

WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES – OCTOBER 28, 1999
HALL A, PLUMMER PARK

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. CALL TO ORDER

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Chairperson Steven Davis at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, October 28, 1999, in Hall A at Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Ruth Cislowski, John D’Amico, Steven Davis,
Dr. Bill Griffin, Peter Mackler, Shirley Roberts
Excused: Teresa DeCrescenzo
Absent: none

A quorum was present at all times. Commissioner Griffin joined the meeting in progress. Staff present included Lloyd Long, Director of Human Services; Daphne Dennis, Social Services Administrator; Tom West, Tamar Springer, and Jeff Book. Howard Jacobs, Deputy to Mayor Pro Tempore Jeffrey Prang, was also present.

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. SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING PROCESS

A. STAFF REPORT

Daphne Dennis presented the staff report on the social services funding process, noting that the city conducts regular needs assessments, and funds programs to meet the needs identified in those assessments. The city has worked with a variety of nonprofit agencies in that regard, ranging from established agencies to newly-formed ones. The funding process and its goals are consistent with the Human Services Element of the city’s General Plan.

B. PUBLIC HEARING

The Chair opened the floor for public comments on the social services funding process.

Vivian Sauer of Jewish Family Services said the city has always focused on the real needs of the community. She expressed reservations about whether proposals for funding should be subject to an “independent review committee,” saying that she has served on such panels and found them to have potential for becoming politicized. She said West Hollywood’s social services funding process has been notably non-political over the years.

Garrison Smith, director of youth services for the Gay & Lesbian Center, said he had recently relocated from Boston, and introduced himself to the Commission.

Lorette Herman and Herb Schultz of APLA thanked the city for its funding and said they appreciated their good working relationship with staff. They said that if funding proposals are reviewed by an outside committee, it is important that the participants know the overall picture of social services and its various parts.

Ged Kenslea of AIDS Healthcare Foundation distributed a memorandum on behalf of himself and Terri Ford. The memo contained information on social services funding processes in Los Angeles, Pasadena, Santa Barbara, and Santa Monica, all of which, he said, use outside community members to review funding proposals. He advocated formation of such a panel in West Hollywood, and other changes in the funding process. The report cited some reservations that were expressed about the funding process in a 1987 report.

Commissioner D’Amico asked why AHF was taking a leading interest in revising the funding process, and Mr. Kenslea said it was because AHF felt it was not treated fairly during the previous funding cycle, and would like to see a process based on objective and empirical criteria.

Terri Ford of AHF said they were concerned because two decisions in the previous funding process, dealing with HIV testing/counseling and expanded condom distribution, were contrary to the needs assessment. Commissioner Cislowski asked how “independent” persons could be chosen for an outside review panel, and Ms. Ford said this could include using other cities’ staff members, as well as experts in the field.

Commissioner Cislowski noted that at the time of the 1987 report, only one agency had the concerns about unfairness that were being cited, and that unless other agencies speak up along the same lines, it would appear that once again only one agency was concerned. She urged other agencies to communicate with the Commission if they have similar concerns.

Helen Levin of the Russian Community Center thanked the Commission for its past work for the community, and strongly supported the existing funding process. She said the staff has great expertise in the subject matter, and that the Commission is appointed because it knows the needs of the community, and can provide independent, community-based oversight.

Julie Jaskol of LA Free Clinic said that West Hollywood was very well served by its current funding process.

Kathy Watt of Van Ness Recovery House said it was amazing that the City provides the diversity of social services that it does, and that the funding process has been fair and open. She said some agencies she works with do not even inform applicants of what their processes are, while West Hollywood has gone out of its way to have a transparent system that is responsive to public concerns.

Caretha Lewis of the Gay & Lesbian Center said she was looking forward to working on new programs and grants with the city.

John Copeland, a member of the HIV Prevention Planning Commission for the City of Los Angeles, said that, depending on how they are chosen and implemented, independent review panels may or may not provide fair and effective input in a funding process. He said he would like to see creative prevention programs funded by the city.

Commissioner D'Amico asked whether that included testing, and Mr. Copeland said that he regards testing as being closer to care, rather than prevention, because those who test negative are rarely routed to more intensive prevention efforts.

Ms. Ford said that Los Angeles County links prevention to testing.

There being no further comments, the Chair closed the public hearing.


The Commission will take up discussion of these matters at their next regular meeting.

III. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m., in memory of Jane Small, who worked with the City's Disabilities Advisory Board, and was widely known as an advocate for persons with disabilities. Staff will prepare a letter to Hugh Hallenberg in appreciation of Ms. Small.

The next meeting will be at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 9, in the Community Conference Room at City Hall.

MINUTES APPROVED NOV. 9, 1999



Steven L. Davis, Chair

Date



Jeff Book, Recording Secretary

Date