

**WEST HOLLYWOOD
DISABILITIES ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
JUNE 23, 2004**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Leslie Isenberg called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

2. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Jordan Chinich, Debra Chodash, Phyllis Coto, Bryan Dahlgren, Suzanne Dietrich, and Joel Ring

ABSENT: Norman Cherner and Ann Semonco

ALSO PRESENT: Staff Liaisons Leslie Isenberg and Kim Patterson

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda of June 23, 2004 was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the May 26, 2004 meeting were approved.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

6. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Inna Epshteyn, Disability Specialist, reported on the past month's activity at the Comprehensive Services Center. She announced that there will be no FAME vouchers for June due to budget constraints, so the Center will be selling more taxi books. She said that the Social Club is doing well, with 4 attendees at the May meeting and 8 people in June.

Ms. Isenberg announced that the City Council approved closed captioning for future meetings and thanked the DAB for their work in making this happen. She also announced that at the July meeting the DAB is required to hold elections. She distributed a draft of the updated disability services brochure and asked for comments by July 6th.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Laurel Place Affordable Housing Project

Jeff Skorneck, the City's Housing Manager contextualized this project within Vision 2020, the City's strategic 20-year plan which includes among its highest priorities the creation of new housing, as well as open space and utilization of outside funding. He also spoke of the affordable housing crisis situation, especially for special needs populations. He presented a history of donation of the Laurel Place mansion to the City, and the awarding of a HUD grant for \$4.2 million for very low-income seniors. He presented artists' renditions of two possible construction plans. Then he and Ann Ehrenthal, Associate Director of the West Hollywood Housing Corporation, fielded questions and answers.

Two audience members spoke at this time in opposition to the City's plan. Geoffrey Dewan, a Los Angeles resident, said that the price of senior housing is the destruction of the ecosystem. Elizabeth Bakulski, a West Hollywood resident, said that Mr. Skorneck and Ms. Ehrenthal have a stake in this project because of their employers and she feels they have lied to the public about this issue.

B. Disabilities Awareness Month

Ms. Isenberg reviewed last year's October events. Ms. Coto suggested that it would be great to start a newsletter and would like to have the Friendship Line listed on the brochure. Ms. Dietrich said that she will unfortunately be out of town from Oct. 9-23, but she will contact a potential "Positive Image" speaker.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

A. LifeLine Program

Beverly Freed, Program Coordinator for LifeLine at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center introduced the new equipment for this 24 hour emergency response system and answered questions from the DAB.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Michael Arrigo told the DAB about a medical program for free prescriptions.

10. DISABILITIES ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Mr. Ring raised a number of access problems that he encountered at Christopher Street West. Mr. Chinich said that he worked on CSW and will take Mr. Ring's criticisms to the Director.

Ms. Dietrich said that she has had problems with the Western Division of Access. She also said that the kick-off for the Gateway Project was a "smashing success".

Ms. Coto said that she was offended by the nudity at the CSW. She would like the DAB to write a letter to CSW.

Mr. Dahlgren took a tour of the Laurel Place site and found it interesting that half of the people who are against the City's housing project are non-residents. He also said that he would like to invite Access Services to the DAB again because the reality of their services differs from their presentation.

11. ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Isenberg adjourned the Disabilities Advisory Board meeting at 8:10 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 28th at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Conference Room of City Hall.

