

MINUTES

Meeting of the
City of Huntington Park Special City Council
Monday, February 24, 2025

The special meeting of the City Council of the City of Huntington Park, California was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, February 24, 2025, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 6550 Miles Avenue, Huntington Park, California; Mayor Karina Macias presiding.

PRESENT: Council Member(s):, Jonathan Sanabria, Eduardo “Eddie” Martinez, Vice Mayor Arturo Flores, and Mayor Karina Macias

ABSENT: None

CITY OFFICIALS/STAFF: City Manager Ricardo Reyes; Eduardo Sarmiento City Clerk; Cosme Lozano Police Cheif; Arnold Glassman City Attorney.

INVOCATION: Mayor Macias led the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Macias led the pledge of allegiance.

PRESENTATION(S)

1. None

The following people provided public comment:

1. Albert Robles
2. Emmanuel Guerra Reda
3. Christian Vasquez
4. Veronica Rangel
5. Elena

Mayor Macias requested a 10 minute recess at 6:20am to set up streaming services on social media. Returned from recess @6:29am.

6. Jane Doe (Macias Supporter)
7. Belen Castro
8. Alberto Rodriguez
9. Erica Gonzalez
10. John Doe
11. John Doe

STAFF RESPONSE:

CLOSED SESSION: NA

REGULAR AGENDA

CITY MANAGER

1. CONSIDERATION OF FILLING VACANT COUNCIL MEMBER POSITION

Per the Municipal Code from the day a vacancy is made on the City Council, the City Council has 60 days to fill the vacancy.

The City Manager presented the alternatives that Councilmembers could take in regards to filling vacant council member commissions.

1) By adopting Resolution No. 2025-06.

- 1) Filling Vacancy by Special Election to be held not less than 114 days from the call of the special election; or
- 2) Filling Vacancy by appointment until the next regularly scheduled election, scheduled to be held on March 3, 2026; or
- 3) take necessary related actions that may be desirable.

On February 18, 2025; the position held by Councilmember Esmeralda Castillo was deemed vacant following an investigation into a complaint received by the City of Huntington Park in September of 2024. The complaint alleged Councilmember Castillo was not a resident in the City. The investigation confirmed that she did not have residency in the City of Huntington Park. As a result, City Council is obligated in filling the vacancy either by appointment or by special election.

If the council calls for a special election, the City Council will have to establish a special election date within 114 days from the call of the special election. The individual elected will hold the office until the expiration of the term March of 2028. County clerk office has no election scheduled from now until that date, thus this election can not be consolidated with any other county, state, or election and would be determined a special election. The election would also come at the City's expense which could be upwards of 500,000 dollars. Staff will prepare resolutions

Or appoint an individual to fill the vacancy until the next general election scheduled for March 3, 2026. City of Huntington Park Municipal Code does not hold a formal process on the appointment process so council would need to create one. Councilmembers can solicit applications, and conduct interviews prior to making an appointment. City Council may choose but is not required to solicit and or conduct interviews prior to making the appointment. If council chooses to make an appointment, it must be done within 60 days of the vacancy. Since vacancy was made on February 18, 2025, council members would need to fill vacancy by April 21, 2025

(since April 18, 2025 falls on a Saturday). Appointees must be a resident in the City of Huntington Park, must be a registered voter, and must be the age of 18 years old at time of appointment. If council serves as appointee he would be required to run in the 2026 general election if interested in retaining his position. If elected in 2026, individuals would serve the remainder of the term (expires in March 2028).

Investigation Detail Breifing: Council and the Public were briefed with basics regarding the investigation into Councilmember Castillo's residency. As it is an active investigation only brief information was provided. Once completed more information would be granted.

MOTION: Councilmember Sanabria motioned to appoint adopted RESOLUTION 2025-06 and fill the vacancy by appointment. With a deadline application on Friday, March 28, 2025. Public candidacy three-minute presentations will be conducted at the regularly scheduled city council meeting of Monday, April 7, 2025; and, possible appointments being on Monday, April 7, 2025 and/ or guaranteed appointment at a following special or regularly scheduled City Council Meeting on or before April 21, 2025 (the 60 day deadline) of the individuals who applied and presented. The motion was then second by Vice Mayor Flores. The motion passed by majority consent.

AYES: Council Member (s): Martinez, Sanabria, and Vice Mayor Flores

NOES: Council Member (s): Mayor Macias. (Mayor Macias wanted to state that the process is illegal).

ABSENT: None

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

None

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Graciela Carbajal and Denise Romero regarding Item #1.

COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

Sanabria: Thanks to all staff and community members who came out tonight. Decision to uphold Municipal Code was why they were elected. Since last time there was a change on council about ten years ago. Was part of that group who tried to make changes for the community. He failed to see Rent Stabalization, changing Huntington Park's status to a sanctuary city. All we saw was a change in vendors. But the material lives of residents did not change. He mentioned the aquatics center. He pushed for the palestinian ordinance and the lobbying ordinance.

Martinez: Thank you to all the community members who came out. All facts will come out. Time will rebuild everything, and we'll have a better understanding of how the city operates and how they make decisions and how they move forward.

Flores: Thank you Staff.

Macias: Thanks Staff and Directors. Very proud of the work that has been done in the last 12 years. There's more work to do. Pool project was stalled due to the county measures, and covid. Resources had to be redistributed from pool projects to keeping individuals alive. Distributing food distribution, mask distribution, senior income for a year, income for struggling folks, etc. Getting transportation money for public transit, and street improvement. That work has been done in the last 10 years, and there's more work to do. It's unfortunate what happened here to Councilmember Castillo, actions were taken that were illegal. She nor any other members of the council were judges to make this kind of decision of who and who does not live in the city. She always carries a little constitution book in her purse, and tonight Councilmember Castillo's constitutional rights were violated. People have died to fight for these constitutional rights. That action was wrong and should've never been done. There's always been disagreements but not to this magnitude. That's why I voted No. The City was placed on Notice by an attorney and we should all be worried.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Macias adjourned the meeting at 7:54p.m. The next City of Huntington Park City Council meeting will be held on Monday, March 3, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eduardo Sarmiento".

Eduardo Sarmiento, City Clerk