The following are summary minutes of the Senior Programs Advisory Board Meeting held on September 12, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at Sage Café Senior Center, 6121 Reynolds Drive, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**
- Chair Cheryl De Young, Benavidez Center Representative
- Vice Chair Rayla Buchanan, Sage Café Senior Center Representative
- Secretary Judy Chavarría, Member-at-Large
- Sharlene Wittern, District 3 Representative
- Gabriel Montalvo, Munson Center Representative
- Jo Ann Rodriguez-Haught, Frank O’Brien Papen Center Representative

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**
- Dr. Abel L. Chavarría, District 1 Representative
- Mariju Darby, District 2 Representative
- Rick Jackson, District 4 Representative
- Manuel Contreras, District 5 Representative
- Etta Kaufman, District 6 Representative
- Rudy Alvarez, Eastside Center Representative

**GUESTS PRESENT:**
- Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator
- Azucena Saucedo, Assistant Management Analyst
- Lorenzo Zepeda, Museum Systems Public Art Program Coordinator
- Toni Flores, Recording Secretary

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Cheryl De Young, Benavidez Center Representative, called the Senior Programs’ Advisory Board meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. on Thursday, September 12, 2019, at the Sage Café Senior Center, 6121 Reynolds Drive, Las Cruces, NM.

II. **ROLL CALL:** Roll call was taken, and a quorum ascertained.

III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Gabriel Montalvo, Munson Center Representative, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** A moment of silence was observed.

V. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Board members and staff present had no conflict of interest with any item of business on the agenda.

VI. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Lorenzo Zepeda, City of Las Cruces Quality of Life Department Public Art Program Coordinator, was introduced and welcomed.

VII. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator, reported at a previous Board meeting there was a recommendation made to place a mural on a highly visible wall at each of the senior centers depicting the history, culture and tradition of the area. As a result, L. Zepeda was invited to discuss the logistics of placing murals in public places. L. Zepeda informed the Board the Art Program Coordinator is a new position with the City of Las Cruces. As the Art Program Coordinator, he is tasked with handling artwork on City property, excluding art owned or on loan by the Library Interior Collections, and art at the Museums. He determines
if the commissioned artwork is a viable project for the City to invest its resources and time. He also serves as a liaison on the City Art Board (CAB). The CAB, which has been in existence since 2013, advises the City Council and staff on matters related to public art commissioned through the City of Las Cruces. Currently, the CAB is working on the development of a master plan that outlines the process and procedures for the implementation of a successful citywide public art program. The master plan, which will be presented to City Council by the end of the year, will include funding flexibility to address specific areas, certain neighborhoods that require attention, and identity development. L. Zepeda stated there has been much activity in the downtown area from events such as “Chalk the Block” to actual renovations to the look and feel of downtown that the CAB has been handling. After further discussion, L. Zepeda provided an overview of the procedures for commissioning artwork. It is a process that involves public input, because it is created specifically for the location but with the requirements or criteria of the community. The CAB does not approve anything per se, but they make very strong recommendations to City Council based on vetting the project.

Secretary Chavarria inquired if it is very intrusive if the Board recommends that the participants of each of the centers be given first preference to paint the murals at each of the senior centers. She stated there are many talented senior artists that may be interested in the project. L. Zepeda stated that is a possibility, because he can attest to the talent of the senior artists. He was an art instructor at the center for several years. He stated this will simplify the process.

He advised the Board to first create a subcommittee made up of Board members, artists, community representatives, facility landowners and/or other interested individuals. The committee will brainstorm ideas and the artist will develop a concept. The concept will be very rudimentary. A survey or town hall meeting to receive public input from the specific neighborhood is highly recommended. The location for the mural will be identified. If it is a privately-owned facility, the landlord or owner of the leased facility will need to be contacted to obtain permission to paint a mural on the wall. He stated at this point the CAB does not have anything in writing that addresses what mechanism will be used to work with privately-owned property owners. That is something that will be addressed in the future. The committee will then itemize costs and identify potential funding sources to cover project costs. Sometimes there may be no additional costs involved and other times repairs or upgrades are needed to the wall, which can be costly. The CAB may have some suggestions. It takes time to develop the concept. The concept is then presented to L. Zepeda or the CAB for consideration. The CAB will either approve or disapprove the concept. If the CAB decides to open the call for artist to the general public, they will go through the commissioning process. An open call for artists will be conducted regionally, statewide or nationally, through a system called CAFÉ. Secretary J. Chavarria stated the idea of the Senior Programs Advisory Board is to include an artist from the senior community. L. Zepeda stated that being the case, the CAB will then recommend the concept to City Council for approval. If approved, the artist becomes the project manager for the installation of the mural. If the project is fully funded by the organization that is bringing it forward, it is seen as a donation or a gift by the CAB and approval is required to accept the gift and the cost of maintaining the gift.

L. Zepeda recommended beginning with one center. Munson Center is a good candidate to begin with, because it is the hub of all Senior Programs. This project can also be used as a form of public engagement. In this case Benavidez Center is another good candidate, because it is highly visible. L. Zepeda stated overall, murals are a good choice because they are low cost, immediate,
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and highly visible. The only issue with the mural is that it will eventually go away. L. Zepeda was thanked for the information provided.

VIII. ACTION ITEM(S): Rayla Buchanan, Sage Café Senior Center Representative, moved to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2019, Senior Programs Advisory Board meeting. Secretary Judy Chavarria, Member-at-Large, seconded the motion. Vote: 6 Ayes; 0 Nays. Motion carried.

IX. DISCUSSION ITEM(S): Sonia Saldana, Senior Programs Administrator, announced that Michael Garcia, Recreation Facility Manager, resigned from his position on September 3, 2019 and is no longer with Senior Programs. In the meantime, she is overseeing the Senior Recreation Program until a Recreation Facility Manager is hired. The vacant position will be posted very soon. Senior Programs is in the process of hiring a Volunteer Coordinator to replace Ryan Steinmetz. In the interim, Jordan Kopreski, will temporarily oversee the Network Volunteer Center until the position is filled. City employees will be given priority and if they do not meet the requirements of the position, then the position will be opened to external candidates.

S. Saldana updated the Board on the September 2019 list of pending work orders and issues of concern:

Item No. 5—Resurfacing of the sidewalk at the Eastside Center. S. Saldana reported the resurfacing of the Eastside Center sidewalk has been completed. Since the sidewalk has been leveled and is in ADA compliance, there should be further risk for falls. There are a few finishing touches that need to be made to the area surrounding the sidewalk, but for the most part, the resurfacing of the sidewalk has been completed.

Item No. 37—Signage needed for the men's and women's restroom entrances at the Eastside Center. S. Saldana reported the permanent ADA compliant signage for the Eastside Center restrooms has been received. A work order will be placed with Facilities Department to install the signage.

Item No. 38—Status on the recruitment of a Tai Chi instructor. S. Saldana stated she received notification from Parks and Recreation that the NMSU grant funding for the Tai Chi classes had been exhausted. No additional funding was available. As a result, S. Saldana contacted the New Mexico Senior Olympics, Inc., the organization that funds the Enhance Fitness program, about the possibility of funding the Tai Chi classes.

Item No. 46—Status of the Sage Café separation of the women's and men's restrooms by gender. S. Saldana reported the recommendation that was made by Facilities Department was to leave the restrooms as originally designated to accommodate transgender individuals. Currently, the restroom facilities are unisex. If the restrooms are gender specific, then one restroom facility will need to be created to accommodate transgender individuals which means losing one gender-specific restroom. She reported the reason this issue was brought forward was due to the messes in the restrooms. However, that issue has been resolved, because there have been no further complaints from the participants. There was Board consensus to make no changes to the Sage Café restroom facilities at this time.
Item No. 47—Replacement of the Sage Café facility address with larger numbers. Facilities Department is obtaining quotes to enlarge and relocate the Sage Café address numbers. The address will be moved to a location where the address is visible from the street.

Item No. 50—Update on the posting of the Pool rules in English and Spanish at Munson and Eastside Center. The rules are being printed on a metal-type material that is sturdy and not easily removed from the wall. As soon as the pool rules are printed, a work order will be placed to install the pool rules in the pool rooms at Munson and Eastside Centers.

Item No. 51: Update on the relocation of the condiments and drinks to relieve congestion during the serving time at the Eastside Center. Staff continue to review options available to reconfigure the area to alleviate congestion of the condiments and drinks area. The challenge is the limited space and ADA compliance requirements.

S. Saldana is working with several community organizations to provide Board training on various topics that affect seniors such as Adult Protective Services, food insecurities, mental health, etc. After discussion, there was Board consensus to conduct the Board meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and training from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Adult Protective Services training will be held at the October 10, 2019 Board meeting.

X. UPDATES: Secretary J. Chavarria, Member-at-Large, recommended Board members be available during the lunch hour, one day a week, at each of the centers to assist with the completion of the 2020 U.S. Census survey. S. Saldana will follow up with Ceci Vasconcellos, Marketing and Event Coordinator, to provide a recommendation based on the plan that was developed by the U.S. Census committee.

J. Rodriguez-Haught, Frank O’Brien Papen Center representative, reported there has been an increase in attendance, particularly on the food distribution days. There is an overflow of people on that day. She requested one additional table be set up in the dining room on those days to accommodate the influx of people having lunch at Center. S. Saldana will follow up.

Sharlene Wittern, District 3 representative, reported there was concern expressed by a volunteer that there were broken branches in the back of Munson Center. City staff have been notified, but nothing has been done. There is an area in the Munson Center north parking lot that requires immediate attention. The concrete is uneven and poses a safety hazard. There are no stripes in the south parking lot where the City vehicles are parked at Munson Center. These City vehicles should be moved out of the parking lot as soon as the facility opens to free up the parking spaces for the senior participants. Saldana stated a work order has been placed to restripe the parking lots on the south and west side of Munson Center. S. Wittern reported at the Eastside Center the north parking lot is being used by the Meals on Wheels program and the Eastside Center employees to park. Staff should be parking across the street to leave the parking spaces for the center participants, particularly for the disabled individuals who need to park closer to the building. Secretary J. Chavarria disagreed with the statement. She stated she has observed the staff and they park across the street. She agrees parking is tight, especially on the days Enchiladas are being served. S. Saldana will follow up.

S. Wittern reported the Munson Center custodian has been closing the dining room at 12:45 p.m. for floor maintenance. However, sometimes it is not feasible to leave by 12:45 p.m. S. Saldana
stated people can remain in the dining room until 1:00 p.m. She will follow up with the custodian to inform him of the dining room closing time. Signs will be posted in English and Spanish. This should allow enough time for setups, teardowns and floor care maintenance before the 2:00 p.m. activities begin.

Gabriel Montalvo, Munson Center Representative, inquired why there are no recycling bins in the centers. S. Saldana stated a survey was conducted a few years back, and people stated they did not want the recycling bins in the center. The recycling bins were being used for trash.

G. Montalvo stated he received feedback from the participants regarding the Saturday, September 19, 2019 dance held at Munson Center. It was great that Senior Programs was celebrating the 16th of September, but the DJ was playing music that people could not dance to. S. Saldana will follow up.

J. Chavarria announced the next Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council meeting has been scheduled from October 16-17, 2019 at Inn of the Mountain Gods in Ruidoso, NM.

Chair C. De Young, Benavidez Recreation Center representative, commended participants are very happy with the new floor. Their only concern was the strong sewer odor coming from the restrooms. S. Saldana stated staff is aware of the issue and is working with Facilities to resolve the issue as soon as possible. The smell is stronger when the facility is closed. S. Saldana will follow up on the work order. Another complaint is the long walk from the parking lot to the main entrance of the facility, particularly for the disabled individuals. The Board recommended creating parking that is closer to the facility. There are many individuals who are disabled and need closer parking to the facility. The disabled parking spaces closer to the building are often occupied. It is a challenge to find any disabled parking spaces open. S. Saldana will contact the Facilities Department to see if it is feasible to add disabled parking that is closer to the facility. It is a challenge for some people to reach the front entrance of the facility without having to rest somewhere in between. S. Saldana will follow up.

The next Board meeting will be held October 10, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Benavidez Center, 1045 McClure Road, Las Cruces, NM.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT:** Secretary J. Chavarria moved to adjourn at 10:25 a.m.

Submitted,

Judy Chavarria, Secretary

Toni Flores, Recording Secretary