

**CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD  
BUSINESS LICENSE COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2023**

**West Hollywood Public Meeting Room – City Council Chambers  
625 N. San Vicente Boulevard**

**6:00 P.M. – REGULAR MEETING**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Vulin called the meeting to order at 6:08 P.M.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Vulin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Commissioner Eng  
Commissioner Hang  
Commissioner Lo  
Commissioner Saltzman  
Commissioner Yusupov  
Vice Chair Eisenberg  
Chair Vulin

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Director of Community Safety, Danny Rivas  
Neighborhood & Business Safety Manager, Vyto Adomaitis  
Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez  
Deputy City Attorney, Grace Yeo

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Approve the West Hollywood Business License Commission Agenda of Tuesday, April 4, 2023

**ACTION:** Approve the agenda of Tuesday, April 4, 2023

**Motion by Commissioner Saltzman, and seconded by Commissioner Yusupov, and approved.**

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approve the Minutes of the previous Business License Commission Meeting of Tuesday, March 7, 2023.

**ACTION:** Approve the minutes of Tuesday, March 7, 2023.

**Commissioner Hang made a correction on page 10 of the agenda packet, to correct that it was Commissioner Hang that seconded Commissioner Yusupov's motion. Commissioner Eng stated that the Commission asked about the "If Entertainment Patrol had been affected." Motion by Commissioner Eng, seconded by Vice Chair Eisenberg, and approved as amended.**

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**7. PUBLIC HEARING**

**A. A VARIANCE REQUEST TO TRANSFER FIFTY-THREE-POINT-SIX PERCENT OWNERSHIP OF THE CANNABIS ADULT-USE RETAIL, CANNABIS CONSUMPTION AREA (SMOKING, VAPING AND EDIBLES) AND CANNABIS MEDICAL DISPENSARY BUSINESS LICENSES KNOWN AS AEON BOTANIKA TO OTC WEHO, LLC, RESULTING IN A TOTAL CUMULATIVE TRANSFER OF EIGHTY-FIVE PERCENT FOR AEON BOTANIKA**

*SUBJECT:* The West Hollywood Business License Commission shall conduct a public hearing to consider a variance request from Ryan C. Baker, Court-Appointed Receiver, on behalf of Aeon West Hollywood, Inc., (to be located at 8448 Santa Monica Boulevard), to allow the transfer of fifty-three-point-six percent (53.6%) ownership in the Cannabis Adult-Use Retail, Cannabis Consumption Area (Smoking, Vaping and Edibles), and Cannabis Medical Dispensary Business Licenses to OTC WeHo, LLC dba Off the Charts (OTC).

Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, informed the Commission that the public hearing was posted as required by law.

Chair Vulin opened the public hearing and asked for the Commission's disclosures.

Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, reminded the Commission that the business plan and conditions were previously approved by the Business License Commission and that the action before the Commission was to consider the variance request, transfer of ownership, only. She then provided background information as reflected in the staff report dated April 4, 2023.

RYAN C. BAKER, RECEIVER, provided an opening statement, and SEAN MADDOCKS, REPRESENTATIVE OF APPLICANT, spoke about the business operations, business model, management team, and their business plan of OFF the Charts.

Commissioner Eng asked regarding the business plan, reason to start construction work, ownership background in health and to clarify the health care practitioner's aspect, social equity, and employee training. NORMAN YOUSIF, APPLICANT, and SEAN MADDOCKS, REPRESENTATIVE OF APPLICANT, responded.

The Commission had questions regarding the wellness program, business operations, parking, deliveries, financial revenue generated at other business locations, commitment towards the business operation, and neighborhood outreach. A long discussion about the Variance Request, Waitlist and Pre-screening Application Process ensued with the Commission.

The Commission was reminded that the business operations have been previously approved in 2019, and what is before them is the variance request only and not the business operations. The variance request has four (4) findings that need to be made, reviewed, and recommended by staff for approval to the Business License Commission.

GENAVE SALAS, Spoke in support.

DORSAY DEJANN, Spoke in support.

SIERRA NANNINGA, Spoke in support.

RAVEN KNEASS, Spoke in support.

VALERIE RENTERIA, Spoke in support.

AMIR RZAIPOUR, Spoke in support.

MARK TOMA, Spoke in support.

NICKON HADDADI, Spoke in support.

NOJAN HADDADI, Spoke in support.

GENEVIEVE MORRILL, Spoke in support.

JEFFREY McCONNELL, Spoke in opposition.

IVAN PEREZ MEDINA, Spoke in support.

IMON NOORMOHAMMEDI, Spoke in support.

NICOLE FOX, Original Owner, called via Zoom to speak in support.

Commissioner Saltzman suggested that the variance be approved as recommended by City staff.

Commissioner Lo expressed concern with original applicants' mission not being met and reminded the Commission that an immediate decision was not required.

Commissioner Yusupov inquired if the cannabis business had to be in continual operation for four (4) years before a transfer can happen. Deputy City Attorney, Grace Yeo, responded.

Commissioner Eng spoke about the cannabis landscape, encouraged the applicant to commit to AEON's business model, employee training and focus on health.

Vice Chair Eisenberg stated that she was inclined to approve the variance request and encouraged the applicant to commit to AEON's business model and focus on their financial health. She then expressed concern about the rapid expansion of multiple locations throughout the country. She suggested that the applicant give more thought to their expansion and focus on the West Hollywood location.

Commissioner Lo asked for City staff to explain the pre-screening rating process for cannabis business license applications and how many applicants are on the waiting list. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, responded.

Commissioner Hang inquired about the remaining construction cost that has been invested to date by the new applicant. RYAN C. BAKER, RECEIVER, responded.

Vice Chair Eisenberg requested that City staff provide a monthly report to the Commission beginning in June of the business status until they open. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, responded.

Commissioner Lo inquired if the Receiver considered the applicants on the cannabis waiting list. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, Director of Community Safety, Danny Rivas and RYAN C. BAKER, RECEIVER, responded.

Commissioner Lo expressed concern regarding the variance request process and the cannabis waiting list.

Commissioner Yusupov requested that the applicant be mindful of any noise impact to the surrounding neighbors and motioned to approve the variance request.

**ACTION:** Adopt Resolution No. BLC23-0003, "A RESOLUTION OF THE BUSINESS LICENSE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD APPROVING THE TRANSFER OF FIFTY-THREE-POINT-SIX PERCENT OWNERSHIP FOR THE CANNABIS ADULT-USE RETAIL #CAU-000007, CANNABIS CONSUMPTION AREA (SMOKING, VAPING AND EDIBLES) #CCA-000004, AND CANNABIS MEDICAL DISPENSARY #CMU-000003 BUSINESS LICENSES FOR THE BUSINESS KNOWN AS AEON BOTANIKA, TO BE LOCATED AT 8448 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD". (Attachment A).

**Motion by Commissioner Yusupov, seconded by Commissioner Saltzman, and approved noting the "no" vote of Commissioner Lo.**

## 8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. AN UPDATE REGARDING THE ANNUAL CANNABIS ADULT-USE RETAIL BUSINESS LICENSE RENEWAL #CAU-000006 FOR J&P CONSULTING, LLC DBA "THE WOODS", LOCATED AT 8271 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

**SUBJECT:** The West Hollywood Business License Commission will receive an update on the annual Cannabis Adult-Use Retail Business License renewal #CAU-000006 for The Woods located at 8271 Santa Monica Boulevard. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, provided background information as outlined in the staff report dated April 4, 2023.

Commissioners had questions regarding the noise complaints, and the information on how to report the noise complaints to the city. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, and Director of Community Safety, Danny Rivas, responded.

JAY HANDAL, OWNER, spoke about their business operations and their proactive approach regarding noise and issues around the business.

GENEVIEVE MORRILL, President and CEO of Chamber of Commerce, commended Chair Vulin for speaking to the youth on promoting civic engagement and thanked City staff for their work. Also, spoke about the noise and challenges within certain commercial districts.

**ACTION:** Receive and File.

**B. UPDATE ON ACTIVE CANNABIS ESTABLISHMENTS**

**SUBJECT:** The West Hollywood Business License Commission will receive an update regarding complaints, violations, and the City's Code Enforcement efforts to monitor neighborhood security patrols required of cannabis establishments operating within the City.

Neighborhood and Business Safety Manager, Vyto Adomaitis, provided background information as outlined in the staff report dated April 4, 2023.

**ACTION:** Receive and File.

**C. UPDATE ON THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND CITY EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND ITEMS RELATED TO BUSINESSES.**

**SUBJECT:** The West Hollywood Business License Commission will receive an update regarding the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and City Executive Orders and items related to businesses.

Neighborhood and Business Safety Manager, Vyto Adomaitis, informed the Commission that on March 20, 2023, the City Council terminated the local emergency in response to COVID-19, and no further COVID-19 updates will be provided.

**ACTION:** Receive and File.

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**10. ITEMS FROM STAFF**

Neighborhood and Business Safety Manager, Vyto Adomaitis, informed the Commission that the public hearing about Heart WeHo has been rescheduled to May 2, 2023, as well as two new hearings for a Cannabis Variance Request and an Extended Hour Business License. He also provided an update on the newly appointed Business License Commissioners and thanked the outgoing Commissioners.

Director of Community Safety, Danny Rivas, spoke about the at-large appointees and thanked the outgoing Business License Commissioners.

**11. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**12. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Eng clarified a comment made back in December 2022, to state that there are no dialects of the Mandarin language. She inquired about the total number of cannabis consumption lounges that are allowed to have a smoking element, Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, responded.

Commissioner Hang expressed his gratitude to Commissioner Lo and Commissioner Saltzman for their service to the Commission. He then inquired about the presentation from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department that was requested. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez responded.

Commissioner Eisenberg expressed her gratitude to Chair Vulin, Commissioner Lo, and Commissioner Saltzman for their service to the Commission. She then requested a detailed report including any complaints about entertainment establishments. Neighborhood & Business Safety Manager, Vyto Adomaitis, and Deputy City Attorney, Grace Yeo, responded.

Additionally, Director of Community Safety, Danny Rivas, reminded the Commission that such reports are not within their purview, but City staff will bring items to the Commission as seen necessary. He then requested Commissioners to connect residents with Code Enforcement staff, that is if they are receiving complaints and remove themselves from the process. Lastly, he explained that any litigation that the City potentially considers approaching, would be brought before the City Council in closed session and would not be presented to the Business License Commission.

Commissioner Lo expressed his gratitude for working with Mr. Rivas, thanked City staff for their efforts, congratulated fellow Commissioners and newly appointed Commissioner, Jordan Cockeram, on their appointments.

Commissioner Saltzman thanked City staff and colleagues for their efforts while serving on the Business License Commission.

Commissioner Yusupov congratulated Commissioner Saltzman on his appointment to the Public Safety Commission, gave his well wishes to his colleagues, thanked City staff for their efforts and welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Cockeram.

Chair Vulin stated that he re-applied for the Business License Commission and is hoping to continue to serve on the Commission. He continued to express his gratitude for working with the Commission and congratulated his fellow Commissioners on their appointments.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

The West Hollywood Business License Commission adjourned at 9:11 p.m., to an adjourned regular meeting, which will be on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. at West Hollywood Public Meeting Room – City Council Chambers, 625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069.

**PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED** by the Business License Commission of the City of West Hollywood at a meeting held this 2nd day of May 2023.

DocuSigned by:  
*Elyse Eisenberg*  
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ELYSE EISENBERG, VICE CHAIR

ATTEST:

*Falyn Kingi*  
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FALYN KINGI, COMMISSION SECRETARY