

**CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2022  
6:00 P.M.**

**VIA TELECONFERENCE**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 6:05 PM
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** led by Chair Berger
3. **ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners Present:** Balbone, Berger, Hallman, Oliver, Roman, Soon-Shiong

**Commissioners Absent:** Roshay

**Others present:** Lieutenant Bill Moulder, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Assistant Chief Drew Smith, Los Angeles County Fire Department; Megan Currier, Community Services Liaison, Los Angeles County Fire Department; Shea Gibson, Block by Block; Kristin Cook, Public Safety Director

4. **ADJOURNMENT REQUESTS**

Chair Berger requested that the meeting be adjourned in the memory of Dena Saur Bowman.

5. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**ACTION:** Motion by Commissioner Oliver to approve the March 14, 2022 agenda, seconded by Commissioner Balbone and approved.

**POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda for the March 14, 2022 Public Safety Commission meeting was posted at City Hall, Plummer Park, and the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station.

6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Stephanie Harker, resident of West Hollywood, asked that clarification be added to her comments from the February meeting.

Commissioners suggested adding additional clarification to their motion and discussion of diverting Sheriff's Department funding to mental health and homelessness resources.

**ACTION:** Motion by Commissioner Balbone to approve the February 14, 2022 minutes, seconded by Commissioner Hallman and approved as amended.

## 7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ruth Williams, resident of West Hollywood, expressed concern with the proposal to reduce the Sheriff's Department's contract and spoke regarding the current impact from crime and the need for more public safety.

Patrick Shandrick, resident of West Hollywood, expressed concern with the proposal to reduce the Sheriff's Department's contract and spoke regarding the current impact from crime and the need for more public safety. Mr. Shandrick spoke in support of reinstating the Entertainment Policing Deputy and Sergeant frozen during the pandemic and of President Biden's recent comments on public safety funding.

Marna Deitch, resident of West Hollywood and member of the Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board, asked the Public Safety Commission to investigate the allegation of Sheriff's Deputies discouraging individuals from making sexual assault reports.

Adam Darvish, resident of West Hollywood, expressed concern with safety and pedestrian safety. Mr. Darvish thanked Lieutenant Moulder for the extra patrols. Mr. Darvish thanked Danny Rivas for code enforcement in the neighborhoods near entertainment districts.

Stephanie Harker, resident of West Hollywood, thanked Chair Berger for his attendance at the recent Public Facilities Commission meeting. Ms. Harker spoke in support of televising the Public Safety Commission. Ms. Harker expressed concern with the proposal to reduce the Sheriff's Department's contract and spoke regarding the current impact from crime and the need for more public safety.

Yola Dore', resident of West Hollywood, expressed concern with the proposal to reduce the Sheriff's Department's contract and spoke regarding the current impact from crime and the need for more public safety. Ms. Dore' spoke in support of President Biden's recent comments on public safety funding.

Jamie Francis, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding being a victim of a violent crime. Mr. Francis spoke regarding the mental health issues affecting individuals experiencing homelessness and spoke in support of more Sheriff's Deputies.

Patrick Ryan Blood, resident of West Hollywood and Chair of the Disabilities Advisory Board, spoke regarding the need for the City to protect people living with disabilities. Mr. Blood spoke in support of more Sheriff's Deputies and said that his interaction with West Hollywood Sheriff's personnel has been incredible.

West Seegmiller, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding the 2021 murders of six women at Atlanta area massage parlors. Mr. Seegmiller spoke in support of having ethical police officers and about a protest at the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors at 10 AM on March 15<sup>th</sup> regarding the vaccination mandate for County employees.

Andrew Solomon, resident of West Hollywood and Public Facilities Commissioner, thanked Chair Berger for his attendance at the recent Public Facilities Commission and spoke regarding the proposed changes to the restrooms at Plummer Park.

Ambrose Brooks, resident of Los Angeles and a member of the Justice LA Coalition, said that the Sheriff's Department's budget is extremely large while there is a lack of mental health care, supportive services, and housing.

Lex Stepling, a member of the Justice LA Coalition, said that West Hollywood was safest in the 1990s and now needs to be more affordable. Mr. Stepling spoke regarding the overly funded Sheriff's Department and how it negatively impacts people while health care and permanent supportive housing are what will bring about public safety.

Michael King, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding a disheartening tone in the Commissioners and spoke in support of listening to residents who give public comment. Mr. King thanked Yola Dore' for her comments.

Cathy Blaivas, resident of West Hollywood, spoke in support of using both Sheriff's Deputies and mental health resources creatively.

## **8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Chair Berger spoke regarding his recent attendance at the Public Facilities Commission shared information regarding the proposed restroom renovations at Plummer Park.

Commissioner Hallman spoke regarding his and Commissioner Oliver's input on the City's Emergency Plan update.

Commissioner Oliver spoke regarding the work on the City's Emergency Plan, including adding synagogues and other critical locations to the City's potential threat list.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong said that she cares very much about safety and preventing harm. Commissioner Soon-Shiong said that the Sheriff's Department does not have any metrics to measure prevention of crime, in response to their claims that crime is increasing. According to Contract Law Enforcement Bureau (CLEB) in a written response to Commissioner Soon-Shiong, "There is unfortunately no way to accurately measure crime that has not occurred." Commissioner Soon-Shiong said that to realign goals of public safety to expenditure, she supports that \$3.2M of the contract be re-allocated to social services. Commissioner Soon-Shiong said that this re-allocation represents the 18% of Sheriff's Deputies time currently dedicated to homelessness resources which could instead fund nearly double the equivalent staff of the MIT team. Commissioner Soon-Shiong said that the Sheriff's Department has an inability to control overtime costs and had to meet with multiple professionals to get very basic figures from the County of Los Angeles, requiring dozens of hours and pages of correspondence. Commissioner Soon-Shiong said that the highest paid department in the County should not be able to unilaterally increase the price for an instrument that is proven to not work. Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke in support of more investment in mental health and homelessness services.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the recent Women's Advisory Board / Public Safety Commission subcommittee meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the upcoming distribution of test strips for drinks and said that it should be accompanied by a robust public education campaign.

**ACTION:** Motion by Commissioner Balbone to recommend to the Social Services Division to include a robust public education campaign and bystander training in the upcoming distribution of test strips for drinks, seconded by Chair Berger and approved.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the recent Human Services Commission meeting which discussed the upcoming social services RFP. Commissioner Balbone said that there was a lot of similarity in the concerns from various commissions, the growing mental health crisis, homelessness, and barriers to service.

Chair Berger said that it is a false narrative to say that the City needs to reduce law enforcement in order to add social services.

Commissioner Oliver thanked the public speakers for their attendance and said that he shares many of their views. Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of community policing, increased foot patrols, and working together with social services to care equitably for residents. Commissioner Oliver said that what we are doing now is not working. Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of dismantling historic and systemic structures which cause inequity.

Commissioner Balbone thanked Commissioners Oliver and Hallman for their work on the Emergency Plan. Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the possibility of hate crimes affecting the Russian and Ukrainian communities due to the war.

Chair Berger spoke regarding the upcoming public safety report on the March 21<sup>st</sup> City Council meeting.

Staff said that a spreadsheet will be used to track requests from the Commission.

**ACTION:** Motion by Chair Berger to add a discussion on cameras to a future agenda, seconded by Commissioner Oliver and approved.

## **9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **9A. RESIDENTIAL FIRE SAFETY / CA BUILDING AND MUNICIPAL CODES**

Commissioners received a presentation from Ben Galan, Building and Safety Manager; Danny Rivas, Acting Public Works Director and Code Enforcement Manager; Assistant Chief Drew Smith; Captain Jayd Swendseid; and Megan Currier, Los Angeles County Fire Department; regarding their responsibilities enforcing the California Building, Fire, and West Hollywood Municipal Codes. Captain Swendseid also discussed coordination for the City's special events.

Commissioner Balbone asked for clarification on how a project is taken from concept to construction.

Mr. Galan spoke regarding the multiple agencies that can be involved with taking a development from start to finish, including planning, code enforcement, engineering, transportation, county agencies, sanitation district, school district, and others. Mr. Galan said that staff monitor the process from entitlement and approval, plan check and construction documents, to the certificate of occupancy.

Commissioner Hallman spoke regarding being a survivor of an apartment fire and said that he wants to make sure that property owners and managers are in compliance with safety codes.

Captain Swendseid spoke regarding regular checks that the Fire Department conducts.

Commissioner Hallman asked if there is anything in writing sent to property owners that outlines their safety responsibilities. Commissioner Hallman asked if a letter could also be sent to tenants outlining the things that are required for units.

Mr. Rivas said that he can work with the Rent Stabilization Division which sends out a newsletter to distribute information.

**ACTION:** Motion by Commissioner Hallman to outreach to residents and property owners regarding safety issues, seconded by Commissioner Balbone and approved.

**9B. REPORT FROM FIRE DEPARTMENT – MONTHLY REPORT**

Assistant Chief Drew Smith said that personnel assigned to West Hollywood are averaging 20 runs per 24 hour day. Chief Smith spoke regarding the upcoming LA Marathon.

Megan Currier congratulated Chief Smith on his promotion to Assistant Chief.

**9C. REPORT FROM BLOCK BY BLOCK SECURITY AMBASSADORS – MONTHLY REPORT**

Shea Gibson, Block by Block, gave a brief report on February’s activities. Mr. Gibson said that the storage of the eastside kiosk will be moved from Massage Envy to the UPS Store.

**9D. SHERIFF’S REPORT – MONTHLY REPORT**

Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding the large increase in criminal incidents as compared to February 2021. Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding the detective “solve” rate for cases. Lieutenant Moulder said that in 2021 there were 10 service complaints (for example, the response took too long), 26 personnel complaints (for example, the Deputy was rude), and 41 commendations (for example, thanking the Deputy). Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding bicycle thefts and the large number of grand thefts on the westside, including using special operations with countywide resources to address them. Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding the Community Impact Team and its additional park checks, foot patrols on Melrose in shopping districts, and patrol checks on residential streets. Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding the arrest of a sexual assault suspect. Lieutenant Moulder said that there are seven new Deputies currently training at West Hollywood Station. Lieutenant Moulder said that Deputies Olvera and Martinez will be recognized at an April City Council meeting for saving the life of a one year old baby.

Chair Berger asked if the new Deputies would receive sensitivity training.

Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding a potential partnership with Trans Can Work and the Rape Treatment Center for additional training.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding more calls for service in 2022 but fewer arrests. Commissioner Soon-Shiong said that it is hard to believe that grand theft increased by such a high margin of 300% and asked for an explanation.

Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding grand thefts and the comparison of Part I crimes from February 2021 to February 2022.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong asked if it is possible that for each graph which reports crime trends per year, the LASD can also share the number of arrests per category of crime.

Lieutenant Moulder said that he can add the arrest data.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding vehicle burglaries and the previous preventive measures taken such as working with rental companies to prevent car rentals to known suspects.

Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding law enforcement's collaboration with rental companies.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding a recent incident at the apartment building next to her home. The Sheriff's Station was called to assist a man in distress behind the building. Commissioner Balbone said that the Deputies treated the person humanely, and the matter was resolved. Commissioner Balbone said that the Deputy did a very nice job speaking to the person in need and said that she appreciated it. Commissioner Balbone also thanked the Fire Department for its response to the incident.

Chair Berger asked Deputies consult with statewide and nationwide bike registries with regard to stolen bikes.

Lieutenant Moulder said that if the bike's serial number is available, it can be entered into the system. Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding how stolen property is managed.

Chair Berger asked if there are any detectives tasked specifically with bicycle theft.

Lieutenant Moulder said that there is not a designated Detective, and that each case is assigned to an available Detective if there is workable information.

Chair Berger asked how often bicycle stings conducted.

Lieutenant Moulder said that while they have not done stings lately, he can look into it.

Commissioner Oliver spoke regarding sexual assault and asked if there is anything that can be done at the park to increase safety and prevent crime in the future.

Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding extra park patrols and the possibility of adding cameras.

Chair Berger asked if repeat offender data can be provided.

#### **9E. COMMISSION WORK PLAN**

Commissioners received an update on the revisions to the Emergency Plan during initial Commissioner comments.

#### **10. ITEMS FROM STAFF**

##### **10A. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION CALENDAR**

Commissioners and staff reviewed the upcoming schedule of agenda items, including discussing Reimagining Neighborhood Watch and cameras at the April meeting.

#### **11. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

#### **12. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Chair Berger asked staff to recap requests made.

Commissioner Hallman thanked the public speakers for their attendance. Commissioner Hallman then spoke as a Neighborhood Watch Captain and in support of more Deputies on the street, including bike patrol. Commissioner Hallman said that he would like to figure out how to make things work better. Commissioner Hallman said that residents do not feel safe. Commissioner Hallman said that the City needs to look at the mental health crisis and said that we are failing our residents experiencing homelessness. Commissioner Hallman said that he and Commissioner Oliver are going to participate on a ride-along with the Sheriff's Department in the near future.

Commissioner Balbone thanked the public speakers for their attendance. Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the impact that cutting 10 Deputies would have and said that she did not have enough information to support February's


motion to recommend cutting Deputies. Commissioner Balbone said that there is a shared concern for under-reported sexual assaults of men in the community. Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding an upcoming study session to be scheduled for the Public Safety Commission, the Women's Advisory Board, the Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board, and the Transgender Advisory Board to talk about sexual assault more broadly.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong said that the City has no control over the 20% cost increase by Los Angeles County and that law enforcement interventions are not working. Commissioner Soon-Shiong said that she sees two issues including no control over rising prices of law enforcement and not enough money for social services.


Commissioner Balbone said that she would need more information next time to support a motion similar to the one made in February to cut Deputies. Commissioner Balbone spoke in support of a collaborative process which gives an opportunity for information to be presented from all sides before a vote.

### 13. ADJOURNMENT

The Public Safety Commission adjourned at 9:00 PM in the memory of Dena Saur Bowman. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2022 at 6:00 PM via teleconference.

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Public Safety Commission Chair

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Staff Liaison

**A copy of the audio recording of this meeting can be obtained from the City Clerk's office upon request.**

***(Disclaimer: Staff records the meetings for the sole purpose of composing the official meeting minutes; therefore, the recordings are not of commercial quality.)***