transparently, welcomes public input, and Commissioners and staff appear well prepared. The “structural deficit” continues. I do worry that the employees spend too much time seeking grants and sponsorships to run the city’s programs.

HUMAN SERVICES

Despite the tight budget and reduced staffing, Claremont succeeds in offering top services.

Homeless Services

Director Turner and former Council Member Joe Lyon worked with Inland Valley Hope Partners (IVHP) to certify them as a Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) vendor. By partnering with IVHP, Claremont will be able to seek funding from Measure H to provide services to the homeless in Claremont. Measure H funding was expected to provide Claremont \$1 million in 2018-19 and \$2 million in 2019-20. Evidently, it is not easy money as some grant applications were denied.

There will be a new 18-unit low income apartment built on Harrison at Cambridge.

Proposed Grant Funding

for 16 Community Based Organizations (\$86,650) And 7 Homeless Programs (\$30,000). Final decisions will come May 28, at City Council.

Senior Programs

Blaisdell and Joslyn Centers are enjoying their new patios for programming. Over 7000 seniors took advantage of the programs of classes, workshops, trips, and free auditing.

Youth & Family Programs

Vibrant programs are offered. When asked why camp costs have increased, the answer was because it made the class more desirable: when it was free, parents wouldn't commit. The YAK and TAC continue to offer free after school activities plus tours in the summer. Free! What a program!

COMMUNITY SERVICES

With three Directors or Interim Directors in 3 years, Community Services has been held together by Dave Roger, the Deputy Director, who is too often an Acting Director. The department is justly proud of its Summer Youth Work Program which has hired five youths to help with tree plantings. I heard clapping when a resident explained that her neighborhood is funding the improvements to their cul-de-sac.

Landscape and Lighting District

The Landscape and Lighting District, part of our property tax bill, is currently insufficient to cover the cost of routine maintenance and is heavily subsidized by the General Fund. There were some years when the City Council did not impose the CPI increase. A loan to purchase all LCD streetlights should pay off in reduced energy expenses even during the term of the loan. Recycling changes have been caused by our service provider (and ultimately by China). Foothill Blvd. Improvement Projects are moving along, but traffic isn't.

Trees

Since January 2018, over 1000 trees have been planted, thanks to Sustainable Claremont and the Green Team and a host of weekend volunteers.

SANITATION

A 2014 Ad Hoc Committee reaffirmed that we should continue to own our sanitation service. By 2021, the debt service on the City Yard will be paid off, and \$500,000 will accrue to the City. I took advantage of a free pick up service of electronic waste: wonderful!

Clean Power Alliance (CPA)

There are now 31 communities in So Cal in the alliance. Claremont residents got their first bills in March. This May commercial businesses will be added.

League of Women Voters of Mt. Baldy Area Position on Government – Local Finances

“...Support measures to ensure revenues that are flexible, suitable and sufficient to meet changing priorities for local government services, that emphasize equity and fair sharing of the tax burden as well as meet current and future needs of municipal financing....”