

# CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



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## EL PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES HISTORICAL MONUMENT

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## COMMISSION MINUTES Thursday, August 12, 2021 2:00 p.m.

*\*Members of the public who wish to speak to the Commission during the meeting must submit a "Request to Speak" form to the Board Secretary prior to the commencement of the public comments for each agenda item of interest. Comments by the public on matters not identified on the agenda, but within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission will be heard during the item designated as "Public Comments Period." The length of public speaking time is two minutes, unless the presiding officer grants some other amount of time.*

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Meeting called to order at: 2:00 PM by President **Louie**. Commissioners present: **Alarcon, Garcia, Marez, Núñez, Samarjian, Thomas, Wirfs**. Also present: General Manager Arturo Chavez, Assistant General Manager Edgar Garcia, El Pueblo Staff Linda Duran, El Pueblo Staff Ailene Ignacio, and Deputy City Attorney Cheryl Soriano.

### 1. WELCOMING REMARKS.

Commissioner Louie welcomed those in attendance.

### 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

Commissioners Ibarra was absent. A quorum was established.

Commissioner Louie nominated Patricia Alarcon as President of the Commission. Commissioner Núñez seconded the nomination, stating that Commissioner Alarcon has been a fantastic leader as Vice President alongside President Louie and complimented her wide range of experience with City government, community advocacy, education, and community organizations. Commissioner Núñez continued on in celebrating Commissioner Alarcon as the Commission leader for the coming year. Commissioner Louie invited Commissioner Alarcon to address the Commission. Commissioner Alarcon accepted the nomination and expressed her appreciation for Commissioner Núñez's kind words. Commissioner Alarcon shared that she is passionate about El Pueblo and hoped to continue the efforts in place and see those items come to fruition. She hoped to explore and focus on economic pipelines for both administration and Merchants, safety, and cultural enrichment entailing education, events, and continued support for the Merchants to continue and enhance their amazing work. She noted that they are all leaders, all give of their time, are all volunteers, and all have a history with El Pueblo either personally, work related, or both. Commissioner Alarcon stated that she believed leadership should rotate, noting that she looked forward to leading the Commission and empowering her fellow



Commissioners to lead thereafter. She spoke on the opportunity for the Commission to work with Merchants, the administration, the City, State, County, and even on the Federal level.

Commissioner Louie shared that he has worked with Commissioner Alarcon over the past year and said that she has been instrumental and participatory in all of the Commission's major decisions, policy directions, and the velocity that they have tried to integrate into the Commission. He stated that she has tremendous experience, knows how to build consensus, and can give direction to chaos. He felt she is prepared and ready with the skill sets necessary for leadership. Commissioner Samarjian commended Commissioner Alarcon for stepping up for El Pueblo and the City and for her service and vision. She expressed excitement for what Commissioner Alarcon would bring in this role and beyond. Commissioner Samarjian expressed her support of women in leadership.

Public Speakers:

Edward Flores: Hello, Ed Flores from Juanita's Café. [Mr. Flores experienced technical difficulties and was unable to be heard.]

Commissioner Wirfs believed that Mr. Flores was inquiring if this comment was for the nominations or for General Public comment. Commissioner Wirfs clarified that this public comment was regarding the Commission leadership nominations.

Public Speaker 1: [Speaker did not address the item under discussion.]

Vote: Louie: Yes; Alarcon: Yes; Garcia: Yes; Marez: Yes; Núñez: Yes; Samarjian: Yes; Thomas: Yes; Wirfs: Yes. The motion carried. Commissioner Louie congratulated Commissioner Alarcon and figuratively passed the gavel over to her.

With excitement, Commissioner Alarcon moved forward to the first item of her new role: the nomination and selection of Commission Vice President for the Fiscal Year 2021- 2022. Commissioner Alarcon nominated former Commission President Louie as Commission Vice President. She remarked on his great passion and dedication and hoped he would have the opportunity to complete many of the items begun over the past year and move forward with the leadership he already shows. She said there has not been a day where Commissioner Louie has not reminded them of the importance of education on what occurs at El Pueblo and how to prepare to research these items. Commissioner Marez seconded. Commissioner Núñez shared her support for Commissioner Louie as Vice President. She stated he has proven to be inclusive: allowing all Commissioners to speak freely, to propose initiatives, and be leaders in their own right. She noted he is a key leader in many initiatives that have been started but are not yet completed and felt it was important for Commissioner Louie to be in a position to complete those initiatives.

Commissioner Wirfs recalled a previous discussion about rotation of leadership and was curious to see his fellow Commissioner's opinions on that as well. Commissioner Thomas felt this was a good opportunity to bring leadership, diversity, and a fresh set of eyes to the Commission. Commissioner Thomas nominated Commissioner Wirfs as Commission Vice President. He stated that Commissioner Wirfs brings much experience from his time leading the Cultural Affairs Department Commission with much crossover with El Pueblo. Commissioner Thomas shared that, periodically, in any organization it is healthy and appropriate to have new ideas and new leadership. He stated that he appreciates and agrees with everything said about Commissioner Louie, yet thought it was important to look at opportunities for new leadership. Commissioner Thomas noted that there have been certain issues brought before the Commission that he hoped to see addressed with a more neutral perspective.

Commissioner Ibarra was present at the meeting at 2:28 p.m.

Commissioner Wirfs accepted the nomination and was curious to hear from other Commissioners about their interest in rotating leadership. Commissioner Samarjian took the opportunity to thank Commissioner Louie for his leadership. She stated that leadership is always challenging and leading through the unprecedented crisis experienced over the last eighteen (18) months took “challenging” to new, unimaginable heights. She commended Commissioner Louie for his steadfast leadership through a tumultuous storm. Commissioner Alarcon was unable to obtain a second for the nomination of Commissioner Wirfs as Vice President.

Public Speakers:

Public Speaker 1: [Speaker did not address the item under discussion.]

Lisane Magdaleno Lee: Yes, hello, good afternoon Commissioners. Lisane Magdaleno Lee, E-5. With all due respect to Mr. Louie and his past being on the Commission for as long as you have, I believe its twelve (12) to thirteen (13) years, and with past decisions that have been made that have been controversial with the Commissions that he’s sat on again with all due respect I do agree that we need new people on the Commission. Dulce had wanted to be there and she was pushed out as she was going to run for Council, but I really do think that there is some decision making process that had happened during Mr. Louie’s tenure with the Commission that needs to be looked at by Ms. Alarcon and the Ethics Commission, which there has been a report already filed on. And so, having said that, I think we need to get fresh voices in to the Commission and, with all due respect Mr. Louie, you have made some decisions that have been good for El Pueblo and unfortunately detrimental to El Pueblo. And this is to the City Attorney’s Office (CAO): are you allowed to be on there for thirteen (13) years? Because if you’re on for ten (10) then it looks manipulative to put him in again under a Vice President position. It looks like a manipulative move by the City of Los Angeles to have him sit there. Thank you again Mr. Louie for your service, but I think we need some new voices.

Jim Jang: This is Jim Jang, the past president of the Friends of the Chinese American Museum. I wholly support David Louie and I’ve dealt with him and I’ve attended El Pueblo Commission meetings probably for the last eight (8) years or so and I think one of the things I see is that David has a lot of experience. One of the things I’ve really enjoyed seeing on the Commission itself is a lot of new faces. I think that combination, and I think someone addressed it when talking about Patricia Alarcon that you need to listen to everybody and that everybody has a voice and I think just because you are President or Vice President doesn’t mean your vote isn’t any more important than someone else’s. So I endorse David, I know he’s helped the museum and has done a lot of things that have helped El Pueblo in general. I and the Friends of the Chinese American Museum support his nomination as Vice President of the Commission. Thank you.

Emily Martinez: Hello, this is Emily Martinez C-7, independent Merchant. Congratulations President Alarcon, we met several years back when Mayor Garcetti was in office. I’m sure you remember Peter and I. On several occasions regarding issues that we were very concerned about and you stated in your words a few minutes ago “leadership should rotate,” give everyone a voice, and I sincerely hope you remember that because what we have, over with the Merchants, we have the same thing, the same talks, the same people, and us as independents and smaller people are not paid attention to and there’s another Commissioner here that’s representing everybody, because we need to represent everyone, black lives matter, Hispanics that don’t have their voice. So I sincerely hope and I will bring it up, everyone should have a voice, and I have asked to be included, my husband and I, as independents in the negotiation of the leases or the rents, the new ones with the Councilman, and I have not heard a word from Management. So give everyone a voice and that is what is not happening here on Olvera

Street. So I support you, I know you've got what it takes, and I hope that you follow through. And Congratulations Vice President Louie, you did a great job while you were there and we'll see what this next session comes up with. Thank you and congratulations to all.

Commissioner Alarcon hoped to elaborate on her thoughts regarding rotating leadership. She shared that she has had several discussions with some of the Commissioners and the public. She stated that leadership should rotate and that it is healthy to do so. She hoped to be transparent sharing she hoped to serve one (1) term, and that, when that term expired, she would see new individuals step up to the plate and run for leadership. She said it is an innovative approach to bringing a different lens to what is seen, noting that they all have different perceptions of what occurs. Commissioner Alarcon noted that leadership brings diversity with a diverse group of candidates. She assured those in attendance that moving forward all comments and feedback will be heard. She hoped the public would be heard, the Commissioners would be heard. She recalled being recently reminded that a title is a title but everyone has a voice. She said that she is appreciative and honored with the title, but that each one has an important part to play to make sure things move forward to completion. She hoped the Commission would embark on new ventures that will be healthy for the Merchants, the City, and the Commissioners. She said that volunteering is ingrained in all present or they would not be there. She hoped to see projects come to fruition because there is money, time, and ideas involved and the benefit to the community is stalled when projects are stalled. Commissioner Alarcon proceeded with the vote to confirm the nomination of Commissioner Louie as Vice President.

Vote: Louie: Yes; Alarcon: Yes; Garcia: Yes; Ibarra: Yes; Marez, Yes; Núñez: Yes; Samarjian: Yes; Thomas: Abstained; Wirfs: No. The motion carried.

Commissioner Louie thanked the Commission for allowing him to continue service. He hoped to make sure they make a good contribution. He shared that he thought rotating leadership is important. He noted that when he last ran for president it was with the idea that the Commission would nurture and share experience to develop that leadership. On the other hand, he said, he thought experience is important, if it can be learned from. He felt it could prevent mistakes from the past. He was hopeful that the combination of Commissioner Alarcon and himself would give good guidance and leadership to El Pueblo. He assured those listening that his vision, extending that to his fellow Commissioners, is wanting the best for the City of Los Angeles and El Pueblo. He noted they all have skill sets, experiences, and assets that they could bring to bear, encouraging those assets to be made available to the Commission for a better El Pueblo.

### **3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT.**

Public Speakers:

Public Speaker 1: [Speaker did not address the item under discussion.]

Lisanne Magdaleno Lee: Lisanne Magdaleno Lee, E-5. Just giving updates, asking again today for the zip file of 07-08-21 Commission Meeting and today's and I will forward that payment over to Oscar in Accounting. Just wanted to give a quick update regarding the court case of E-5, there will be a jury trial set for 12-09-21. The hearing was on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, and I just have to say it wasn't pretty, Judge Bird who is overseeing this, was extremely upset at trial procedure or the lack thereof by the City Attorney's Office (CAO). So, having said that, he did not understand, as he put it, 'the municipalities unwillingness to deal with the constituents of the City' is exactly what he said and to pay the money and open up for the agreement and the court case will show that evidence of the illegal business transfer that started this whole thing during the Commission time in 2015 on that vote and also the illegal termination of the El Pueblo agreement with E-5 and also the eviction. So, as the judge looked that over he asked us if there

was any way we could come to the table and obviously there wasn't and he was very concerned that there was no way to do a settlement conference because we tried that also and it did not go well for the City Attorney's Office. It was pretty ugly. So on that I've given my update and congratulations Ms. Alarcon, I'm hoping that you will be able to sit there and give some fresh views to this and hopefully with future businesses that are willing to transfer their business interest on Olvera Street, the Commission will take a better hand at overseeing El Pueblo, because in the past that's how we got to this mess is that the Commission and the Department did not oversee the City Attorney's Office and they believed the City Attorney's Office, that what they did was in fact compliant with the El Pueblo Charter with the City of Los Angeles and we found out it was not. And on that, thank you.

Edward Flores: Good Afternoon Commissioners. Congratulations Commission President, this is Edward Flores from Juanita's Café. Two days ago I had a recollection about... [Technical issues occurred and left Mr. Flores comment unintelligible.]

Commissioner Alarcon requested the next caller in the hopes that Mr. Flores would return with better reception.

Rosario Calatayud Serna: Good Afternoon Commissioners, my name is Rosario Calatayud Serna. I've made some public comments in the past during these meetings. As part of a special committee or the Mexican Cultural Institute of Los Angeles, I'm an Arts Administrator, I've worked in various museums and foundations in New York City and now I have an arts programming and consulting agency here in LA. Today, my comment is to focus on a request on behalf of the Mexican Cultural Institute, an organization that has provided cultural programming out of El Pueblo for many years. I would like to request a meeting with the El Pueblo Commission to discuss programming and ensure the appropriate members of the Commission are receiving our correspondence and updates that we have been asked to send. In April of this year, MCI was asked to provide a sample of programming which included activities to start next month at El Pueblo and we've yet to receive an answer or any updates or any follow up messages. We've been promised meetings and presentations with the Commission in the past and these have yet to be confirmed. As a matter of fact, I would like to see the Commission share with the public the process of communication, including the process for including items on the meeting agendas, as this is important information not just for MCI, but for all organizations and individuals wishing to bring up important topics regarding the El Pueblo community. Thank you, I appreciate your time and effort to resolve this issue at hand.

Rosalio Muñoz: Yes, I'm Rosalio Muñoz. I'm here to support the proposal for the Board of the Commission to have a presentation and discussion with us about both our experiences in presenting the history of Mexican, Mexican Americans, and Indigenous art and culture here at El Pueblo and throughout Southern California and Mexico. I think there has been some errors by the Commissions of the past and even more recently in not bringing to the attention of the Board what our contributions have been in the past, what they have been in the period of the last nearly five (5) years when we were not allowed to make presentations officially in the Pueblo. And more that our contributions to other areas, East Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley, South LA, and other areas, have been misrepresented to the Commission. So very much we're in a period, we have a new administration, we have a new budget, we're going into trying to get back to normalcy in the economy and social life of our country where we move on from this horrendous pandemic, but also a period of very strong divisiveness and much of that brunt has fallen on the Mexican American, the Indigenous, the Latino, the people who really in history have set up the foundation."

Edward Flores: Hello, this is Edward Flores from Juanita's Café. I called in again because my Bluetooth was failing. Congratulations Commission President. Congratulations Commissioner Louie. I recently had a recollection about a gifted million dollars that Metro had given El Pueblo, of course Commissioner

Marez will remember that and so will you Commissioner Louie. And I was just was concerned whatever happened to that revenue because they were originally going to use that for the Park to redevelop it and they came to the realization that it was not adequate funding so they gave that to El Pueblo. And if you recall, a group of Merchants and a museum came forward and requested that that money be utilized for various reasons and items. I recall that some of that was going to be used for the bathrooms in Lot #2. One hundred thousand (\$100,000) for the plumbing in the Italian Hall since it is in such a poor state since the building is so old. I recall twenty-five thousand (\$25,000) being allocated for a PA system. I was just wondering whatever happened to that revenue, because we've never heard anything of that since that time. And these are things that should have been done especially now that attendance is low, those type of repairs could have been done and should have probably been done back then when attendance was low here and it was probably a better time to do things of that sort. And I know you can't respond to that now, but perhaps that can be addressed at some time in the future. Cause I think that that should have been done and I'm concerned about how we've been requesting a P.A. system here, and a place like this should actually have one. They should actually also have a surveillance system as well as places like Disneyland and Universal have, and of course this is not that kind of place, but none the less we should have surveillance here and we should have a P.A. system here for the good of the public and for the good of the Merchants as well as part of the way the place operates. Thank you.

#### **4. COMMUNITY REPORTS.**

Valerie Hanley of the Olvera Street Merchants Association Foundation (OSMAF) shared that OSMAF was planning a full lineup for the Dia De Los Muertos program. She stated they have spoken with many of the artisans and other places and have found that many are canceling programming due to the rise of the Delta Variant. Ms. Hanley stated that OSMAF has decided to not hold the Muertos Art Walk intended to take place at the beginning of October. OSMAF is still working with El Pueblo staff to see if the rest of the program, including the nine (9) day procession and the Muertos weekend, will still be viable depending on City and County restrictions.

#### **5. GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT.**

Mr. Chavez began his report by congratulating Commission President Alarcon and Commission Vice President Louie. Mr. Chavez stated that under Operations the Department has been doing fairly well in terms of open Merchants and Restaurants. One of the large restaurants, La Golondrina remains closed with discussion of a possible transfer of ownership. Mr. Chavez shared an increase in activity on site including Sundays at the Plaza with Mariachi entertainment, Ballet Folklorico and Aztec dancers, and Cayambe playing Peruvian flute. Mr. Garcia shared images from the event. Mr. Garcia noted that El Pueblo staff coordinated with Council of Mexican Federations in North America (COFEM) to bring performances to the Pueblo. This event was advertised in Spanish and English, keeping in mind the safety of the public. Mr. Garcia noted that the performances were directed toward the entrance of Olvera Street. He shared that this brought forward to him that this space is for all people and families of all backgrounds to have a day with their loved ones. The Department hopes to continue these Sunday events while remaining mindful of any health orders in place.

Mr. Chavez noted that the Budget remains the same. He said that negotiations are ongoing regarding Merchant rent. The Department has met with Merchant representatives and Council District 14 (CD14). Rents turned in by Merchants for July and August varied. The bulk of the Merchants turned in about forty percent (40%) of their rents for July and August. Some have only turned in twenty-five percent (25%) of their rents. Some have turned in up to eighty percent (80%) and some have paid in full. At this point, Mr. Chavez stated, there is no agreement to any percentages or waiver of rent and the Department has discussed with the CAO and is awaiting further discussions with CD14. Mr. Chavez

noted that CD14 has the authority to make any recommendations to the City Council.

Mr. Chavez moved on to discuss the Olvera Street Merchant Advisory Committee (OSMAC) which by ordinance is to be a representative body of Olvera Street Merchants. A motion was introduced to change the ordinance as it was antiquated. The ordinance was to be changed to reflect business size and type. OSMAC will consist of a committee of seven (7) individuals. Mr. Chavez continued to note that nomination forms were originally sent out in 2020, but nominations were put on hold based on discussions with the CAO. Mr. Chavez noted that the Department planned to move forward with nominations once the motion was introduced as it takes time to change the ordinance. He stated the Department is in the process of sending out nomination forms for OSMAC in hopes of holding elections in October of 2021 in anticipation of the motion's approval.

Next, Mr. Chavez noted that there were ten (10) calls to LAPD during July regarding security issues. He noted a rise in incidents totaling around four hundred and thirty-four (434). One hundred and eighty-eight (188) of those incidents were transient related, the bulk of these incidents were related to panhandling. He noted issues with doors being unsecured which has been discussed with Security. Mr. Chavez shared that the Department would provide further updates on Operations and Budget at the next meeting.

Commissioner Núñez thanked Mr. Chavez for his report. She shared her experience performing Ballet Folklorico professionally and her happiness seeing the children performing at El Pueblo. She inquired if any of the surplus funds outlined by Governor Newsom would become available to El Pueblo. Additionally, she noted that there was a sexual assault reported and requested further information about the incident. Mr. Chavez shared that the assault occurred about two (2) months prior and the perpetrator was arrested. Addressing the question of funding, Mr. Chavez shared he has met with the Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) regarding funding and grant possibilities. He noted a twenty-five million dollar (\$25 Million) allotment of five thousand dollar (\$5,000) grants for businesses. Mr. Chavez spoke of the possibility of EWDD visiting El Pueblo to meet with Merchants in September. He noted that several Merchants were successful in applying for grants. Commissioner Núñez thanked the Department for work equipping Merchants to apply for grants.

Commissioner Thomas requested an update on any third-party assessment of the trees around the Plaza. Mr. Chavez shared that the Department has received estimates and is looking to identify funding. He hoped the Department would have an update at the next meeting.

Commissioner Núñez inquired if the Department had moved forward investigating the possibility of installing a camera system on Olvera Street to enhance security. Mr. Chavez stated that cameras have been discussed as well as a P.A. system. The Department has performed a walkthrough with a company to create an estimate for a P.A. system. Mr. Chavez noted that many of the Merchants have their own camera systems. He shared that the Department has not looked into a camera system due to a need for constant monitoring. Commissioner Núñez hoped to continue to explore alternatives. Mr. Garcia noted sporadic camera coverage including museums and Merchants. Based on previous discussions with ITA, Mr. Garcia doubted the ability to create one centralized camera system at El Pueblo. He noted the possibility of cameras in public areas. Mr. Garcia shared that many of the incidents are perpetrated by individuals experiencing mental health issues and expressed concern if a camera would be a deterrent in those cases.

Commissioner Alarcon requested the Department continue to notify the Commission of future events they may visit. Commissioner Núñez requested additional information on the Department's plans for Hispanic Heritage Month. She hoped for a cultural arts webinar to explore the history and heroes of the Mexican-American and Latino community. Mr. Chavez noted that an event was planned for September

16, 2021 with the Mexican Consulate, but the Consulate canceled. Mr. Chavez shared uncertainty around events given changing restrictions. He thanked COFEM for their work on the previous event. Commissioner Núñez extended an offer to assist in any way to create educational programming for Hispanic Heritage Month.

Public Speakers:

Public Speaker 1: [Speaker did not address the item under discussion.]

Emily Martinez: Emily Martinez, C-7, Independent. I thought in September the Commission discussed trying to get some of the billions of dollars that the President sent in. One of the Council members got two (2) million for the street vendors and somebody in the Commission or Management was supposed to check on that so we wouldn't be so stressed out, Management trying to pay their bills and the Merchants trying to survive here. So I'd like to know if anybody looked into that. There were Merchants going around telling Merchants that they had to pay forty percent (40%) rent. Valerie Hanley, Norma Garcia, Edward Flores were telling Merchants, "you have to pay forty percent (40%)." So, this hasn't been decided, why are they naming forty percent (40%)? And some of us paid twenty-five percent (25%) in good faith, we'll see what happens, we'll pay the difference, no problem. One of the Merchants went up and were insistent in "why didn't they pay more than the twenty-five (25)?" There are a lot of people out there on Olvera, so why aren't you doing better? This should be addressed to book-keeping, I'm not going to say who it was, but it should be addressed. They all have been there to take our money and give us the receipts for it and that's not right. Also, this discussion that the Manager has with Merchants it's a Merchant Association or Valerie and the same group. Going forward, giving everyone a voice, will independent Merchants be allowed to participate in this. The other thing, is on the Merchant Advisory I hope there were not any Merchants helping to change all of this as was done before with Chris Espinosa and whoever is voted in should not be an absentee owner. The majority of owners here are absentee owners and yes, we have a lot of people on the weekends Commissioners, but you come down here this week and you see what we've got here, its dead, it's getting dead like it was pre-pandemic almost.

Valerie Hanley: Good Afternoon Commissioners. Just touching on the report as far as some of the events stuff. I wanted just to give you some clarification as to some of the things that have been canceled which triggered us canceling the art walk which is at the beginning of the month of October. Events that have vendors MOLAA (Museum of Latin American Art) canceled theirs, Uptown Whittier canceled theirs, Bazaar Del Mundo in San Diego canceled theirs, Calvary Cemetery canceled theirs, Ontario Day of the Dead Festival canceled theirs. There are still a couple of one (1) day events that are happening, so LA Plaza is having a screening of Coco with no vendors. Forest Lawn is open with no vendors. Hollywood Forever has something on the thirty-first (31), but no theme or ticket information yet, so I think they're holding off to see where COVID is heading. Also Self Help Graphics say they're going forward, but I think they are also playing it by ear due to COVID. And we have not heard anything from Grand Park. So, as much as we would like to say that everything is starting to open up and get better, this new variant has curtailed a lot of that. And if we are not able to have our full Muertos program, which we already are not because we are canceling the Art Walk, it's going to make it much more difficult to be able to try and continue to survive, especially in the very slow months which happen to be January, February, and March. I just want everybody to sort of be aware that, yes, we're trying to move forward as if we are going to be able to do more things, but there are other factors that are starting to curtail all of that for us. So it's still going to be a bit of a struggle to try and get people to come in. And, just on top of that we still have no international visitors. The flights, of course, internationally have been canceled, a lot of them are pushing to close again, I believe even Hawaii is starting to do some closures again within the United States. So, just to keep aware, be informed, that we're still struggling to even try to make ends meet. People are coming on weekends, absolutely. Thank you.



Lisanne Magdaleno Lee: Thank you, Linda. I just had an observation here, in regards to Mr. Chavez. When he said, correct this if I'm wrong, some Merchants have paid forty (40), some paid eighty (80), and some paid one hundred percent (100%). That's counterintuitive to what the waiver was doing, because for a year and a half we were on shutdown, and you couldn't pay your rent. So that's a year and a half of rent free and nobody down there and now there's hardly anybody coming in. I mean, on the weekend yeah, but not during the week. I've heard that from several Merchants in and around LA period. So, if the moratorium is still in effect, I don't know if the City Attorney wants to chime in and El Pueblo is set to take twenty-five percent (25%). How are you going to pay one hundred percent (100%) of your rent if you couldn't pay during the waiver period. That makes no sense. You're paying eighty (80) to forty percent (40%) of your rent, how can you afford that? And that, to me, looks like an audit, because if you're saying to the City, "I can't pay my rent period" and so it's going to be waived for a year and a half and now the City is negotiating with you to pay up to forty (40) when legally you only have to pay twenty-five (25), because of the moratorium. Why would you pay forty (40), eighty (80), or one hundred percent (100%) of your rent when you couldn't afford it for eighteen (18) months. That just seems like you're counterintuitive to yourself. Thank you.

Edward Flores: Good Afternoon Commissioners, Edward Flores, Juanita's Café. I was just going to piggyback on what Valerie was saying. You know, I just heard this morning, that the pandemic levels or the infection rates has matched January of this year. If you recall, in January, we were actually closed down, or rather still ordered to do out-door dining. That's what the level is currently right now. I heard that seventy thousand (70,000) children tested positive for COVID last week. And, although, it seems there is much to be desired to ignore or pretend that it's not happening the fact of the matter is we've hit all the markers that we previously had established to do shut downs and all sorts of other things that have not taken place and I think that has to do with politics. I think because of the quarantine we all know that the Governor who is facing a recall is very reluctant to do anything of the sort, shutting us down as well as the Mayor, City Council, and Supervisor which is actually beneficial to us, because if they shut us down we'd be doing even worse. But the fact of the matter is COVID has resurged and things are getting grim again and we hit all the triggers that would have caused shut downs and all sorts of things multiple times over. In fact, the City Council voted yesterday, as you're probably all aware, to mandate that you have a vaccine to go into restaurants or go into a store, so that's how bad things have gotten and we must realize that, you have to accept that and not try to pretend that it's not happening. Business has declined steadily since June fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) when everything started to reopen, within a couple of weeks we already started realizing the resurgence of COVID again, and the spread, and how people that are vaccinated are getting infected as well and passing it to one another. We really need to take a look at this and realize that we're not at normal capacity yet.

## **6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS.**

6.1 Commissioner Alarcon discussed the Approval of the El Pueblo Commission Meeting Minutes from July 8, 2021. Commissioner Wirfs noted that his name was not listed as present at the beginning of the meeting. He asked the record reflect his presence. Commissioner Wirfs inquired if, as the previous meeting was a Special Commission Meeting, the minutes should likewise indicate "Special". El Pueblo Staff Linda Duran shared that the corrections would be made. Ms. Soriano confirmed that the minutes should reflect that it was a Special Commission Meeting. She noted that when the Commission moves on the item it will be as amended to reflect the corrections requested by Commissioner Wirfs.

Public Speakers:

Public Speaker 1: [Speaker did not address the item under discussion.]

Lisanne Magdaleno Lee: Thank you, Linda. I just wanted to say thank you to I guess the City Attorney's

Office cause as I read these minutes I found that instead of just placing the names, what I asked for, which hasn't been done in about a year of meetings, or maybe a year and a half where a speaker name was instead and nothing was placed in there regarding what they had spoken during the public comment portion. Thank you for that because now you're not in violation of the Brown Act. My question is what about all those other meetings that had happened? I guess they'll be on the public website, the City Clerk Management System? But again, thank you for following the Brown Act and I appreciate that Ms. Soriano. Thank you.

Commissioner Wirfs moved to approve the Minutes of July 8, 2021 with the correction noting his presence at the beginning and indicating the Meeting Minutes as a special meeting. Commissioner Núñez seconded the motion.

Vote: Alarcon, Yes; Louie, Yes; Garcia, Yes; Ibarra, Yes; Marez, Abstained; Núñez, Yes; Thomas, Yes; Wirfs, Yes. The motion carried.

Commissioner Samarjian was noted as having left the meeting at 3:38 PM.

6.2 Mr. Garcia introduced Board Report No. 21-007 related to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro) report and recommendation to approve the street lights, street and sidewalk surfaces, fixtures and other appliances and furnishings related to Metro's Los Angeles Union Station Esplanade and Forecourt Project that are proposed to be located on or adjacent to the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument in accordance with Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.626. Mr. Garcia reiterated on behalf of El Pueblo Management that this project dates back to 2014 and shared he could attest to the extensive outreach done by Metro staff. He introduced Elizabeth Carvajal who has been a part of the project from its inception alongside Megan Nangle. Mr. Garcia acknowledged that not all of the current Commissioners were present from the beginning of the project and noted that in 2017 Metro presented four (4) separate times to the Commission, along with five (5) public workshops, and over three hundred (300) briefings in total. Specific to El Pueblo Stakeholders, there were eight (8) focus groups, meetings, and workshops conducted from the beginning of the project to present day. He noted a typo in the report presented to Commissions indicating that the final sentence should read "The Project completed geotechnical utility investigations in 2020 and secured approval of the construction plans from City departments in 2021." Ms. Nangle thanked the Commission for allowing her to present on the Los Angeles Union Station Esplanade and Forecourt Improvement Project. She shared that she was present to recommend that the El Pueblo Board of Commissioners approve the streetlights, street and sidewalk surfaces, fixtures and other appliances and furnishings that are part of the Project. She provided a time line of the Project beginning from Metro's acquisition of Union Station in 2011 through design completion in 2021. Metro secured eighteen (18) million dollars in grants from Caltrans for Alameda and Los Angeles Street improvements. Ms. Nangle shared maps to allow those present to visualize the Project space. She noted that the goals of the Project are to improve safety and pedestrian access in the space. Ms. Nangle noted that design focused on preserving the historic fabric of El Pueblo including relocating existing features, matching existing treatments, and elements required by the City. These efforts include color matching concrete, planning new trees, replacing trash receptacles and bollards, and new landscaping and irrigation. Ms. Nangle stated an ADA accessible path and handrails are new elements to be added as well as maintaining historical plaques on site. She sought the Commission's formal approval of the El Pueblo adjacent project design in anticipation of consideration from the Board of Public Works in either August or September. Ms. Nangle assured those present that Metro intends to continue engagement with El Pueblo and the Merchants to develop a marketing plan to engage the public during construction. Mr. Garcia shared with the Commission that the area of Placita Dolores is not a contributing element to the historic district. This, he said, allows for additional changes that would not be allowed in other areas of the park.

Commissioner Núñez thanked Metro staff for reaching out to the new Commissioners and providing individual presentations. She thanked them for responding to her questions, sending detailed information, and extensive outreach. She noted she was happy to see Father Serra Park was not to be impacted other than the addition of trees. Commissioner Núñez inquired further into the planned ADA accessibility as well as the marketing plan to be created alongside the Merchants. Ms. Nangle confirmed that Father Serra Park would not be changed. She continued to state that the Project is complying with any ADA requirements. Marcy Anderson of Gruen Associates shared that both ramps were designed following all required widths and measurements with some extra space added. Ms. Anderson shared that the lower ramp has a consistent six (6) foot span in the straightaways. She noted that the minimum access distance for wheelchairs is three (3) feet. Ms. Anderson stated that the upper ramps are wider than the lower portion at eight (8) feet wide. This spacing, she said, was decided to help accommodate El Pueblo maintenance carts utilizing the space as well.

Commissioner Wirfs hoped to follow up on Commissioner Núñez's inquiry about the marketing plan. Ms. Nangle shared that this plan was a priority for their team. Work on the plan is intended to begin prior to construction in 2022. Ms. Carvajal shared that the highly skilled Metro marketing department will be leading the initiative. She shared they hoped to work collaboratively with the Merchants to create a plan that serves El Pueblo's needs. Fundamentally, she hoped the marketing plan would show that El Pueblo and Olvera Street are open for business even with construction occurring on Alameda.

Commissioner Alarcon thanked Metro staff for the presentation and their outreach. She shared that based in her experience with outreach it is not an easy task and Commissioner Alarcon praised their work. She spoke to the importance and inclusivity created by the ADA additions to the Project. Commissioner Núñez complimented the beautiful design and inclusivity of the Project's design. Commissioner Louie shared his remembrance of this Project from the inception and the Commission's discussions surrounding the Project. He thanked Metro for returning to El Pueblo and their continued work to hear El Pueblo's feedback.

Public Speakers:

Public Speaker 1: [Speaker did not address the item under discussion.]

Edward Flores: Good Afternoon Commissioners. Edward Flores, Juanita's Café. I really like everything you're doing about this project. It's really fantastic. I also like that you're reaching out to El Pueblo and the Merchants to mitigate the impact to the Merchants here while you're doing your construction. I just have one particular concern and my concern is the traffic levels on Alameda. I have a business with windows that face out to Alameda and I've seen the horrid traffic levels out there. And it concerns me, removing two (2) lanes of six (6) out there and the traffic buildup that will happen because of that, then you will have public transit like the buses for example taking up one (1) of those two (2) lanes that are left in each direction. I can definitely see traffic at horrible levels at various times of the day. And that just concerns me in the long term and how it's going to be affecting people who come to El Pueblo and the draw of El Pueblo bring cars and traffic as well as Union Station, and then of course the surrounding areas, you know, Dodgers' games you have people come down here for that, they use the public transportation from Union Station as well, so it just concerns me removing thirty percent (30%) of the lanes there to get here in the long term. I don't know how that's going to be addressed in the long run, maybe with traffic signal changes, or something of that sort, but either way it's a concern to me. Thank you.

Commissioner Louie moved to approve Board Report No. 21-007. Commissioner Núñez seconded the motion.

Vote: Alarcon, Yes; Louie, Yes; Ibarra, Yes; Marez, Yes; Núñez, Yes; Thomas, Yes; Wirfs, Yes. The motion carried.

Commissioner Garcia was noted as having left the meeting at 4:11 PM.

## **7. NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL COMMENTS.**

Valerie Hanley shared that there were no community impact statements impacting El Pueblo. She stated that the Neighborhood Council is being reformatted by Empower LA as there have been several grievances filed against it. Ms. Hanley hoped that regular meetings would begin again in the next month.

## **8. COMMISSION BUSINESS.**

Commissioner Wirfs noted that there were a number of Commissioners participating in the Steering Committee for the 1871 Anti-Chinese Massacre occurred on July 21, 2021. Ms. Soriano noted that to comply with the Brown Act the item should be placed on the Agenda for a future meeting. Commissioner Wirfs hoped to include a standing item for that committee.

Commissioner Núñez requested an update on planned Hispanic Heritage Month events and the development of a webinar be placed on the Agenda for the upcoming meeting. Commissioner Wirfs requested clarity on the dates of Hispanic Heritage Month. Commissioner Núñez believed the month began with the celebration of El Grito on September 15<sup>th</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Marez requested an update on the RFP regarding the Mexican Cultural Center.

Public Speakers:

Public Speaker 1: [Speaker did not address the item under discussion.]

Edward Flores: Good Afternoon Commissioners, Edward Flores, Juanita's Café. As I understand it, we're entertaining possible future agenda items if that's correct? I thought perhaps we could add to that, that million dollars that I led off with during public comment that was a gift from Metro. And addressing that and the projects that were attributed to that revenue. I know some of you Commissioners, or probably the majority of you, are hearing this for the first time, but as I stated previously: we were given a million dollars by Metro and it was earmarked for various items on Olvera Street and I was concerned about whatever happened to that revenue and the projects that were going to be addressed with those funds. So if we could perhaps agendize that item, so that it could be looked at, I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT.**

Commissioner Alarcon adjourned the meeting at 4:22 PM.