

**WEST HOLLYWOOD
DISABILITIES ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
September 10, 2003**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-Chair Ann Semonco called the meeting to order.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Members said the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Norman Cherner, Debra Chodash, Suzanne Dietrich, Yola Dore, Chuck Henry, and Ann Semonco

ABSENT: Joel Ring

ALSO PRESENT: Staff Liaisons Daphne Dennis, Leslie Isenberg and Kim Patterson

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda for the September 10th meeting was approved.

5. SWEARING IN NEW ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS:

Councilmember John Duran swore in the new DAB members, Debra Chodash and Chuck Henry.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the Aug. 13th meeting were approved with amendments. Ms. Dietrich abstained.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Phyllis Coto spoke about starting a social club for people with disabilities and conducting a needs assessment. She is working with Inna Epshteyn at the Community Center.

Michael Arrigo, former DAB member, thanked the Board, City Council and City staff for the privilege of serving for two years on the Board. He looks forward to continuing to participate in the activities of the Board.

Alan Weber, former Senior Advisory Board liaison, thanks each of the DAB members for their support of his ideas and efforts. He is now working on a project on self-acceptance.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Disability Awareness Month: The agenda for the special October DAB meeting was decided. Hearing-impaired students from Melrose Elementary School will be invited to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Awards will be presented before the business items. Discussion of outdoor dining, transportation and a report about Disability Mentoring Day, will follow.

Board members will have the opportunity to introduce themselves and speak about their interest in serving on the Board and to offer a "Call to Action" to the community. Members suggested that an overview of who is disabled in West Hollywood also be presented.

B. National Disability Mentoring Day: Ms. Isenberg reported on the progress of her work on Mentoring Day, October 15. There will be a youth focus, but adults will also be included. She is investigating entertainment and hotel industry leads for mentor possibilities and contacting local schools for mentees. Members stressed the importance of preparing both the mentors and the mentees for the experience.

C. National Organization on Disability Award nomination: The DAB unanimously voted to suggest to the Mayor that he submit an application to nominate the City of West Hollywood for this award, and that it include a statement that the DAB made a recommendation for it.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Selection of Disability Award winners: The DAB selected Howard Jacobs for the individual award, JFS-Partners for the non-profit award, and Pavilions for the business award.

B. Election of DAB Officers: Mr. Cherner was elected Chair and Ann Semonco Vice-Chair.

10. DISABILITY RELATED ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. Dore: 1) there will be changes to ACCESS and Cityline beginning Oct. 1; 2) there may be changes to the taxi companies that serve West Hollywood; 3) Ms. Dore would like to continue to serve as liaison to the Senior Advisory Board; and 4) the West Hollywood Book Fair will be held on Sept. 21 in West Hollywood Park.

Vice-Chair Semonco reminded people to vote in the Oct. 7 election. She urged the DAB to attend the next City Council meeting because they will be declaring October as Disability Awareness Month.

Ms. Dietrich told the DAB that on Sept. 19 she would be undergoing surgery, so she would be unable to participate in this year's Disability Awareness Month activities. The DAB expressed their best wishes for her quick recovery.

Ms. Dore indicated her interest in inviting disabled entertainers to participate in the October DAB meeting. She will meet with Ms. Dennis to see who's available.

11. STAFF COMMENTS:

Inna Epshteyn reported that the Disabilities Program served 33 clients this month, five of whom were new to the Center. Four clients received counseling services and 33 clients received case management services. The main issues that people had were with transportation and housing, plus a few legal issues. She's gathering information from clients and constituents about a social club or group, and she encouraged the DAB to contact her with any ideas or suggestions.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Hillary Selvin, Executive Director of the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, congratulated the DAB on the mentoring program.

Mr. Arrigo suggested that videotape be made concerning the difficulties for persons in wheelchairs due to outdoor dining. The videotape could then be shown at the October DAB meeting. He also expressed interest in participating in the filming of PSA's.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

Vice-Chair Semonco adjourned the Disabilities Advisory Board meeting at 8:50 p.m., after the Board approved a 15-minute time extension. The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2003 at 6:30 p.m. at West Hollywood Park Auditorium.**

G: human/soc-svcs/misc/dab/minutes-0903

Ann D Semonco