

WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES – FEBRUARY 10, 2015
LIBRARY COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Anne-Marie Williams at 6:01 p.m., Tuesday, February 10, 2015, in the Community Meeting Room of the West Hollywood Library, 625 N. San Vicente Blvd., West Hollywood.

A. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Rob Bergstein.

B. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Rob Bergstein, Ruth Cislowski, Steven L. Davis, Barbara Meltzer, Andrew Oldershaw, Jimmy Palmieri, Anne-Marie Williams.

Not Present: None.

A quorum was present at all times. Commissioner Cislowski arrived during consideration of the Minutes. Staff present included: Elizabeth Savage, Director of Human Services and Rent Stabilization; David Giugni, Social Services Manager; Leslie Isenberg, Derek Murray, and Jeff Book.

C. **POSTING OF AGENDA**

The secretary reported that 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**

In the draft minutes for the Jan. 8, 2015, meeting, Commissioner Bergstein said in Item VI, Items from Commissioners, he had said that the Aging in Place strategic planning meeting should be postponed because the composition of the Commission will change after the City elections. Also, Commissioner Meltzer said that in Item III, Items from the Public, Councilmember John Duran had spoken about a goal of zero HIV transmission rate by 2016, rather than zero HIV-related deaths.

With these corrections, the minutes for Jan. 8, 2015, were approved on a motion by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Bergstein, with Commissioners Cislowski and Palmieri abstaining.

III. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

David M. Eichman, Chair of the Transportation Commission, spoke about the traffic safety signs that have been placed between lanes at several places on Santa Monica Boulevard, and asked the community for input on whether these are effective.

Stephanie J. Harker said there will be a second debate among candidates for West Hollywood City Council, on Feb. 25. She also spoke about displacement of residents in the Detroit bungalows, and about whether this would occur in other locations, too.

Tristan Schukraft encouraged people to vote in the March 3 City election, and to learn more about his candidacy for West Hollywood City Council by visiting his website.

Cathy Blaivas said the West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation has decided to not pursue placement of cell towers on the Sierra Bonita building. She also spoke about the displacement of residents in the Detroit bungalows.

Larry Block said that as revenues have increased over the last five years, funding for Social Services has become a smaller proportion of the City budget, and he'd like to see this increased. He said he would like the safety net to be the same for all seniors and people living with disabilities, instead of extra protections for people living with HIV or AIDS. He supported unit swapping, to enable seniors to switch into a ground-floor apartment. He spoke about finding ways to involve people living with disabilities and on limited income as volunteers for the City.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no Unfinished Business items.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. HOMELESS CENSUS 2015

Leslie Isenberg spoke about the recently completed Homeless Count, which was conducted in West Hollywood on the evening of Jan. 29, 2015, and found 43 adults, as well as two cars, two vans, and three makeshift shelters that appeared to be lived in. Thirty volunteers and eight Sheriff deputies conducted the survey. She said the number of persons has declined from 59 in 2009, and also from 45 in 2013. The West Hollywood count is part of an overall count by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA).

Commissioner Palmieri spoke about a homeless person who recently assisted in saving the life of a child by finding an abandoned baby. Commissioner Davis expressed interest in receiving the full report from LAHSA when it is available. Commissioner Bergstein asked if there was no contact with the homeless people during the count, and therefore data by age or gender are best guesses, and Leslie Isenberg said this was the case.

Commissioners Cislowski, Oldershaw, and Williams spoke about participating in the count, which they found was well organized. Commissioner Williams said she wished the count could have occurred later in the evening, because

they seemed to find people on their way to their overnight spot, rather than already there.

B. AGENCY DEVELOPMENT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Derek Murray presented a report on a \$25,000 annual fund to provide grants for development and capacity building of contracted social services agencies. Agencies may apply for up to \$10,000 with proposals to use the funds for strengthening leadership, board development, improved grant acquisition, and related purposes.

Commissioner Cislowski said that if the intention is to aim to benefit smaller agencies, this should be clear in the RFP. She also asked how the agencies demonstrate how they have determined that this is what they need, and she would be interested to know that they have buy-in from key stakeholders before they receive funding.

Commissioner Oldershaw spoke about whether software was a possible purpose for the grants. Elizabeth Savage said the grants are intended to fill a gap that other grants do not address, and that the application could be amended to include technology related to the goals of the applicant.

C. MEDIA RELATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND ASSETS

David Giugni said that communications, social media, and outreach were identified as priorities at the Commission's recent study session. He presented information about WeHo Cares, the Social Services Division's Facebook and Twitter pages, and about the City's newly adopted Media Relations Policy and draft Communications and Community Engagement Strategic Plan.

D. SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

David Giugni said this area had also been identified as a priority by the Commission. Staff recently coordinated a Substance Abuse Treatment providers Planning & Coordination meeting, followed by a Psychological Services/Mental Health Planning & Coordination meeting. These were well attended, and addressed a number of ways the community is served, including building relationships for cross-referrals among the agencies.

Commissioner Davis said these kinds of meetings are among the most important things that Social Services does, and how informative it is for Commissioners to be present. Commissioner Meltzer said it was exciting to see connections being made among the agencies.

VI. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Bergstein said he and Commissioner Meltzer visited the West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation building on La Brea. He also spoke about visiting Being Alive, which he said is a somewhat undiscovered gem which has been around a long time and provides important services, including no wait time to

see a therapist. Commissioner Bergstein also said he would appreciate it if cell phones remained down and off during the meeting.

Commissioner Oldershaw said that he and Commissioner Meltzer visited McIntyre House, which has had renovations. They had lunch and met with residents, and received an inside perspective on the agency. Commissioner Oldershaw also said he appreciated Commissioner Davis's encouragement for commissioners to participate wherever they can, outside of the monthly Commission meeting.

Commissioners Davis and Meltzer attended the Senior Advisory Board meeting. He also attended the Homeless Services collaborative meeting held at the Sheriff's Station. He said he was concerned about the term "struggling organization" in reference to contracted social services agencies, because it's possible some organizations which are repeatedly patched up actually need to end.

Commissioner Palmieri said he read that some health plans are not covering Truvada. David Giugni said that staff would look into this and respond. Commissioner Palmieri spoke about the success of #BOOM!, the sober New Year's Eve event; about a trans woman who became homeless because her roommates were using her portion of the rent payment to buy drugs; and about the Sheriffs' rapid response to a young man who overdosed in the hallway of Commissioner Palmieri's building. He thanked Commissioner Bergstein for bringing up cell phones, and said there are certain things he has to look up, to enable questions, and this requires phone use.

Commissioner Meltzer said she thought some Senior Advisory Board members may not be aware of what the Human Services Commission does, and that she may not have enough information about whether boards and commissions do. She recommended finding a way to educate board and commission members about this.

Commissioner Williams attended the Homeless Services coordination meeting also. She spoke about a friend who was violently attacked in a hate crime at Fairfax and Santa Monica Blvd., and said that Public Safety will be working on its Hate-Free City campaign. She attended the Public Safety Commission meeting last evening.

VII. ITEMS FROM STAFF

David Giugni attended the Public Safety Commission also, and provided the six-month update on recommendations from the Homeless Services Subcommittee. The report on that will go to the City Council in March.

Leslie Isenberg said the Senior Valentine's Dance is from 3 to 5 pm this Thursday in Fiesta Hall, catered by La Conversation.

Elizabeth Savage said sign-ups for the next season of Recreation programs are underway, both online and by phone. She said the Commission's special meeting on Aging in Place has been set for Saturday, May 9. She also said this was a hard-working commission which puts in a great deal of time outside the monthly meeting.

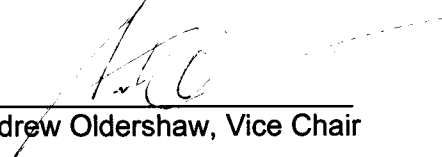
VIII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Michael Wojtkielewicz spoke about concerns with receiving sufficient support in seeking social services from City-contracted providers, and requested to be heard.

IX. ADJOURNMENT


The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

APPROVED BY A MOTION OF THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION ON THE 10th DAY OF MARCH 2015



Andrew Oldershaw, Vice Chair

Attest:



Jeff Book, Secretary