

**CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
BUSINESS LICENSE COMMISSION**

MINUTES

TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2023

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

6:00 P.M. – REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Eisenberg called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Hang led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Commissioner Eng
Commissioner Hang
Commissioner Yusupov
Vice Chair Eisenberg

ABSENT: Chair Vulin

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

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approve the West Hollywood Business License Commission Agenda of Tuesday, May 2, 2023

Commission Secretary, Falyn Kingi stated that item 7A is being continued to June 6, 2023, at the request of the applicant.

ACTION: Approved the agenda of Tuesday, May 2, 2023.

Approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approve the Minutes of the previous Business License Commission Meeting of Tuesday, April 4, 2023.

ACTION: Approved the minutes of Tuesday, April 4, 2023.

Vice Chair Eisenberg made a correction on page 9 of the agenda packet to clarify that she was referring to the financial health of the business.

Motion by Commissioner Eng, seconded by Commissioner Hang, and approved as amended.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

A. AN APPLICATION BY HEART WEHO, LOCATED AT 8911 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD, FOR AN EXTENDED HOUR BUSINESS LICENSE TO OPERATE UNTIL 4:00 A.M. ON SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS

SUBJECT: The West Hollywood Business License Commission shall conduct a public hearing to reconsider the application for an Extended Hour Business License to operate until 4:00 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, for an existing nightclub known as Heart WeHo, located at 8911 Santa Monica Boulevard.

ACTION: Continue the Public Hearing to June 6, 2023, at the request of the Applicant.

B. AN APPLICATION BY DOUGHBRIK'S PIZZA SUNSET, LLC FOR AN EXTENDED HOUR BUSINESS LICENSE LOCATED AT 8363 SUNSET BOULEVARD

SUBJECT: The West Hollywood Business License Commission shall conduct a public hearing to consider the application for an Extended Hour Business License at an existing restaurant known as Doughbrik's Pizza, located at 8363 Sunset Boulevard.

Commission Secretary, Falyn Kingi, informed the Commission that the public hearing was posted as required by law.

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

Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, provided background information as reflected in the staff report dated May 2, 2023.

Commissioner Hang suggested that future staff reports should include complaints received by Block-by-Block Ambassadors.

The Commission had questions and discussed in-depth Doughbrik's Pizza (Doughbriks) business operation impacting adjacent businesses and neighborhoods, parking concern, Doughbriks restroom location, trash concerns and valet options. Neighborhood & Business Safety Manager, Vyto Adomaitis, responded.

MATTHEW MELLO, AGENT TO APPLICANT, provided a brief background on the business, spoke about the need for extended hours, acknowledged the community concerns, and assured the Commission that the applicant is willing to develop solutions to rectify the issues.

GENERAL MANAGER, FRANK D'ANDRE, explained that he is in communication with the owner of Carney's Restaurant, and they are working together to post signs to restrict Doughbrik's customers from parking on their property. He then stated that Doughbrik's customers will be allowed to use the valet service provided by the neighboring business, Saddle Ranch Chop House Restaurant.

The Commission spoke with General Manager regarding daily operations, the number of customers served in a day, dine-in and takeout options, alternate parking options, patron seating, security, and changes that will be made with the extended operating hours.

Neighborhood & Business Safety Manager, Vyto Adomaitis, reminded the Commission of the conditions that have been placed in the resolution as it pertains to the number of guards that are required, and the patio use being prohibited after 2:00 a.m.

Commissioner Eng and Vice Chair Eisenberg expressed concern with the discovery of armed guards on Doughbrik's property. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, spoke about the conditions on the resolution.

Commissioner Eng inquired about the communication flow of the business and the involvement of the owners. GENERAL MANAGER, FRANK D'ANDRE and MATTHEW MELLO, AGENT TO APPLICANT, responded.

Commissioner Hang inquired about the application process. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, explained the business license permitting process.

Vice Chair Eisenberg and GENERAL MANAGER, FRANK D'ANDRE spoke regarding the trash concerns and parking issues in the surrounding neighborhood. They went on to discuss the time it takes to serve customers and business operations.

Commissioner Hang inquired if Doughbrik's would be willing to offer valet parking as suggested by the Commission. Neighborhood & Business Safety Manager, Vyto Adomaitis, reminded the Commission that the item before the Commission was for extended hours and not valet operations and explained the process.

Director of Community Safety, Danny Rivas, reminded that the Commission cannot require the business to pursue a valet license. He clarified the municipal code as it relates to armed guards. Additionally, explained the standard practices that are outlined in the conditions of the resolution and the application review process.

AARON KAMIN, LOS ANGELES, representative of the Sunset Plaza Neighborhood Association, spoke in opposition.

JORDAN COCKERAM, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the item.

Commissioner Yusupov suggested that the approval be conditioned for a brief period and require the applicant to return to the Commission for review. Deputy City Attorney, Grace Yeo, responded.

The Commission discussed the possibility of allowing the business to correct some of the issues and then return to the Commission. They also discussed the desire to support local businesses, lack of communication within the business, security guards, acknowledged the community concerns with parking and trash in the neighborhood, suggested approving the license with the condition of a 6-month review, and encouraged the public to attend the Commission meetings to voice their concerns.

Commissioner Yusupov motioned to approve the license with the condition that the applicant returns to the Commission within six months for review. Commissioner Hang seconded the motion.

ACTION: Approve Resolution No. BLC23-0004, "A RESOLUTION OF THE BUSINESS LICENSE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD APPROVING EXTENDED HOUR BUSINESS LICENSE NO. EXT-004736 FOR THE BUSINESS KNOWN AS DOUGHBRIK'S PIZZA, LOCATED AT 8363 SUNSET BOULEVARD." **Motion failed noting a 2-2 vote.**

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. A PRESENTATION ON THE BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION PROCESS CONDUCTED BY THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT MAJOR CRIMES BUREAU FOR REGULATORY CITY BUSINESS LICENSES
SUBJECT: The West Hollywood Business License Commission will receive a presentation on the background investigation process performed by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Major Crimes Bureau on required regulatory city business licenses.

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Major Crimes Bureau Investigator, Michelle Hauser, provided a brief presentation to the Commission explaining the types of background checks performed for various business license applications, the process, and the necessary steps taken to provide information and recommendations to the City of West Hollywood.

The Commission inquired about the hiring process for investigators, details involved with the background checks, how interviews are conducted, and how interpreters/translators are included in the process. The Commission continued to inquire about the investigator's service for the entire County of Los Angeles, and the number of reviews over a month. Additionally, inquired about an investigation conducted previously for a massage establishment that was considered at a December hearing and spoke about low level crimes. Investigator Hauser clarified that the massage business license application was denied based on fraudulent information and not based on unlawful activity. Director of Community Safety, Danny Rivas, and Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, provided additional information about the low-level crimes and business license application process.

ACTION: Receive and file.

10. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Neighborhood and Business Safety Manager, Vyto Adomaitis, informed the Commission that the public hearing regarding Heart WeHo has been rescheduled to June 6, 2023, and informed the Commission about the City's Celebration of 'Senior Month' throughout the Month of May. Also, shared the preparations being made by staff for the upcoming City's Pride Week event in June.

Director of Community Safety, Danny Rivas, informed the Commission that the West Hollywood Pride event will begin on June 2, 2023, and end with a parade on June 4, 2023.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

12. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Eng informed the Commission that Delaware is the 22nd State to allow adult-use cannabis, Minnesota presuming to be next, making that a total of 38 States allowing medicinal or adult use. She expressed concern with the allotment of sixteen (16) consumption lounges and commented that training should be a requirement for these establishments, similar to ServSafe.

Commissioner Hang thanked staff for steering the Commission in the right direction and for providing guidance. He then acknowledged Senior and Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage (AAPI) Month and thanked staff for their efforts.

Commissioner Yusupov thanked staff for their efforts.

Vice Chair Eisenberg thanked staff for their efforts and welcomed future Commission Cockeram.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The West Hollywood Business License Commission adjourned at 8:10 p.m., to an adjourned regular meeting, which will be on Tuesday, June 6, 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 6th day of June 2023.

ANTHONY VULIN, CHAIR

ATTEST:

Falyn Kingi

FALYN KINGI, COMMISSION SECRETARY