

**MINUTES
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
REGULAR MEETING**

**JULY 14, 2020
6:00 PM**

TELECONFERENCE

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Reback called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Commission said the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. ROLL CALL: Human Services Commission Secretary Roger Vinalon Jr. took roll call.

PRESENT: Barbara Meltzer, Jimmy Palmieri, Patrick Shandrick, Marquita Thomas, Steven Davis, Andrew Reback

ABSENT: Sam Borelli

ALSO PRESENT: David Giugni, Corri Planck, Derek Murray, Aaron Celious, Ph.D., Francisco Gomez, Douglas Nguyen, Maureen Feldman, Leslie Isenberg

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

ACTION: Approve the agenda of Tuesday, July 14, 2020. Motion by Commissioner Meltzer, seconded by Commissioner Palmieri, and approved unanimously by roll-call vote.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION: Approve the minutes of June 9, 2020 with correction. Motion by Commissioner Palmieri, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, and approved unanimously by roll call vote.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR: No items.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: No items.

4. NEW BUSINESS

(Items B and C were taken ahead of item A)

A. SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

Maureen Feldman, Director, Social Isolation Impact Project, Motion Picture Television Fund (MPTF), gave a presentation on social isolation and loneliness, including demographic data and related risks. MPTF created the Daily Call Sheet program to connect volunteers to industry members through social calls and developed a social program toolkit for organizations to launch or expand existing social connectivity programs.

Commissioner Meltzer asked how the City can help individuals overcome the stigma of seeking assistance. Ms. Feldman stated the focus should be on destigmatizing and teaching the health risks of social isolation, promoting the power of staying socially connected, and including older adults in the volunteer workforce.

Commissioner Thomas thanked Ms. Feldman for her work and asked about MPTF's work with LGBTQ agencies. She also asked if volunteers are trained to identify other concerns during contacts. Ms. Feldman stated MPTF trained the LGBT Center and launched the Hello Club call program and stated volunteers are trained to report concerns as well as lost contact with members.

Commissioner Palmieri thanked Ms. Feldman, noting the effect these issues can have on people of all ages and the importance of intergenerational contact.

Commissioner Meltzer mentioned West Hollywood is a member of MPTF's Social Isolation Impact Coalition. Ms. Feldman supports the City's efforts and offered virtual training to help launch programs.

Chair Reback thanked Ms. Feldman for her work and mentioned local Congregation Kol Ami's buddy program. Chair Reback supports MPTF working with West Hollywood's social service providers in building a citywide social connectivity program.

B. HIV ZERO YEAR FOUR MID-YEAR REPORT

Derek Murray, Social Services Program Administrator, gave an overview on the HIV Zero Initiative and aims to invite local care providers to the September meeting to address declines in certain progress indicators. Surveys on HIV-related stigma continue to be distributed and updated data will be shared at the September meeting.

Commissioner Palmieri inquired if the decrease in care retention may be linked to individuals who begin care with local contracted service providers, then switch to private care. Staff will research and report back in September.

Aaron Celious, Ph.D., the City's consultant for the HIV Zero Initiative, gave a presentation on the mid-year evaluation for year four of the program. The data focused on cisgender men based on the available data. He cited a gradual increase in access to healthcare coverage and steady decline in HIV diagnoses, linkage to care, retention in care, viral suppression, and AIDS diagnoses. He also noted significantly higher concerns with acquiring COVID-19 than acquiring or transmitting HIV.

Commissioner Shandrick requested clarification on whether 78% of the 41 individuals diagnosed with HIV from 2014-2017 were linked to care. Dr. Celious confirmed that was correct.

Commissioner Meltzer inquired why the low rate of people concerned with transmitting HIV is a positive survey result. Dr. Celious considers the low rate (2.8%) a result of the advances in medical treatments and availability. Commissioner Meltzer also asked if individuals surveyed were virally suppressed. Dr. Celious stated the surveys were updated to collect this data and results will be included in the next report.

Commissioner Thomas inquired about the sample size for the current data. Approximately 100 participants were included.

Commissioner Palmieri asked if the number of participants could increase to 150. Dr. Celious stated reaching that sample size would be ideal. Commissioner Palmieri asked if the 4% decrease in viral suppression might reflect a margin of error and Dr. Celious affirmed. Commissioner Palmieri requested clarification on the privacy concerns with including data for women. Mr. Murray stated with so few cases, the intent is to protect their identities. Commissioner Palmieri asked if transgender data was available. Los Angeles County has not provided data reflecting sexual identity.

Commissioner Shandrick proposed inviting an AIDS Project Los Angeles Navigator to provide insight on the participants not linked to care. Mr. Murray noted the data sample did not include homeless individuals.

Mr. Giugni inquired if the Human Services Commission's role could include writing to Los Angeles County and advocating to Council to improve West Hollywood's data collection, particularly for the transgender and homeless communities. He proposed updating the City's Homeless Demographic Survey to add health care access as a follow-up question to HIV status. Chair Reback proposed staff draft a letter to the County for review by the Human Services Commission.

C. TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS UPDATE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Transportation Program Administrators Francisco Gomez and Douglas Nguyen provided an update on the City of West Hollywood's transportation programs and services as impacted by and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local transit services have adjusted operations due to ridership declines and implemented new safety policies. The City's transit service providers continue to provide special services, including transportation to COVID-19 test sites, senior/disabled meal deliveries, and grocery/box fan deliveries.

Commissioner Meltzer asked how older residents can find out about these special transit programs. Mr. Gomez stated the programs have been promoted via news release, social media, Recreation Services staff contacts, and City Hall customer service.

Commissioner Palmieri commended the City's transit services staff for wearing masks and asked about the delivery timeframe for Ambiance Transportation's grocery delivery service. Mr. Gomez stated American GTS drivers will deliver orders once a scheduled order is ready, in approximately 15 minutes.

Chair Reback showed appreciation for the programs and encouraged increased communication efforts to reach older adults who could benefit from the programs, but either don't know about them or feel hesitant to use them.

5. ITEMS FROM STAFF:

Mr. Giugni stated the August Human Services Commission meeting will include updates on the City's Homeless Initiative and the Los Angeles County Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women's Health Collaborative.

Corri Planck, Strategic Initiatives Manager and Acting Human Services and Rent Stabilization Department Director, showed appreciation for Ms. Feldman's presentation and mentioned Jewish Family Service (JFS) and the LGBT Center have call programs in place. Recreation Services staff received guidance on referring callers to the appropriate resources and reporting information to Social Services. Ms. Planck supports training with MPTF and mentioned the City's Seniors in Action program continues online.

Leslie Isenberg, Social Services Supervisor, stated the Senior Advisory Board will reconvene on July 22, 2020.

Mr. Giugni shared updates on the provision of emergency support services in response to the Safer-At-Home order. A report will be included on the August HSC agenda with a detailed summary of emergency funding allocated by the City Council and the services provided through that funding.

Mr. Murray stated the City's gender diversity and workplace gender transition guidelines will be added to the League of California Cities as an example of how to create inclusive policies in City government. Mr. Murray mentioned Trans Can Work will have diversity and inclusion training online on July 28, 2020, and Bet Tzedek's tenant defense program is in operation.

Commissioner Palmieri asked if the eviction moratorium protects tenants who lose roommates who've lost employment due to COVID-19. Mr. Giugni affirmed.

Corri Planck mentioned City Council will discuss extending the eviction moratorium to end of September at the following City Council meeting.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

7. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Meltzer read a quote from Dr. Anthony Fauci urging the public to wear a mask with support from Chair Reback.

Commissioner Palmieri supports broadcasting Human Services Commission meetings to provide community members access to the information discussed. He encouraged attending 12-step Zoom meetings, mentioned Sizzle has been placed on hold, and urged the public to wear masks. He also commended Ascencia on their effective homeless services.

Commissioner Thomas showed appreciation for Ms. Feldman's presentation and requested recognizing the transgender lives lost in 2020 in adjournment.

Vice-Chair Davis thanked Mr. Giugni for his emergency services report and supported broadcasting Human Services Commission meetings.

Chair Reback supported each of the Commissioners' comments and echoed the importance of wearing masks. He also supports broadcasting Human Services Commission meetings and asked staff to research the cost to do so.

8. ADJOURNMENT

In honor of Commissioner Borelli's birthday and in memory of our transgender brothers and sisters who have lost their lives this year, the Human Services Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m. to the next regular meeting on August 11, 2020 via Zoom conference.

ATTEST:



Chair



Secretary