

**WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES – NOVEMBER 13, 2001**  
**COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. CALL TO ORDER

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Peter Mackler at 6:05 p.m., Tuesday, November 13, 2001, in Room 1 of the Plummer Park Community Center, 7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood.

B. ROLL CALL

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Gratton.

Present: Ruth Cislowski, John D'Amico, Steven Davis,  
Ponsella Gratton, Dr. Bill Griffin, Peter Mackler

Excused: Teresa DeCrescenzo

Absent: none

A quorum was present at all times. Staff present included Lloyd R. Long, Director of Human Services; Daphne Dennis, Social Services Administrator; Nancy Beard, Recreation Services Administrator; Diane Kahn-Epstein, 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 request form.

II. MINUTES

Minutes of the October 9, 2001, meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, with Commissioners Cislowski, Gratton, and Mackler abstaining. It was noted that the topic of a commission retreat was carried over for later discussion.

### III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### A. UPDATE ON 2001 HALLOWEEN CARNAVAL

Nancy Beard reported on the Halloween *Carnaval*, which was well attended and featured performances by musical groups such as Azteca. The Ramada hosted the VIP room this year. Worldwide press was generated, particularly since this was the largest public event of its kind to be held since September 11. More than 300 news items ran worldwide. There were two arrests.

For next year, consideration will be given to improving the size and placement of the stages, as well as improving the street closure process and publicity.

Commissioner Griffin said he had lost approximately \$2,000 in income due to the closing of the street, and had one patient who walked four blocks with a cane to keep an appointment. He said the street should be kept open later, and that merchants were not happy with losing so much street time this year.

Commissioner Davis asked for better attention to illegal sales and vendors. He also asked for consideration of having the entertainment in West Hollywood Park.

Commissioner Cislowski said the festival's marketing and publicity should explain that it is not a family-oriented event, and that the card notifying the public of the closures and schedule should be more descriptive of exactly what is going to occur.

Commissioner Mackler said the question of what constitutes public obscenity may have to be addressed at some point, given the nature of some of the costumes and displays that people exhibit during the evening.

Lloyd Long noted that along with the Rose Parade and the Oscars, West Hollywood's Halloween *Carnaval* is one of Southern California's three largest public events. He said Council will review the event in December.

#### B. LEGAL PROGRAMS

##### 1. BET TZEDEK

David Lash, executive director, Robert Brody, director of litigation, and Alla Chasnik, attorney dealing with West Hollywood cases, provided a general overview of the development and status of Bet Tzedek's city-funded programs. They have a new two-year pilot program dealing with employment rights for low-income workers; are working on kinship care issues, such as grandparent/grandchild care; and are continuing their work on reparations and other legal issues of Holocaust survivors.

David Lash said they are concerned about a legal challenge to IOLTA, the program that provides funding for public interest lawyers from the interest on attorneys' trust accounts.

Alla Chasnik said many of Bet Tzedek's West Hollywood cases deal with Section 8 housing issues, such as landlords who wish to exclude Section 8 residents from their properties.

Commissioner Cislowski asked about problems with publicly funded housing on Palm, and Alla Chasnik said that Bet Tzedek was working with residents there on a variety of issues. Daphne Dennis said the building had been vacated for renovation, and that many of the residents had issues when they returned to the renovated property.

Commissioner Cislowski asked how much HUD housing is left in the City, and Daphne Dennis said there are four buildings, and two of them will be eligible for turnover soon. All of the buildings are large, with hundreds of residents.

Commissioner Gratton asked what guidelines are used to determine low-income eligibility, and Mr. Brody said they used county guidelines. Mr. Lash said that there are different eligibility rules for different programs, and that in its West Hollywood contract, Bet Tzedek targets services to those in most need.

Commissioner Mackler asked if there were any patterns that emerged in dealing with particular buildings or landlords. Mr. Brody said that Bet Tzedek does engage the same landlords again and again, but that it was difficult to establish collusion between landlords or properties. Mr. Mackler asked if Bet Tzedek co-counsels with other organizations, and Mr. Lash said that it did.

## 2. LOS ANGELES FREE CLINIC

Abbe Land and legal services program manager Andrew Said spoke on behalf of the Free Clinic, which has offered legal services for 34 years, and seeks to serve a unique niche by focusing on a limited set of legal issues, including bankruptcy and uncontested divorces. The program's reliance on volunteer assistance by attorneys is both a strength and a weakness, and as with other social services agencies, fundraising has been challenged by national events.

Commissioner Davis asked if the Free Clinic provides help to people with credit problems, such as helping to informing seniors as to how to avoid scams, and the Free Clinic representatives said that they did.

3. GLC LEGAL

Roger Coggan of GLC Legal provided an update on their program, which provides consultation in more than 20 areas of law, with a focus on the needs of low-income GLBT persons, including discrimination cases. GLC Legal has an income cap on persons applying for its services, and refers those who do not qualify to use the state bar referral program instead.

Commissioner D'Amico asked about legal aspects of recent state legislation on domestic partnerships, and Mr. Coggan said they were preparing an informative brochure which would be available soon.

4. DRS

David Helie of DRS spoke on their role as a pre- or extra-legal alternative for those who would like to resolve issues without going to court. They work with property managers, landlords, and tenants to resolve mutual issues. Services are free to West Hollywood residents, with a minimal charge for others.

Commissioner Cislowski asked if the clients seem to have a different attitude toward the service because there is no charge for it, and Mr. Helie said that there is some impact on real estate issues.

C. CHARITABLE SOLICITATION

Daphne Dennis presented background material on charitable solicitation regulation, which the Commission had been asked to review. The Commission discussed the neighboring cities' policies and the pros and cons of regulating charitable solicitations.

Commissioner Cislowski moved to look into providing residents with informative material about charitable solicitations, such as in a community mailing, but without recommending specific regulations on fundraising. This was seconded by Commissioner Gratton, and adopted unanimously.

VIII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Garrison Smith of GLC Youth spoke about their annual Thanksgiving dinner on November 20 from 6 to 9 p.m., which will feature a talent show and benefit from volunteer help. They are also planning a holiday party for this season.

Tripp Mills gave the WeHo Life condom report, which was more than 46,000 distributed in October. They had tables at Halloween and at a Healthy West Hollywood event. They are going to reprint the inserts soon, because they are exhausting their supply.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. REQUEST FOR FUNDING HIV TESTING

This item was considered in tandem with the item below.

B. ALLOCATION OF CONTRACT SAVINGS

Daphne Dennis presented the staff report recommending funding for three months for STORE and for the Russian Community Center's furniture program. Commissioner D'Amico moved to approve the recommendation, and this was seconded by Commissioner Gratton.

Commissioner Cislowski asked what would happen after three months. Dr. Bolen, medical director of the Center, said that the Center is committed to continuing the STORE program past that date.

Commissioner Davis said this was another example of the Center making commitments and obligations and asking for city funding after the fact. He said he could not support the recommendation because other agencies have not been given an opportunity to apply for the contract savings, even though their needs for it may be as great or greater than those recommended for funding.

At this point, Commissioner Cislowski left due to a prior commitment.

Commissioner Mackler asked when we would know about how much money would be available, and Ms. Dennis said the Council wanted a recommendation from the Commission on this topic at its December 3 meeting.

Commissioner D'Amico asked how STORE's services differed from those available at the AHF facility across the street. Tiffany Horton, program manager of HIV testing and counseling, said they would have gonorrhea, syphilis, and chlamydia screening at STORE, in addition to HIV.

Commissioner Gratton asked how long STORE had county funding, and Ms. Dennis said it was two years. Ms. Horton said the site was previously a county epidemiology site, which was adopted by the county office of AIDS programs and policy. Commissioner D'Amico asked why the county was leaving.

After discussion, the motion was restated, and adopted on a vote of 4 to 1, with Commissioner Davis voting no.

V. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION

Commissioner Mackler noted the chairs are moving to bimonthly meetings and changing the focus of the meetings. Commissioner Davis said the purpose of the chairs meetings should be reviewed.

The Commission asked staff to send a letter of appreciation to Tamar Springer, who is leaving her position as social services program specialist with the City.

Commissioner Davis said he attended the Light Up the Library event, which was lovely.

By-laws will be included in the next meeting.

VI. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Information on the agency orientation meeting was distributed. A new agency roster is being prepared. David Giugni, a former case manager at APLA, will be joining the staff as a social services program specialist. He is a MSW who is soon to be a LCSW, and he begins after Thanksgiving.

VII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The floor was declared open for nominations for Chair. Commissioner Gratton nominated Commissioner Griffin. Commissioner Davis nominated Commissioner Mackler. Commissioner Griffin declined the nomination. There were no further nominations. Commissioner Griffin moved, seconded by Commissioner Gratton, to close nominations and declare Commissioner Mackler elected unanimously, and this was approved 5 to 0.

The floor was then declared open for nominations for Vice Chair. Commissioner Gratton nominated Commissioner Griffin. Commissioner Mackler nominated Commissioner D'Amico. Commissioner Griffin declined the nomination. There were no further nominations. Commissioner Mackler moved, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, to close nominations and declare Commissioner D'Amico elected unanimously, and this was approved 5 to 0.

A plaque of appreciation will be prepared for Commissioner DeCrescenzo.

VIII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no additional items from the public.

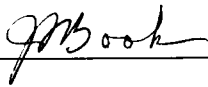
IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m. The next regular meeting is at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 11.

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Signed:   
Steven L. Davis

Attest:

  
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