

MINUTES - CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD  
Committee on Disability

Thursday, September 8, 1994  
4:00 p.m.

City Hall, 8611 Santa Monica Blvd.  
Human Services Conference Room

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. Members present were Brian Cole, Tom Hamlett, Deanna Stevenson, John Von Douris, and Z Zimmerman. Staff present were Lloyd Long, Jodi Curlee, Perri Sloane, Lucy Dyke, and Jeff Book. Also present were Rita Guarriello, Steve Kreizel, Scott Benson, Susan Boisvert, Kathy Donahue, Mike Radcliffe, and Jane Small, Chair of the Los Angeles County Commission on Disability.

B. Posting of the Agenda:

Jeff Book reported that agendas were posted at Plummer Park, West Hollywood Library, West Hollywood Sheriff's Station, and City Hall.

III. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

1. Steve Kreizel/Scott Benson.

Steve Kreizel told the Committee about his goal to install TDDs at public phones in West Hollywood. He said that he would personally direct the fundraising, and the installation would be accomplished at no cost to the City or other governments. He is seeking City support in contacting the U.S. Post Office or the Rapid Transit District and gaining their approval for TDD placements in their West Hollywood facilities. He also expressed interest in serving on the Committee, and said he has raised \$8 million for Cri-Help, a residential drug abuse program.

Scott Benson described his work at the House Ear Institute, which has conducted research on hearing and balance since its founding in 1947. He conducts programs encouraging interaction among deaf children, and among parents of deaf children, and said he is very involved with the community of deaf people in West Hollywood. He supported placement of a TDD at a public accommodation used widely by the deaf, such as Six Gallery.

In response to questions, Steve said that he would consider whether such a project requires formation of a new non-profit agency, or can be administered as a pass-through by an agency already contracted to provide social services in the City.

The Committee expressed strong interest in these ideas, and placed the item on the agenda for the October meeting. Steve asked for a TV/VCR at that meeting so he can present a brief video on the subject.

John wondered exactly how much could be raised for such a project, and Steve expressed confidence that public support would be forthcoming. John said he would like to see TDDs installed in West Hollywood and Plummer Parks, on Melrose Avenue,

and on Sunset Boulevard. Z said that City support for the project would have a positive public relations impact, and the presence of the TDDs would be educational for the entire community. Rita asked about TDD installation at the new City Hall, and wanted to make sure that an appropriate share of public phones are properly equipped there.

Scott noted that he will need a sign interpreter to assist him at the next meeting.

2. Susan Boisvert.

Susan Boisvert introduced herself as a person with MS who was new to the process and purpose of the Committee. She said she would like to receive a copy of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) for reference, and expressed interest in knowing the relative percentages of seniors and persons with disabilities on the City and County waiting lists for Section 8 Housing.

The subject of Section 8 Housing was placed on the agenda for the October regular meeting. City staff who deal with this subject will be invited. In the meantime, Jodi said that Susan could speak with Julia Abdala of the Community Development Department.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Z Zimmerman made one correction to the minutes of the most recent meeting, stating that it was Jodi who had brought up the question of needing to identify persons with disabilities in the community.

With this correction, Tom Hamlett moved and John Von Douris seconded the approval of the minutes. Motion carried.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Taxi Coupon Criteria

Lucy Dyke of the Transportation Department reported on the City's taxi coupon program, under which seniors and persons with AIDS and/or specific disabilities may purchase discount coupons for taxicabs. She said that the eligibility criteria predate the incorporation of the City, and provide that persons with AIDS, persons with Alzheimer's Disease, and persons receiving kidney dialysis, radiation therapy, or chemotherapy, may purchase three books of coupons per month, while the blind, persons over age 65, and persons in wheelchairs may purchase one. She said the Transportation Department is seeking input from the Committee regarding possible revisions of this policy, bearing in mind that changes may have unintended consequences, such as tightening availability for all eligible persons, or reducing availability for persons who have particular dependence on this mode of transportation.

Z said that the policy should be changed so that persons over age 65 and persons with disabilities of any kind are eligible for the same number of coupon books, and that the criteria for determining who is a person with a disability should be broader. She also said that legal requirements mandate this equality.

Lucy disagreed with Z's interpretation of the legal requirement, and said that the City Attorney had advised the Department that the categorizing of persons was

not inconsistent with the Proposition or the ADA. Z asked to see any written advice the City Attorney had provided on this subject.

John said the City needed broader criteria for eligibility, such as making the coupons available to any person on Medi-Cal or with a doctor's letter stating that the person had a disability.

Brian asked whether there are utilization figures so the Committee could know what persons use the program, and said he thought that public funding for programs of this kind is at such a premium that persons who can afford their own transportation should not be subsidized. He said this is only one of several transportation programs to which persons with disabilities may have access.

Z asked Lucy why the Transportation Department didn't ask the Committee for advice on the RTD Bus Pass issue, as apparently the Senior Advisory Council was consulted. Lucy said that the Committee didn't meet during the time in question.

Lucy said she would provide some statistical information on users. The City currently contributes \$673,000 of the total \$1 million cost of providing this service.

#### B. Workplan for 1994-1995.

Z asked why the process of setting priorities and making specific funding decisions on social services programs had been conducted by the Division of Social Services, in consultation with other committees, but without the consultation of this Committee.

John said this was a sign that the Committee needs to become a free-standing body with its own elected officers, and with officers, rather than staff, setting the agenda and directing the Committee.

Jodi said that the funding process occurs as follows: About every four years, the City produces a Needs Assessment Report based on research and analysis by staff and professionals. Based on this Report, the Division prepares a Request for Proposals to Provide Social Services, and it is publicly issued. Proposals are then received and reviewed by staff. Although no subcommittee of the Human Services Commission formally reviews the proposals or recommendations, staff uses the ongoing work of the subcommittees as part of their reasoning in evaluating the proposals. Recommendations then are submitted to the Human Services Commission, which reviews them in a public hearing, and revises them. The report is submitted to the City Council, which reviews it in a public hearing and adopts final priorities and funding. Jodi explained that the Needs Assessment Report was on the Committee on Disability agenda in June.

Mike Radcliffe said that he had been a member of the ad hoc task force, and was not aware of why he ceased to be invited. He said the Committee is staff-driven; that it needs to be changed so that the disability community is in charge; and that the City has stacked the Committee by permitting employees to serve on it.

Perri said that the Committee began with a mailing list which included members of the ad hoc task force -- a list on which Mike had been included -- but that persons who did not participate ceased to be on this mailing list. She said she agreed that the Committee was staff-driven, and that nothing would please her more than to have members of the Committee assume responsibility for leadership.

An extensive discussion of the role of the committee ensued, concluding in a

decision to hold a special Committee meeting at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, September 22, to pursue this matter further. Based on the work at that meeting, an action item will be prepared for the October agenda with regard to the role and organization of the Committee. A facilitator will be arranged for the September 22 meeting.

Mrs. Guarriello said that people employed by the City should not serve on the Committee. Eligibility criteria were placed on the agenda for the special meeting on September 22.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Brown Act/Committee Membership - Tabled to October.

VI. ITEMS FROM THE COMMITTEE

A. Closed Captioning Update

Deanna Stevenson reported on the costs of providing closed captioning for City Council meetings. Steve Kreizel expressed interest in raising funds for this project, so he and Deanna will explore the possibilities and report in the future.

B. Census Discussion Update - Tabled to October.

C. Business Brochure. - Tabled to October.

D. Other Business

Z stated that Resolution 622 and the Housing Element of the General Plan are scheduled for five-year review in 1994, and that the Committee should participate in the review process. She asked staff to determine whether this review in fact will be occurring. This subject was placed on the agenda for the October regular meeting.

John said he has asked Jeff and Mac McCoy for copies of minutes and documents of the Committee for the last two years, so he can review them in preparing his recommendations on the 1994-95 Committee workplan.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:00 p.m., the Committee adjourned to its Special Meeting at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, September 22, in the same location.