

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2024
PLUMMER PARK - ROOMS 5 & 6
7377 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD 6:00
PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Adolphson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

A. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Commissioner Borelli
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Eyres
Commissioner Williams
Commissioner Wyville
Vice Chair Williams
Chair Adolphson

Absent: Commissioner Palmieri

ALSO Wendy Barreno, Human Services Manager

PRESENT: Derek Murray, Social Services Supervisor
Amy Valdepeña, Commission Secretary, Human Services
Specialist
Michelle Liberman, Social Services Program Administrator
Francisco Gomez, Acting Strategic Initiatives Supervisor

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Adolphson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Human Services Commission is requested to approve the meeting agenda for December 10, 2024.

ACTION: Approved the Agenda of Tuesday, December 10, 2024, motion by Commissioner Eyres, seconded by Commissioner Wyville, and approved by roll call vote. Noting the absence of Commissioner Palmieri.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Human Services Commission is requested to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2024, Human Services Commission meeting.

ACTION: Approved the minutes of November 10, 2024, **motion by Commissioner Borelli** to approve, **seconded by Commissioner Wyville. Noting the absence of Commissioner Palmieri and Chair Adolphson abstained.**

E. PUBLIC COMMENT

RENEE SOTILE, CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD – Spoke in support of the Ambiance program and is in hope that the program will improve with the City’s funding. She shared that although the program is helpful there has been quite a few challenges and is interested in the platform Ambiance will be incorporating.

SAM ELBAZ, CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD – Speaking for the first time at the Human Services Commission, Sam, a volunteer with the SOVA Food Pantry at Plummer Park, highlighted a lack of understanding about available community resources. While she acknowledged the City of West Hollywood’s strong efforts to connect services, she noted gaps in outreach and awareness. Sam expressed curiosity about what measures are in place to ensure individuals know where to seek help and how to advocate for themselves.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR: None

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. PRESENTATION FROM THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERAN AFFAIRS

The Human Services Commission received a presentation from James DeBacco, Veterans Assistant II with the Los Angeles County Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (MVA). He provided an overview of the Department’s services, which include disability compensation, claims appeal processes, military records requests, Veterans' pensions, and disabled veteran license plates. James emphasized the MVA’s collaborative approach, working closely with clients to address their needs.

Following the presentation, Commissioners engaged with several questions and comments. They inquired about the availability of legal counseling, whether shame impacts veterans' willingness to seek assistance, and the outreach methods currently being used to reach Veterans. Commissioners also asked about available resources for the

families of deceased Veterans and the extent of support for these families. Additionally, Commissioners expressed gratitude for James DeBacco's service and his informative presentation, and they discussed how to better disseminate information about these resources to community members.

ACTION: Received and discussed.

B. UPDATE ON THE ON-CALL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM FOR OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

The Human Services Commission received an update on the On-Call Transportation Program, presented by Michelle Liberman, Social Services Program Administrator, and Brian Moffett, Owner/Partner. The program provides essential transportation services for older adults and individuals living with disabilities in West Hollywood. Highlights of the update included the integration of the Lyft app, a new program portal, enhanced ridebooking features, passenger trip data, and ongoing outreach and marketing efforts to increase program awareness.

Following the presentation, Commissioners expressed appreciation for the update and engaged in a discussion with questions and comments. Topics included the funding cost ratio for using the Lyft app, complaint-handling procedures, and the availability of multilingual staff. Commissioners also inquired about the program's ride capacity, noting an estimated 25,000 trips per month, and sought clarification on service restrictions, limits, and exceptions. Suggestions were made to expand outreach efforts and potentially include HUD in the coverage area.

Additional questions focused on technical aspects of the program, such as whether an additional app is required beyond the standard Lyft app, how subsidized funds are applied when a ride exceeds the Lyft Pass balance, and whether tipping is supported through the subsidized funding.

ACTION: Received and discussed.

C. REQUEST FOR INPUT ON A PLANNED ASSESSMENT OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD "FIVE YEAR PLAN TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS IN OUR COMMUNITY"

The Human Services Commission received a presentation from Francisco Gomez, Acting Strategic Initiatives Supervisor, and Wendy Barreno, Human Services Manager, on the progress of the City's "Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness in the WeHo Community." Staff requested input from the Commission to guide an upcoming assessment, including key stakeholder groups to consult, critical research areas, and important outcomes to pursue in 2025 and beyond.

Commissioners affirmed the plan's continued relevance while highlighting the need to address unmet goals and adapt to emerging challenges. Key recommendations included periodic reviews to ensure the plan aligns with evolving needs, establishing a day center for services like laundry and storage, evaluating rental assistance programs, and expanding permanent housing options.

Regional collaboration was a central theme, with Commissioners emphasizing the importance of integrating West Hollywood's efforts into a broader framework across Los Angeles County. Strengthening partnerships with neighboring cities, county officials, and nonprofit organizations was deemed critical to achieving systemic solutions. Commissioners also stressed the importance of inclusive engagement, recommending localized strategies to reach underrepresented groups and incorporating input from individuals with lived experience to shape effective policies.

Other priorities included improving the visibility and accessibility of outreach efforts to enhance public awareness and foster community support. Specific recommendations included increasing the presence of outreach teams in public spaces and exploring safe parking initiatives to assist individuals living in vehicles. Overall, the Commission recommended extending the Five-Year Plan with an enhanced focus on inclusivity, collaboration, and systemic change.

ACTION: Received input and discussed.

ACTON: Motion by Commissioner Eyres to extend the Human Service Commission meeting past 8 pm, seconded by Commissioner Wyville and approved, noting no vote from Commissioner Borelli.

SAM ELBAZ, CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD – Expressed thanks for the learning at this meeting and recommended strategies for raising awareness with individuals who utilize services directly, including word of mouth and smartphones. Recommended utilizing volunteers in community engagement and service planning. Identified safety for unhoused community members as a priority, as well as preventing drug dealing, including trading food provided through service providers for drugs.

D. [PROPOSED LGBTQ+ SUICIDE MEMORIAL REVIEW PROCESS APPOINTEES](#)

The Human Services Commission considered appointing up to three members to work with the Public Facilities Commission Ad Hoc Committee developed to gather more precise and detailed information on the Council proposed LGBTQ+ Suicide Memorial. There will be four meetings in 2025, the first to be held at the end of January.

ACTION: Received and appointed Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Wyville, and Commissioner Eyres.

5. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Michelle Liberman, Social Services Program Administrator, encouraged all to apply to the On-Call Program Ambiance if eligible.

Derek Murray, Social Services Supervisor, informed the Commission that the End of Year report will be on the January Human Services Commission meeting on January 14, 2025.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

JOE GREEN, CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD – Attended the LGBTQ+ Commission meeting and gave a shout out to Being Alive. As Co-Chair of the HIV Commission, shared that the next three meetings will be at the California Endowment (Jan, Feb, Mar) on the second Thursday of the month. The Commission will also have a public policy meeting on January 6 and noted concerns with the upcoming administration. He shared wishes for happy holidays.

RENEE SOTILE, CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD – Expressed high hopes for the Ambiance program and urged Commissioners to stay engaged with its progress. She shared that she and her wife are volunteers for the West Hollywood Community Cats TNR program, which provides free spay/neuter services. She advocated for the inclusion of community cats in future homeless initiatives. Lastly, she announced the first kitten adoption event, taking place this Saturday, December 14, at Gym Bar WeHo from noon to 3 PM.

7. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Davis – Shared that he provided public comment at the last Council meeting on December 2, 2024. He congratulated the Commission and staff on a great Warrior Awards event.

Commissioner Borelli – Shared feedback from a friend who frequently rides the commuter line, noting bus challenges over the past two weeks. Specifically, Dial-A-Ride buses were unavailable, leading to the use of commuter line buses, and on two occasions, his early morning bus did not arrive. Borelli also explained his vote against extending the meeting time. He had considered joining the Suicide Memorial Review Process as an appointee but felt his personal views, shaped by his past experience on the Trevor Project Board, might not align with the City's direction. As such, he is comfortable passing the responsibility to others. Lastly, Commissioner Borelli emphasized the need to agendize a discussion about the Warrior Awards. He acknowledged the challenges Commissioner Palmieri faced leading up to the event which Palmieri mentioned at the last meeting. While he agreed it was a wonderful event, Borelli suggested discussing the process and challenges involved.

Commissioner Eyres – Thanked staff for their excellent work on the Warrior Awards. She then discussed her concerns after reading Project 2025, particularly regarding its impact on the transgender community. Eyres highlighted that the document, which is intended to guide the next president's policies, aims to disenfranchise the transgender community by cutting federal funding for programs that serve them. Eyres urged the Commission to be aware of this as they work to strengthen programs and support the community.

Commissioner Wyville – Congratulated the Commission and staff on a flawless Warrior Awards event. Regarding Commissioner Eyres' comments on Project 2025, he said that it's important for the City to remain a refuge for people. He expressed his support for Commissioner Borelli, offering to discuss the Suicide Memorial further, as it is also very meaningful to him.

Vice Chair Williams – Commended everyone on a job well done, sharing that while she couldn't attend the Warrior Awards due to illness, she heard nothing but great things about the event. She congratulated the Chair on being voted in and thanked everyone for voting her in as Vice Chair. Vice Chair Williams also extended her congratulations to former Councilmember Sepi Shyne, thanking her for her contributions and hard work. After reflecting on public comments, she emphasized the importance of including volunteers in the homelessness stakeholder group. She also highlighted the need to consider pets when addressing the needs of the unhoused community.

Chair Adolphson – Echoed praise for the Warrior Awards, calling it a fantastic evening and noting how uplifting it is, especially this time of year, to celebrate progress amidst so many challenges. She thanked the Commission for electing her as Chair and expressed her gratitude. She also congratulated Vice Chair Williams and thanked Commissioner Eyres for her service.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

The Human Services Commission adjourned at 8:12 pm, to its next Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 6:00 pm at the Plummer Park Community Center, Rooms 5 & 6.

Notice: Written materials distributed to the Human Services Commission within 72 hours of this meeting are available for public inspection immediately upon distribution at the Department of Human Services and Rent Stabilization, 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, California, 90069, during normal business hours. They will also be available for inspection at the staff liaison's table during the Commission meeting.

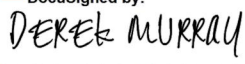
APPROVED BY A MOTION OF THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION ON THIS 14th DAY OF JANUARY 2025.

Signed by:

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SARAH ADOLPHSON,
CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

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STAFF LIAISON

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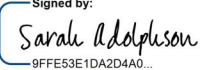
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