



**CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
SPECIAL TELEVISED MEETING MINUTES
DISABILITIES ADVISORY BOARD**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2024
6:00 PM**

**WEST HOLLYWOOD PUBLIC MEETING ROOM – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
625 N. SAN VICENTE BOULEVARD
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA 90069**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Welcome remarks by Assemblymember Richard Zbur congratulating the awardees and recognizing the Board for their work.

2. **ROLL CALL:**

PRESENT: Board Member Dore
Board Member Green
Board Member Leathem
Board Member Nash
Board Member Schwartz
Board Member Semonco
Board Member Watts
Vice Chair Mann
Chair Smith

Absent: None

ALSO Dee Saunders, Social Services Specialist
PRESENT: Maribel Ulloa, Social Services Program Administrator
Derek Murray, Social Services Supervisor
Joyce Britton, Recording Secretary, Administrative Specialist
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3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Nick Roy Ball led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilmember Meister and Councilmember Heilman provided congratulatory remarks.

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** *The Disabilities Advisory Board approved the agenda of the October 23, 2024, Disabilities Advisory Board meeting.* **Motioned by Vice**

Chair Mann, seconded by Board Member Green and approved unanimously by roll call vote.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT:

A representative from Congressman Adam Schiff's office expressed gratitude to the advisory board, city staff, and honorees, praising the city's beauty and inclusivity and saying they feel proud and fortunate to have it in their congressional district.

Sam Borelli, a Human Services Commissioner and liaison to the Disabilities Advisory Board, expressed gratitude to awardees for their impactful work in the community And congratulated the awardees.

George Nickle, spoke in honor of all the awardees

Anne-Marie Williams, on behalf of LA County Assessor Jeff Prang, presented awards to the evening's honorees, expressing his gratitude and support for their impactful work in West Hollywood.

Alan Strasburg expressed gratitude to the board for their essential work in local governance, highlighting honorees Mikey Friedman and Brandon Ross Garcia.

Stephanie Harker praised Mikie Friedman for always stepping up to make a difference, humorously referencing a commercial about "letting Mikie do it." She noted Mikie's past senior award and joked that Mikie deserves a safety award too when the city tackles sidewalk issues with scooters and delivery robots.

Cathy Blaivas praised the advisory board for highlighting life's daily challenges and thanked them for their service and congratulated all the honorees.

Richard Eastman expressed gratitude to David Nash and the disabled community of West Hollywood, reflecting on his journey living with AIDS for decades.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR:

6.A. POSTING OF AGENDA:

SUBJECT: The agenda for the meeting of Wednesday, October 23, 2024, was posted at City Hall, Plummer Park, the Sheriff's Station, and at the West Hollywood Library on Wednesday, October 16, 2024.

ACTION: Received and filed.

6.B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

SUBJECT: The Disabilities Advisory Board is requested to approve the minutes of the prior Council meeting.

ACTION: The Board unanimously approved the minutes of September 25, 2024.

7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None.

8. **NEW BUSINESS:**

8.A. 2024 DISABILITY SERVICE AWARDS PRESENTATIONS

SUBJECT: The Disabilities Advisory Board presented the 2024 Disability Service Awards:

Lovedy Brydon Differently Abled Individual Award to Myra "Mikie" Friedman
Nonprofit Award to Disability Community Resource Center
Business Award to California Rehabilitation Institute
Media Award to Brandon Ross Garcia, editor of WeHoOnline

9. **EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR:** None.

10. **ITEMS FROM STAFF:**

Staff thanked the Board and congratulated all the award recipients.

11. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Zekiah Wright congratulated the awardees and expressed appreciation for the annual Disability Awareness Month celebration in the city, emphasizing the importance of continued support for the community.

12. **ITEMS FROM BOARD AND LIAISON REPORTS:**

Vice Chair Mann highlighted the Disabilities Advisory Board's active 2024, which included attending the Abilities Expo, contributing to the city's strategic plan on accessibility, and engaging with various community events. The Board launched Disabilities Awareness Month in November, themed "Accessibility Rights," with a health event partnering with Cedars-Sinai that provided screenings and vaccinations. Vice Chair Mann emphasized the ongoing fight against ableism, celebrating the unity and diversity of disabled voices, and urged everyone to support a world that values all abilities.

Board Member Leathem expressed gratitude for being part of the Disability Advisory Board, emphasizing the importance of amplifying community voices, especially those advocating for change against systemic failures. Leathem hopes for continued vocal advocacy from the board and those in positions of power, stressing that true equality and accessibility come from listening and empowering these voices. Leathem thanked the board, staff, council, and honorees for their impactful work.

Board Member Joe Green, recently appointed and liaison for the Transgender and LGBT+ Commission, expressed enthusiasm for collaborative opportunities between boards to drive meaningful change.

Board Member Dore expressed solidarity with Disabilities Awareness Month while also recognizing Breast Cancer Awareness, urging everyone to get tested. Reflecting on recent earthquakes, Dore noted how they symbolize society's fractures, questioning true inclusion and equality in disability rights. Dore emphasized that, through this meeting, the voices of board members and award recipients will rise to demonstrate the importance of accessibility.

Board Member Schwartz expressed pride in advocating for accessibility rights during their term on the board, thanking honorees, fellow members, and staff for their contributions.

Board Member Semonco thanked attendees, the City of West Hollywood, staff, and honorees, expressing gratitude for the support of friends and local organizations that helped them thrive. She emphasized the board's commitment to fairly addressing the disability community's needs and shared a personal commitment to learning, respecting others, and staying strong. Semonco encouraged everyone to vote.

Board Member Watts highlighted that most people will experience a disability at some point in their lives, whether temporary or permanent. This reality underscores the importance of laws and support systems that ensure people with disabilities can live with dignity and participate fully in society. Mr. Watts emphasized the advisory board's role in guiding the City Council and collaborating with legislators to create fair, effective laws. He also stressed the importance of constitutional rights, including free speech and a free press, as essential to a democratic society.

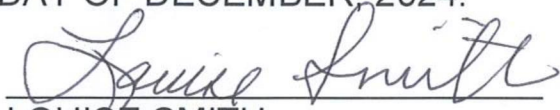
Board Member Nash expressed gratitude to the awardees and highlighted daily challenges, like encountering scooters and robots that block accessible paths. He praised the community's aquatic center, which has accessible facilities that aided his rehabilitation, and thanked local therapists and the Disability Community Resource Center for their support. Nash noted his severe visual impairment and asked for patience if he doesn't recognize people due to his limited sight. He appreciates the board's work and sees this event as a chance to celebrate those who improve lives in the disability community.

Chair Smith expressed gratitude to the board members, City Council, and staff for their support over the past year. Reflecting on her personal history, she noted that she has never faced discrimination related to her disability and emphasized the importance of employment for individuals with disabilities, as only about 28% are employed. Chair Smith highlighted the need for increased awareness and

resources for various conditions that are often overlooked as disabilities. She praised the efforts of the board and recognized awardees, particularly Mikie Friedman, Brandon Ross Garcia, and organizations like the Disability Community Resource Center and the California Rehabilitation Center. She concluded by thanking the audience for their patience and engagement.

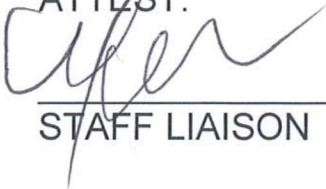
13. **ADJOURNMENT:** The Disabilities Advisory Board adjourned at 7:39 pm in memory of Imogene Prang, Gary Davis and Linda Grant to its special meeting which will be held at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at Plummer Park, Room 5 & 6, 7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, California, 90046

APPROVED BY A MOTION OF THE DISABILITIES ADVISORY BOARD ON THIS 11th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2024.



LOUISE SMITH,
CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:



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.)