

WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES – MARCH 13, 2012
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM

I. CALL TO ORDER

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Mark Zangrando at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 13, 2012, in the Community Conference Room at City Hall.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Cathy Reback.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Ruth Cislowski, Steven L. Davis, Jimmy Palmieri, Bob Shepard, Heidi Shink, Anne-Marie Williams, Mark Zangrando.

Not Present: None

A quorum was present at all times. City staff members present included Sam Baxter, Human Services Director; Daphne Dennis, Social Services Manager; David Giugni, Craig Rhea, and Perri Sloane Goodman.

C. POSTING OF AGENDA

Daphne Dennis reported notices for the meeting had been posted as required.

D. PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Persons desiring to address the meeting were asked to complete a form.

II. MINUTES

The minutes of the February 13, 2012, meeting were approved.

III. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Robert Gamboa of the recovery community spoke positively about the work of McIntyre House.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. DISCUSSION WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND RECOVERY SERVICES

The Commission received presentations from Cathy Reback of Friends Research Institute, Ed Kohler of McIntyre House, and Ruben Acosta and Brett Mullen of the Gay & Lesbian Center's WeHo Life program about their City-funded programs.

Cathy Reback spoke about the following programs:

WeHo Streets: Street-based encounters with substance users targeting men who have sex with men and transgender women. The goal is to move them into a higher level of care. West Hollywood clients are more open to HIV testing and report feeling more secure and comfortable in West Hollywood than in surrounding communities. They also report that West Hollywood law enforcement is supportive rather than confrontational.

Friends Getting Off: An 8-week, 24-session methamphetamine outpatient treatment program. The contingency management piece rewards clients who have clean urine samples. The reimbursement rate for a clean sample escalates from \$2.50 at the beginning of the program to \$240 at the end of 8 weeks. There's a rapid reset policy; if a client slips, they can get back to their previous reimbursement level with 3 clean samples. The majority of West Hollywood clients report being homeless.

LGBT Outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment: This program was recently funded and is now in its 6th week. A clinician has been hired. The first appointments will start on March 15th.

Ed Kohler of McIntyre House reported that they have been a licensed substance use treatment residence since 2005 for men 18 years old and older. One-half of their clients are HIV+, one-half are homeless, and 60% are methamphetamine users. The treatment plan is 9 to 12 months. McIntyre House operates like a family unit, emphasizing teamwork and service work. It promotes a culture of recovery; residents are required to attend 12-step meetings and must have a sponsor. Follow-up assessments are conducted at 6 months and annually for those residents who complete the program. 85% of those who complete the treatment plan stay clean. In 2011, 50 clients started the program and 6 completed treatment. Ed noted that many who leave the program leave within the first week. McIntyre House also has a 6-bed sober living facility that provides 3 months to one year of transitional living for those who've completed the initial program.

Ruben Acosta reported that WeHo Life distributes more than 228,000 condoms annually to more than 30 sites in West Hollywood. This involves a lot of personal contact with businesses.

Ruben also spoke about WeHo Life's "In the Moment" web series. The goal is to have the viewer make a decision to practice safer sex. The WeHo Life web site receives more than 3,000 hits per month. Ruben explained that "In the Moment" reaches community members who may not think they need to hear about HIV prevention and who are busy and online a lot. They expect a high-quality product. Having viewers complete the online surveys has proved challenging. WeHo Life plans to promote survey completion by using characters from the webisodes and celebrities like CoCo Peru. They are also considering raffling webisode walk-ons for those who complete a survey.

Volunteers are put to work stuffing condom packets, especially in preparation for CSW.

B. YEAR-END REPORT ON SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS: FURTHER DISCUSSION

Commissioners raised questions about last month's presentation.

Commissioner Shink asked about the City-owned building located across from Plummer Park that formerly housed the Partners Adult Day Healthcare program. Sam Baxter explained that the City Council decided within the last year that the building would be used as a Russian cultural center housing various organizations, including World War II Veterans from the former Soviet Union and other Russian cultural organizations. Sam will report back with more information at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Davis expressed concern about tracking the number of former clients of the Russian Community Center who now utilize the services of the West Hollywood Comprehensive Services Center. Daphne Dennis reported that the Comp Services Center is tracking that information and will report on it next month.

Commissioner Williams expressed concern about the same issue and noted that she is still awaiting a response from JFS about volunteer resources for the CONNECT program.

Commissioners Davis and Cislowski noted that they liked being able to ask questions of the agencies as they reported, rather than holding all questions until the end of the presentations.

Commissioner Palmieri reported visiting PATH and Being Alive. He noted that PATH will find a bed for West Hollywood community members brought to them by a Sheriff's Deputy, even if the 3 West Hollywood emergency beds are occupied. He reminded the Commission that Glenn Lindsay of the Center's Mental Health Program noted that some clients are hesitant to access APLA's services because AIDS is a part of their name.

Commissioner Cislowski asked if the City could look for a grant to fund psychiatric services for community members, a need identified by the Gay & Lesbian Center and NCJW at the Commission's February meeting.

C. UPDATE ON TRANSIT PROGRAMS

Perri Sloane Goodman presented CityLine's revised single route. She noted that the total trip from end to end is longer (approximately one hour), but that the buses will be more frequent (every ½ hour). Changes should occur before the end of the year, possibly as early as this summer. In addition, Perri reported that the City is applying for a 3-year, \$1,000,000 federal grant to fund a rush-hour shuttle from West Hollywood to the Hollywood/Highland metro station and to provide a new vehicle for slower-moving clients which would

offer door-to-door service rather than the curbside service that Dial-a-Ride provides.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. REPROGRAMMING SAVINGS FROM 2010-11 SOCIAL SERVICES CONTRACTS

Leah Ziskin-Kaufman of the National Council of Jewish Women reported on the rental assistance program. The Commission expressed interest in having the City Council provide direction on this issue in the future.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve staff's recommendation that \$11,987 in contract savings from the 2010-11 social services programs be used to augment rental assistance through the National Council of Jewish Women's program.

VI. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Davis asked about the West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation project at 1234 N. Hayworth Avenue, which Daphne Dennis noted would be open soon. Commissioner Davis also mentioned that the signage for street tree trimming is inadequate, causing unnecessary disruptions. Sam Baxter will follow up with the Facilities Division.

Commissioner Shink reported that she would be facilitating a lesbian discussion group with the first meeting to be held on April 11th; meetings will be held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month after that. Commissioner Shink also mentioned that volunteers are needed for the Senior Health Fair on May 16th, especially helping in the breast cancer exam area.

Commissioner Palmieri reported that he had visited PATH, Being Alive and McIntyre House since the last Commission meeting. He noted that funding for PATH's HIV floor had ended, but they're keeping it going. He reported that Being Alive has a new transgender support group that needs promoting. He thanked Ruth Tittle for placing free condoms in Capitol Drugs, even though she offers them for sale to her customers. He reported that the SPOT had lost \$15,000 from the County due to low testing numbers. *(Note: Staff will look into this and report back to the Commission.)* He also distributed an article about homeless gay youth.

Commissioner Shepard attended the Russian Advisory Board meeting and reported that a Russian Style Festival is being planned at Plummer Park. They're hoping to schedule the event at West Hollywood Park next year.

VII. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Commission Chair Zangrando asked about the agency tours. Daphne Dennis reported that the program monitors would make arrangements with agencies where four or more Commissioners are interested in visiting.

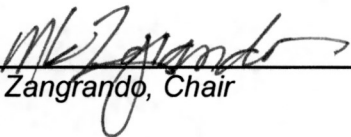
VIII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. in memory of Jeff Book's mother, Olene Book.

Signed:



Mark Zangrando, Chair

Date