

WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 11, 2007
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Steven L. Davis at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 11, 2007, in Rooms 5 and 6 at the Plummer Park Community Center, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood.

A. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The pledge of allegiance was repeated.

B. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Ruth Cislowski, Steven L. Davis, Debra Farmer, Charles Henry,
Shirley Roberts, Hywel Sims.

Not Present: Mark Zangrando.

A quorum was present at all times. Staff members present included Daphne Dennis, Social Services Administrator; Leslie Isenberg, Craig Rhea, 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**

The minutes of the June 12, 2007, meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Farmer, seconded by Commissioner Henry. Commissioners Roberts and Sims abstained due to absence from that meeting.

The minutes of the July 10, 2007, meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Farmer, seconded by Commissioner Sims. Commissioners Henry and Roberts abstained due to absence from that meeting.

III. **ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Michael Sidler spoke about (1) an absence of posting of criteria or hours for the cooling center held at Plummer Park Community Center during hot weather; (2) the locking of bathrooms nearest the Senior Lounge on weekends; and (3) the locking of entry doors near the Senior Lounge, which makes it harder for people to access the facility.

Commissioner Henry asked for this item to be placed on the agenda of the next meeting,

and Recreation staff asked to provide an overview of the cooling center operations, and verify that a client-centered approach is being used.

Without objection, the Commission decided to take up Item V.A. next.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. MERGER OF AID FOR AIDS WITH THE SERRA PROJECT

Terry Goddard, executive director of the Serra Project, and Brenda Goodman, Aid for AIDS, said their agencies are in discussions that could lead to merger. This evaluation could take several months.

Commissioner Henry asked about AFA's longevity as a West Hollywood-based agency, whether there were any downsides to the merger, and whether an analysis of administrative overhead costs showed that there would be savings in merging. Terry Goddard responded, noting that both agencies expend 90% of funds on client services.

Commissioner Sims asked what the process of consideration would be. Terry Goddard said a decision would probably be made by March 2008, and that if the agencies decide not to merge, they would nevertheless begin working together more collaboratively.

Commissioner Henry asked if any determinations had been made about a new organizational structure, and Terry Goddard said this was under discussion.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Barry Greenfield, a member of the Public Safety Commission, discussed the city's emergency preparedness plans, in recognition of September as emergency preparedness month. He encouraged listeners to prepare by having an out-of-state contact; including extra medicine, glasses, and other necessities; food for at least 3 days; a can opener; a gallon of water per person per day; an ABC-type fire extinguisher; flashlight and batteries; clothes and shoes; tools and work gloves; sanitation supplies; and emergency contact information. He encouraged those who are willing to attend emergency preparedness meetings, and learn First Aid and CPR.

Commissioner Henry asked if hot weather can be considered a public safety or emergency preparedness issue, and whether the Public Safety Commission was interested in cooperating with the Human Services Commission in addressing the issues raised earlier about the cooling center. Commissioner Greenfield said it was not something they had addressed in the past, but that it was likely the Public Safety Commission would be willing to work cooperatively on it.

Michael Sidler asked for improved availability of emergency preparedness materials in Russian. She said many Russian-speaking residents are under the mistaken impression that the City will be entirely responsible for necessities in emergency conditions, when in fact individual responsibility is an essential part.

B. SOCIAL SERVICES CONTRACT RENEWALS 2007-08

Daphne Dennis thanked the city's contract social services agencies for their work and for responding to the new requirements placed on them in performance objectives and site visits. She said the agencies are continuing to see increased need for services due to rising rents, landlords dropping Section 8 availability, and the impact of crystal meth. She noted a 2% cost-of-living adjustment in the contract amounts has been approved by the City Council, and is included in the recommendations.

AIDS Healthcare Foundation's mobile testing program and the Gay & Lesbian Center's WeHo Life program were recommended for six months probation.

Commissioner Henry asked if agencies had been notified of the Commission's higher expectations in terms of performance objectives and self-analysis, and Daphne Dennis said that those who have gone through a site visit have been notified, and the remaining agencies will be notified in upcoming site visits.

The Commission heard from the following speakers:

1. Steve Wayland, PAWS L.A.
2. Maribel Ulloa, Aid for AIDS
3. Leslie deBeauvais, NCJW
4. Ian Stulberg, GLC Mental Health Program
5. Susan Cohen, GLC WeHo Life
6. Lynn Bridges, GLC Transgender program
7. Michael Sidler
8. Eleanor Hodson, Pathways Child Care
9. Grant Specht, Bet Tzedek Legal Services
10. Kevin Kurtz, Being Alive

There was a 10-minute break. When the meeting resumed, the Commission heard from:

11. Whitney Engeran, AIDS Healthcare Foundation
12. Jason Roundy, AIDS Project Los Angeles
13. Karen Bhangoo, Dispute Resolution Services
14. Kathryn Turk, Dispute Resolution Services
15. Kate Branson, Van Ness Recovery House
16. Tiffany Estell, Alternative Living for the Aging
17. Joel Polachek, Alternative Living for the Aging
18. Brad Leathers, Rainbow Bridge Community Services
19. Susan Alexman, JFS
20. Leslie Friedman, SOVA Food Pantry
21. Fred Summers, SOVA Food Pantry
22. Marina Berkman, JFS
23. Precious Stallworth, GLC Sexual Health program
24. Fr. Ian Davies, St. Thomas the Apostle
25. Eileen McAuliffe, JFS Nutrition
26. Angie Cooper, JVS WHEST program
27. Roger Coggan, GLC Legal program
28. Silvia Gutierrez, PATH

29. Rudy Salinas, PATH
30. Michelle Lovette, a PATH client
31. Donzella Lee, LA Free Clinic
32. Helen Levin, Russian Community Center
33. Suzanne Dietrich, member of the Disabilities Advisory Board
34. Kim Daughton, Partners ADHC
35. Dylan Gailey, GLC Youth Services
36. Ira Kruskol, Aviva Family and Children's Services
37. Fred Vanacore

Commissioner Roberts moved approval of staff recommendations for contract renewals and funding amounts for all agencies except AIDS Healthcare Foundation, which would be held for subsequent discussion. This was seconded by Commissioner Cislowski.

Commissioner Farmer asked for the reasoning behind providing a funding increase for agencies that are being placed on probation. Daphne Dennis said this is in recognition that costs of all agencies increase, including rent, insurance, etc. Commissioners Farmer and Henry said it was sending a mixed message to raise funding for agencies that were on probation.

Commissioner Henry asked if the maker and seconder of the main motion would accept a friendly amendment by holding both agencies recommended for probation – AIDS Healthcare Foundation's mobile testing unit, and the Gay & Lesbian Center's WeHo Life program – for subsequent discussion. This was accepted by Commissioners Roberts and Cislowski.

Commissioner Henry said that positive results in HIV tests among young MSM (men who have sex with men) in New York has been reported to have doubled in the last year, and said the city's agencies should look at focusing additional effort and program outreach to this group.

The motion to approve staff recommendations for renewal and funding for all agencies except AHF and WeHo Life was approved, 6 to 0.

Commissioner Henry then moved to establish as a policy that the Human Services Commission does not endorse any increase in funds for agencies currently on probation, or recommended to begin probation. This was seconded by Commissioner Farmer.

The secretary said while the motion may not pose a conflict of interest as worded, it was foreseeable that it would apply to the two agencies currently recommended for probation, and therefore an appearance of conflict could exist for any commissioner who was employed by either of those agencies.

At this point, Chair Davis passed the gavel to Vice Chair Henry, and left the meeting room.

Commissioner Henry clarified his motion by saying that staff could request an exemption from the proposed policy in specific cases where providing increased funding to an agency on probation would help them improve more quickly.

Commissioner Sims asked for clarification on the meaning of probationary status. Daphne Dennis said it results in greater scrutiny of the agency by staff, including more visits, regular updates to the Commission, and closer engagement with the agency in accomplishing its goals.

Commissioner Sims asked if the motion meant to eliminate the increased funding only as long as the agency remained on probation, or throughout the then-current funding cycle, and Commissioner Henry said the motion was directed to the entire funding cycle, with staff free to recommend reallocation of funds.

The motion was approved, 5 to 0.

Commissioner Sims then moved approval of contract renewal for AIDS Healthcare Foundation's mobile testing program, with the contract amount adjusted to reflect no cost-of-living adjustment. This was seconded by Commissioner Roberts and approved, 5 to 0.

Commissioner Davis then returned to the room, and to his seat on the Commission.

Commissioner Roberts moved to approve contract renewal for GLC's WeHo Life program, with the contract amount adjusted to reflect no cost-of-living adjustment. This was seconded by Commissioner Cislowski, and approved 6 to 0.

Commissioner Davis then resumed the chair.

Commissioner Henry asked if staff would support the Commission's recommendation regarding no increase in funding for agencies on probation. Daphne Dennis said staff needed time to consider the question, and should know by tomorrow.

After discussion, Commissioner Henry moved that if staff does not concur in the recommendation, the Commission will hold a special meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 18, at a location to be determined by staff based on availability of rooms, to discuss communication to City Council about the proposal. This was seconded by Commissioner Farmer, and approved 5 to 0, with Commissioner Davis abstaining.

Without objection, the remaining agenda items were tabled.

VI. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Davis said he asked at the chairs meeting about the naming of the urgent needs fund, and was told that it was likely up to the Commission to select a name, because it did not fall within the parameters of the naming procedure for city properties.

Commissioner Davis said he spoke to the chair of the Public Facilities Commission, and there was a possibility of the two commissions working through a joint subcommittee to address West Hollywood office space for social services agencies.

VII. ITEMS FROM STAFF

There were no additional items.

VIII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

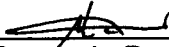
There were no additional items.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 p.m., in memory of the victims of the attacks which occurred on Sept. 11, 2001.

If staff does not concur in the recommendation regarding funding for agencies on probation, there will be a special meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 18, at a venue to be announced.

The next regular meeting will be at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 9, 2007.

Signed: 

Steven L. Davis

Attest: