

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO  
BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
January 11, 2022

BOARD MEMBERS:

Anthony Serna, President  
Rick Rodriguez, Vice President  
Valda Lewis, Secretary  
Gilberto Cantu  
Eugene Austin

STAFF:

Ateria Allen  
Dawn Dawkins  
Vanessa Hernandez-Orange

Reported by: Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR  
Fissinger & Associates

Call to Order: 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Roll Call: Present: Anthony Serna, Eugene Austin

Telephonic: Valda Lewis, Gilberto Cantu

Staff Present: Ateria Allen  
Vanessa Hernandez-Orange

Staff Telephonic: Attorney Dawn Dawkins

MR. SERNA: We do have a quorum. Mr. Rodriguez called and informed me he would not be able to attend tonight's meeting, but we do have a quorum.

First, under Administrative Matters, we have approval of December 28, 2021 meeting minutes, as written. I'll entertain a motion to approve.

MR. AUSTIN: Move for approval.

MS. LEWIS: Second.

MR. SERNA: All in favor signify by saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

Motion carries.

Next we have approval of Payroll dated January 7, 2022. Entertain a motion to approve payroll of January 7, 2022.

MR. CANTU: I move we approve.

1 MS. LEWIS: Second.

2 MR. SERNA: All in favor signify by  
3 saying aye?

3 (All signify aye.)

4 Motion carries.

4 Old Business, there is none.

5 New Business: Vanessa

5 Hernandez-Orange.

6 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: First item on the  
7 agenda will be the election of officers.

8 MR. SERNA: I asked our secretary, Ateria  
9 Allen, that be put on the agenda at our first Board  
10 meeting of the year. I will open nominations to the  
11 Board. I did speak to Rick Rodriguez and ask if he was  
12 interested in serving as Vice-president again, and he  
13 agreed. Miss Lewis, would you still be interested in  
14 remaining as secretary?

11 MS. LEWIS: Yes, that will be fine.

12 MR. SERNA: Mr. Cantu, are you okay with  
13 that?

14 MR. CANTU: Yes.

15 MR. SERNA: So it appears that everyone  
16 is content to stay with the same positions. I will  
17 remain as Board president, Mr. Rick Rodriguez as  
18 Vice-president, and Miss Valda Lewis as secretary.

18 MR. AUSTIN: I move we continue with the  
19 same officers for the next year.

19 MR. CANTU: Second.

20 MR. SERNA: All in favor signify by  
21 saying aye?

21 (All signify aye.)

22 Motion carries.

22 Next we have our update to perennial  
23 plant pricing.

24 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I need approval  
25 for the actual update of perennial pricing. We have a  
new employee at the Park Department, who has a  
background in planting, farming, greenhouse entirety.

1 So his plan is literally and figuratively for our  
2 Greenhouse. So what we have done is, we have taken some  
3 of the plants that we had in our tropical room and we  
4 separated them. On here you have a list of plants that  
5 we are able to sell at this moment. The goal is to have  
6 these and to make use of what we actually have at our  
7 Greenhouse, to purchase brand new stuff for the upcoming  
8 year with the intent of selling. With his connections  
9 that he has to Lake County, as well as other garden  
10 clubs throughout Northwest Indiana, he stated that even  
11 if it's not something that other places want, at least  
12 we can get them to bring them in.

13 I asked him for a comparison of what  
14 we sell and what other locations sell, the pricing.  
15 Basically we are fairly cheaper than everyone else and  
16 our products are a little bit smaller than most places,  
17 but again, we do a good job of keeping the price at a  
18 good rate.

19 The second page that you have on  
20 there is price a comparison to help people price the  
21 plants. So we'd just like approval to sell at these  
22 prices, along with, as you can see, like the size, the  
23 inches that these plants are and we started with a  
24 little bit more detail of how we are selling them.

25 MR. SERNA: All right. Any questions on  
this Board members?

MS. LEWIS: Are these prices comparable  
to what they were last year?

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: They are. They  
may be a dollar or two more, but if you buy more there's  
a discount if you are buying more than one. But we did  
keep the price range around the same thing, solely  
because most of ours are smaller compared to what you  
would buy at the Home Depot, Menard's, etcetera.

MS. LEWIS: Okay, thank you.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I will come  
before you again when we have the selling of the Spring  
plants, but as of right now, this is just what we have  
in our Greenhouse that we want to sell and we also want  
to make some type of money. We felt like it was enough  
that we needed to raise the price a little bit.

MR. SERNA: Okay. Any further questions  
Board members? (None) I will entertain a motion to

1 approve the updated perennial plant sale price.

2 MR. CANTU: I move we approve.

3 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

4 MR. SERNA: All in favor signify by  
5 saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

Motion carries.

6 Next item we have is approval of  
7 donation from Paxton Suggs and total would be around  
8 \$50.00. Mr. Suggs, how he works with planting is pretty  
9 amazing when you watch him in action. So what he has  
10 done, he wants to bring in different vegetables and  
11 fruits that we are able to sell. So what he did was,  
12 some of the items he put together so we can start  
13 planting is watermelon, cucumbers and stuff like that.  
14 We expect to see a lot more growth of vegetables in the  
15 Greenhouse, including the products we have. But because  
16 we don't have some of the items we need, he brought some  
17 in because he had them around. Again, he has a farm.  
18 He loves to do gardening. He loves to plant. So he's  
19 decided to kind of donate to the Greenhouse.

20 MR. SERNA: Any questions Board members?  
21 (None) Entertain a motion to approve the donation from  
22 employee, Paxton Suggs, for the various items listed.

23 MS. LEWIS: I move for approval of the  
24 donation.

25 MR. CANTU: Second.

MR. SERNA: All in favor signify by  
saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

Motion carries.

Anything further?

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: That's it for me.

MR. SERNA: Next we have Public Comments.  
(None) Our next meeting date is Tuesday, January 25,  
2022, right here at City Hall Council Chambers at  
5:00 p.m.

I will entertain a motion to  
adjourn.

1 MS. LEWIS: I so move.

2 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

3 MR. SERNA: All in favor signify by  
4 saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

Motion carries.

5 Thank you Board members, meeting  
6 adjourned.

7 \*\*\*\*\* Meeting Adjourned \*\*\*\*\*  
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Approval of the Meeting Minutes of Tuesday  
January 11, 2022

Approved and signed January 25, 2022

Anthony Serna, President

  
Rick Rodriguez, Vice-President

Valda Lewis / Zoom  
Valda Lewis, Secretary

Gilberto Cantu / Zoom  
Gilberto Cantu, Member

  
Eugene Austin, Member

  
Ateria Allen, Recording Secretary

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Peggy S. LaLonde, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of the said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Valparaiso, Indiana, this 17th day of January, 2022.

*Peggy S. LaLonde*

Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR



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