

Claremont Community & Human Services Commission

League of Women Voters of the Claremont Area Observer Report

By Observer Barbara Rugeley

May 11, 2017

Purpose of the Commission

The Community and Human Services Commission advises the City Council on matters of maintenance of City property and on programs for its citizens. The mission of the Human Services Department is to make life better through high-quality programs and services.

Commission Members (7) (year indicates end of current term) (4 years, renewable once)

Butch Henderson, (2009-2017); Chair for 2 years. Retired Minister, Claremont United Church of Christ.

Appointed to the Commission August 2009 with a term to expire in July 2013 (4 years)

Re-appointed August 2013 with a term to expire in July 2017 (4 years)

Maury Feingold, (2013-2017); Vice Chair, retired teacher.

Appointed to the Commission August 2008 with a term to expire in July 2009 (1 year)

Re-appointed to the Commission August 2009 with a term to expire in July 2012 (3 years)

Appointed August 2013 with a term to expire in July 2017 (4 years)

Pauline Bourne, (2010-2018); Human Resources Consultant at L. A. Co. Office of Education.

Appointed August 2010 with a term to expire in July 2014 (4 years)

Re-appointed August 2014 with a term to expire in July 2018 (4 years)

Lee Kane, (2015-2019). Program Manager, Shoes That Fit.

Appointed August 2015 with a term to expire in July 2019 (4 years)

Lynne Marsenich, (2015-2018). Retired social worker.

Appointed August 2015 with a term to expire in July 2018 (3 years)

Phyllis Munson, (2013-2017).

Appointed August 2013 with a term to expire in July 2017 (4 years)

Jed Leano, (2016-2020). Immigration lawyer.

Appointed August 2016 with a term to expire in July 2020 (4 years)

Staff

Human Services

Anne Turner, Director

Fred Cervantes, Special Events Coordinator, 2016-

Christopher George, Senior Park Ranger, 2016-

Michael McKittrick, Program Coordinator, Tracks El Roble, 2017-

Community Services

Roger Bradley, Director, Apr. 25, 2016-

David Roger, Deputy Director, August 2016-

Ian Gray, Full-Time Arborist, July 2016-

Lisa Marrujo, Commission Secretary

Michele Gonzalez, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Attendance

Regular meetings are held the 1st Wednesday monthly in City Council Chambers. I attended 12 of the 13 meetings between May 2016 and April 2017.

Overall Assessment

The agency is following good government standards. It operates transparently, welcomes public input, and members appear well prepared.

HUMAN SERVICES

FUNDING FOR 19 COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS (\$86,650) AND 6 HOMELESS PROGRAMS (\$60,000)

The top CBO grant recipients were Youtherapy Psychological Services, with \$25,000, and Claremont After-School Programs (CLASP) with \$13,200. Both programs support the Claremont Unified School District. In December 2016, the Commission rated 22 of the 27 grant programs as exceptional or above average. Two programs were denied continued funding for 2017/18 due to lack of measurable results: The David & Margaret Youth and Family Services and Service Center for Independent Life.

Top Homeless Program funding went to Inland Valley Council of Churches, dba Inland Valley Hope Partners, for their Family Stabilization services (\$32,900), and Pacific Lifeline for its Women's Program (\$7,300). These programs are funded through the City's General Fund and are impacted by Congressional funding decisions.

4TH OF JULY

The Committee reduced from 15 to 10 members, returned to the "Big Show" (22 minutes), with the Parade beginning at 3, not 4pm, and booths closing at 2pm, not 4, in time to watch the parade.

SENIOR PROGRAMS

The Committee on Aging, chaired by Karen Rosenthal, honored the 13,000 hours donated by 300 volunteers. Two major accomplishments were the launch of a successful social program, "Mingle and Munch," and "Reading About Money," a discussion group whose chair is Arlene Andrew. Excursions are booked within days of their announcements. I did hear one participant wish that Claremont residents had priority for those trips. The Committee continues to advocate for Larkin Park improvements and to explore partnerships.

HOMELESS SERVICES

In June 2016, enhanced collaboration began between Claremont Police, the City's Human Services Dept., and local service providers, such as Volunteers of America, Tri-City Mental Health, Claremont Homeless Advocacy Program (CHAP), and Inland Valley Hope Partners. Two brochures list resources to help those in need, as well as those trying to help them. Nevertheless, 3 persons were evicted from the flood control channel at Monte Vista and Foothill. Some homeless resist housing.

YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS

TAC AND YAC: TRACKS ACTIVITY CENTER (EL ROBLE) AND YOUTH ACTIVITY CENTER (CHS)

The YAC was deemed the "Crown Jewel" of teen facilities during an exchange with the Teen Committees in Ontario and Perris. The City Staff has offered mentoring to youth for job skills, resume building, interview training, as well as hands-on experience in planting trees. The ABC's for Me preschool has a huge waiting list. Tiny Tots had 2 openings in September '16. Contract classes continue to garner regular attendance and enthusiasm.

Claremont Graduate University (CGU) EVALUATIONS

CGU students surveyed 3 programs: the Joselyn Center had a 90% satisfaction rate on physical, mental, and social programs. College Workshops should be 2 days, not one; free tutoring was moved from Claremont High to San Antonio High and for 4, not 2 days a week. 98% of seniors were satisfied with the CALL program of auditing classes at the Claremont Colleges, but requested expansion into the arts and humanities.

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RELATIONS

This committee of 9 is being reformed with the intent to affirm the values of the city as inclusive and supportive.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

CLAREMONT HILLS WILDERNESS PARK MASTER PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In June 2016, the City Council approved the plan after two years of study and community input. It includes one full time Senior Park Ranger as well as some part time rangers.

PARKS & MEDIANS, LANDSCAPE & LIGHTING

Residents appreciate the new Wheeler Park playground equipment and LED lights. The Pooch Park was closed for reseeding, reopening June 10, 2016, but, now that funds are available, the Pooch Park Renovation Project went to bid April 12, 2017. It will include subterranean drainage, weather-based irrigation, new turf grass, 5 new benches, vines, shrubs, and trash cans. Periodic closures will be needed to allow the grass to recover.

City budget costs for tree maintenance and landscaping have risen. Due to the 2.71% increase in the CPI (Consumer Price Index) the Landscape & Lighting levy will increase \$4.47 to \$169.63 per assessment unit. This covers only 77% of the funds needed to maintain our 21 parks, 24,000 trees, street medians and lighting. The remainder comes from the General Fund.

TREES

In 2016, Claremont earned the Tree City USA award for the 31st year in a row. Our Summer Youth Program of tree planting events earned the Going Green Award from the California Parks and Recreation Society. In March the city completed its initial treatment for PSHB (Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer) and will monitor twice a month in the treatment areas. This is a deadly pest. Recent research confirmed that treatment is more cost effective than “remove and replace” policies used in other cities. Nevertheless, the city has spent \$150,00 to remove 270 dead trees and \$60,000 to replace them.

The wet spring was a relief for our trees, but Claremont’s program of soaker hoses and water bags for the last 2 years was effective. There is a proposed Tree Fund, a kind of adopt-a-tree program, confirmed by Council, but not yet advertised. Friends of the Oak Park Cemetery donated \$10,000 to treat the PSHB at the cemetery. Supervisor Solis gave \$200,000 for tree planting.

SANITATION

The new Sewer Assessment and Cleaning Program is half complete with no urgent repairs identified: good news. The Commercial Organic Material Recycling Program will be run in-house, as the bids were too high. Fees will be conducive to compliance: raising the overall rates 5% to fund the program. There are several partners involved with a lot of interest generated. There are 2 new CNG city vehicles and 1 new Solid Waste Operator position.

Overall Assessment

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