



City of Las Cruces®
PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

**SENIOR PROGRAMS ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

March 10, 2016—Munson Center

PRESENT: Chair Felix Vega (Eastside Center Representative), Vice Chair Judy Chavarria (Member-at-Large), Secretary Marilu Darby (District 2 Representative), Sharlene Wittern (District 3 Representative), Renee Short (District 6 Representative), Bill King (Frank O'Brien Papen Center Representative); James Gibson (Munson Center Representative); Juliette White (Henry Benavidez Center Representative)

ABSENT: Rick Jackson, (District 4 Representative), Kent Palmer (Sage Café Representative)

GUESTS: Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator; Azucena Saucedo, Assistant Management Analyst; Claudia Chavez, Parks and Recreation Services Manager; Jeneca Maya, Recreation Services Leader Senior; Lajos Kiss, Charles Black, Errol Gilliland, Charles Black, Arthur Cuaron, Ricardo Gomez, Ralph Smith, and Toni Flores, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Vega called the Senior Programs Advisory Board meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 10, 2016, at the Munson Center, 975 S. Mesquite Street, Las Cruces, NM.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: It was noted that no Board members or staff present had a conflict of interest with any item of business on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Board members reviewed the February 11, 2016, Board meeting minutes. After review, R. Short inquired why the Codes Enforcement informational presentation held on February 11, 2016, was not included in the meeting minutes. It was explained the presentation was conducted prior to the official starting of the Board meeting due to a lack of a quorum. After further discussion, Renee Short, District 6 Representative, recommended the Codes Enforcement presentation conducted on February 11, 2016, be included in the Board meeting minutes. Vice Chair Chavarria, Member-At-Large, moved to approve the February 11, 2016, Senior Programs Advisory Board meeting minutes as amended. James Gibson, Munson Center Representative, seconded the motion. Vote: 8 Ayes; 0 Nays. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Chair Vega opened the floor for public comment on the proposed fee of \$1.00 per day to play pool (billiards).

44 Arthur Cuaron, guest, stated he is an avid pool player at the Eastside Center. He stated
46 that charging a fee to play pool is "opening a can of worms." If a person plays five times
48 a week that is \$5.00 a week, which amounts to \$250 a year. There are some people
50 who cannot afford it. Collecting the fee will also be a challenge. He stated there has
never been a fee for playing pool at any of the centers. His recommendation to the
Board is that there be no charge for playing pool.

52 Ralph Smith, guest, provided a brief history of the billiards' game at Munson Center. He
54 stated the participants were asked to support the bond issue for the appropriation of
56 funds for the construction of a billiards' room in Munson Center. Since it was a City
58 project, it was understood that the City would cover the maintenance costs of the new
60 billiards room. For the past 20 years, volunteers have been very involved in the day-to-
62 day maintenance of the billiards' tables and equipment, resulting in a cost savings to the
64 City. R. Smith stated throughout the years, he and other participants have purchased
billiards' equipment such as a vacuum cleaner, pool stick cue lathe machine, and a
billiards' ball polisher. He stated that Jim Waugh, who passed away in April 2015,
would volunteer to make pool sticks. Volunteers also repair pool sticks and cue tips for
both Munson and Eastside Center participants at no charge to the City. He added
during the planning phase, pool participants were invited to provide input on the
drawings and design of the new pool room. However, in the end the plans and design
were changed. The billiards' room was built smaller than originally planned.

66 R. Smith informed the Board the monthly pool tournaments are organized by volunteers,
68 but the City collects the \$3.00 entrance fee per person. The pool players, at their own
70 expense, purchase the pastries for the monthly pool tournaments. The pastries are for
72 everyone to enjoy, not just the pool players. The City purchases the trophies, which
74 amounts to \$90.00 a month. However, the fees collected during the pool tournaments
76 offset the cost of the trophies. At one time, the pool players collected the money and
78 everything was accounted for. R. Smith stated it is not fair to charge \$1.00 a day to play
80 pool especially when the pool players are putting a lot of effort into this activity to make
82 it successful. The purpose of the senior center is to socialize. By imposing a fee for
pool, the staff will be driving seniors away from the centers. He added whenever a rule
or a policy is changed, there is no plan for implementation. An example is the new
registration process. Senior Programs is losing funding because participants do not
stop to sign in at the front desk. As a result, staff is saying that the building is
underutilized, specifically pool. Consciously, staff knows it is not true but on paper it
shows that the room is underutilized. R. Smith added that staff should be inclusive of
everyone and try to bring people in to the centers. Charging people to play pool drives
people away, and it is not fair because volunteers take care of the majority of the
maintenance and repairs. That is enough payment already.

84
86 Ricardo Gomez, guest, stated it was not right to charge a \$1.00 per day to play pool.
He voiced his support for no fees for playing pool at any of the centers.

88 Charles Black, guest, has been coming to the center for the past 4 years. He stated the
City has done an excellent job with the billiards' room. The pool players are very lucky
90 to have Ralph Smith. He questioned the endeavor or the reason behind the proposed
fee of \$1.00 per day for playing pool. He stated he has played pool in other cities where
92 there is a fee to play pool at a senior center. The fees are collected by a pool
committee, not the senior center. The money collected is used to purchase billiard
94 supplies. He questioned who will be enforcing, controlling or collecting the money.
None of the pool players, him included, want to collect the money from the participants.
96 He stated things are so good in the billiards' room as they right now. He reiterated he
did not understand the reasoning behind the proposed fee for pool.

98
Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator, stated the bond issue, size of the room,
100 and design of the multipurpose room was already in place when she first came to the
job. She will research the reason the room was not built the way it was designed. She
102 explained that part of the reason that the \$1.00 per day fee is being proposed is a result
of the focus group meeting held in April 2015 with the billiards' players. At that time
104 there was a consensus from those present to implement a fee for playing billiards.
There have also been complaints from other program participants about the billiards'
106 players not paying a fee, yet they have a new billiards room. S. Saldana stated that in
terms of fairness for everyone who attends the centers, a fee for billiards is being
108 recommended to the Board for their consideration. The Board's recommendation is very
important because they represent the continuents of each of the centers as well as the
110 city districts. She reiterated one concern seems to be who will be tracking, collecting
and monitoring the fees, if approved. She stated Senior Programs' staff has been
112 working on some ideas.

114 Senior Programs is not accurately capturing all the participants' attendance, particularly
in the billiards' room. S. Saldana stated the meeting room can be used for other
116 activities if the room is underutilized. Different options are being explored to accurately
track and monitor participant attendance in the Munson Center billiard's room. R. Smith
118 stated the new registration process is serving staff, not the seniors. He added this new
system is inefficient and has created problems where problems do not exist. S.
120 Saldana explained the new e-track system, an electronic registration system, is being
implemented City wide. R. Short stated the e-track system is inefficient because a staff
122 person has to physically see and register participants. She stated a kiosk is a better
option. S. Saldana stated Senior Programs is exploring different options to better track
124 Senior Programs' acitivity attendance and at the same time find a system that is not
cumbersome or an inconvenience for the participants.

126
Errol Gilliland, guest, stated he has seen an increase in the billiards' attendance since
128 the pool tables were moved to the new multipurpose room. Billiards builds comrade
and socialization among the participants. Chair Vega explained there are only two pool

130 tables at the Eastside Center. There are five to six people playing at a time and other
132 people waiting to play. It is not fair to charge everyone \$1.00 per day to play pool when
people are only going to be playing one game and only get to shoot once every ½ hour.

134 R. Short inquired what was the category that billiards falls under and what makes
billiards different from card games, chess, dominoes and Mah Jongg. S. Saldana
136 stated Senior Programs is listening to other members of the centers. One of the
reasons a fee is being proposed for billiards is a result of the complaints from
138 participants and comments voiced at the public hearings. Another reason, is the fact
that this year Senior Programs has spent over \$10,000 in the billiards' room to tint
140 windows, purchase and install acoustic panels, resurface tables, etc. E. Gilliland stated
as far as the expenditures for the room are concerned those items should have been
142 included when the room was built. The acoustics in the billiards' room was terrible. It
was hard to hear. Therefore, those items are not considered add ons. S. Saldana
144 stated when the room was completed there was money left over and that money could
have used to make improvements in the lapidary room. E. Gilliland stated it not right to
146 penalize the pool players because those items should have been included during the
construction phase. S. Saldana stated Senior Programs was not penalizing anyone.
148 The proposed fee is being recommended as a direct result of the Senior Programs'
focus group meeting held with the billiards' players a year ago.

150
152 After further discussion, Board members took under consideration the public comments
presented on the proposed fee for billiards. J. Gibson moved that there be no charge to
any individual for playing pool at any of the centers. Vice Chair Chavarria seconded the
154 motion. Vote: Ayes 6; Nays 2. Motion carried.

156 **SENIOR PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** Claudia Chavez, Recreation
Manager, reviewed the February 2016 monthly recreation attendance report. She
158 reported people are being encouraged to participate in the hiking trips that originated
from Munson Center. Shaunna Foster, who was transitioned from Senior Programs to
160 Parks and Recreation, has been leading the hiking trips. The trips have been very
successful. There are day and weekly hikes. The next hike is planned for Big Ben,
162 Texas. This is a great opportunity for individuals to meet new friends, travel as a group
and see the outdoors. For more information, people can contact the Parks and
164 Recreation office. The fees vary. If people travel on their own, there is a different fee
associated with the hike. The hiking trips cost \$200 for the week. Meals and
166 transportation are included in the total cost. Participants camp at the site. The hike is
limited to 13 individuals.

168
170 S. Saldana reported that Ryan Steinmetz, the Network Volunteer Center Coordinator,
will be holding a multigenerational peace camp for adults and children on March 16,
2016. These two populations are the most vulnerable populations in New Mexico for
172 hunger. All-day fun peace building and educational activities are planned. Ryan

174 Steinmetz can be contacted at 528-3035 for more information. The event will be held
from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 1:00-5:00 p.m.

176 S. Saldana provided an update on the March 2016 Senior Programs' Open Action
178 Items. Action Items number 12--promote the bond issue to get funding for the central
kitchen design remains in the works. Action number 13—implementation of a
180 congregate meals program at Sage Café remains in the works. S. Saldana stated there
has been an increase in the number of people attending the congregate meals program.
182 Senior Programs is anticipating it will exceed the projected goals by 10,000 meals this
year. Due to an increase in the meals, the start of the congregate meals program at
Sage Café is being postponed until July 1, 2016. Roger Bishop, Nutrition Program
184 Manager, is working on obtaining a food permit for the facility. Staff is also coordinating
the set up and teardown of the dining room when the meals program begins.

186 S. Saldana reported on action item number 14—the purchase and installation of the
188 acoustic panels for the Munson Center multipurpose room. The acoustic panels were
installed February 26, 2016. The project has been completed. R. Short moved to
190 remove action item 14--the purchase and installation of the acoustic panels for the
Munson Center multipurpose room from the list. S. Wittern seconded the motion.
192 Vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

194 **CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:** J. Gibson reported the piano has been
reinstated in the Munson Center dining room. The piano is now locked. S. Saldana
196 explained two gentlemen engaged in a confrontation over the piano. One individual
was abusive to the piano. For this reason, the piano was removed and secured.
198 Individuals may play the piano if they register as a volunteer with The Volunteer
Network Center. To date, only one individual has been registered as a volunteer. A
200 schedule has been created for the volunteers to play the piano.

202 Secretary M. Darby, District 2 Representative, stated she has received complaints from
a few of the congregate meal program participants stating the piano is too loud and the
204 music is disruptive. The piano should not be played during lunch.

206 R. Short inquired if there is a plan to move forward with the Sage Café Senior Center.
She stated many people have signed-up showing interest in the proposed activities at
208 the center. However, there seems to be no plans to begin any of the proposed activities
at the Sage Café. S. Saldana stated she is in the process of hiring a Recreation
210 Facility Manager. The individual in this position will be spending a lot more time at the
centers assessing the needs and wants of the center participants. At this time, Sage
212 Café has limited space available for meals and activities. R. Short stated that she has
noticed people are congregating for an activity at the center but are moving off site
214 because Sage Café is unable to accommodate the groups. S. Saldana stated the
facility was designed for a completely different purpose. It is a small facility and if meals

216 will be provided then more space is needed for other activities. R. Short inquired if any
218 consideration has been given to extending the hours of operation or expanding into the
kitchen space since the meals will be catered to the center. S. Saldana stated staff will
be exploring different options.

220 Sharlene Wittern, District 3 Representative, stated there are participants who are
222 emotionally and mentally unstable. Some of these individuals do not have any respect
for the participants or the property. She commented staff needs to take appropriate
224 action immediately and remove them from the center they violate the program rules.
She commented she has received negative remarks/comments about the food served.
226 Others have commented they like what is being served. It is very nutritional and they
appreciate that.

228 Juliette White, Benavidez Center Representative, stated that several of the center
230 participants have commented that it is nice to have real meat served in the dishes. In
the past the chicken patties and chicken fried steak looked and tasted like cardboard
232 because of the pressed and processed meat. There have been some changes made,
because the stew that was recently served actually contained chunks of real beef.
234 People are very excited about the changes and are much happier with the meals now.
S. Saldana stated that is a direct result of the donations received for the program. The
236 meal donations help improve the quality of the food. She reminded the Board
suggestion boxes are located at all centers. The comments are welcomed and
238 appreciated.

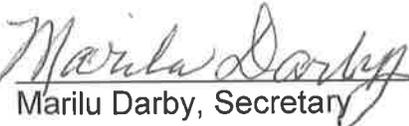
240 Senior Programs continues to work on the Munson Center reaccreditation project. The
Board will be informed as soon as a site visit is scheduled.

242 **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Chair Vega reiterated Senior Programs Advisory Board
244 approved no fees for playing billiards at any of the Senior Programs' centers.

246 **UPCOMING MEETING:** The next regular Senior Programs Advisory Board meeting is
scheduled for Thursday, April 14, 2016, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Frank
248 O'Brien Papen Center, 304 W. Bell Avenue, Las Cruces, NM.

250 **ADJOURNMENT:** S. Wittern moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 a.m. Secretary
Darby seconded the motion. Vote: 8 Ayes; 0 Nays. Motion carried unanimously.

252 Submitted,

254
256 
Marilu Darby, Secretary


Toni Flores, Recording Secretary