

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

**Monday, April 28, 2025
6:00 P.M.**

**West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room - Council Chambers
625 N. San Vicente Boulevard
West Hollywood, CA 90069**

1) CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eramian called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M.

2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Eramian led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) OATH OF OFFICE

The Oath of Office was administered to Kelly Pilarski by Mayor Chelsea Byers and to Catherine Eng by Councilmember Danny Hang.

4) ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

Commissioner Blau
Commissioner Eng
Commissioner Hallman
Commissioner Nickle
Commissioner Pilarski
Vice Chair Harrison
Chair Eramian

Commissioners Absent:

None.

Others Present:

Danny Rivas, City Community Safety Director; Anita Shandi, City Public Safety Manager; Jessica Anukam, City Public Safety Specialist; Assistant Fire Chief Drew Smith, Los Angeles County Fire Department; Erica Leon, General Manager, Block by Block; Lieutenant Fanny Lapkin and Sergeant Jason Duron, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Michele Hanisee, Special Assistant for the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office for District Attorney Nathan Hochman.

5) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION: Approve the agenda of April 28, 2025.

The motion was made by Vice Chair Harrison, seconded by Commissioner Hallman, and approved by the Commission.

6) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Approve the minutes of March 24, 2025.

The motion was made by Vice Chair Harrison, seconded by Commissioner Blau, and approved by the Commission.

7) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Richard Maggio, a resident of West Hollywood, congratulated newly appointed Commissioner Catherine Eng.

Edd Holman, a resident of West Hollywood, congratulated the new Commissioners and thanked the Block by Block Security Ambassadors and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputies for their work at the recent protest and counterprotest activity in the City.

Cathy Blaivas, a resident of West Hollywood, congratulated the new Commissioners, thanked the Eastside Neighborhood Watch Group for their recent neighborhood watch meeting, and thanked all the Security Ambassadors, Sheriff Deputies, fire personnel, and first responders for their continued work helping to keep the community safe.

Stephanie Harker, a resident of West Hollywood, welcomed the newly appointed Commissioners and expressed her appreciation to the block captains of the Eastside Neighborhood Watch group for their recent meeting. She also highlighted the importance of seismic retrofitting, requested an update on the Fountain Avenue project, and voiced her concerns regarding the delivery robots in the City.

Councilmember Danny Hang congratulated the newly appointed Commissioners and expressed his gratitude to the City's Public Safety and Communications Divisions, Sheriff's Deputies, and Security Ambassadors for their efforts in maintaining community safety during the recent rally.

Emmanuel Ares, a resident of West Hollywood, voiced concerns about insufficient street lighting near Santa Monica Boulevard and Larrabee Street.

Victor Omelczenko, a resident of West Hollywood, welcomed the newly appointed Commissioners and referenced key points from the City's Community Strategic Plan to emphasize the importance of prioritizing community safety. He also acknowledged his participation in the recent Eastside Neighborhood Watch meeting.

Jackie Steele, a resident of West Hollywood, expressed her gratitude to the City's Public Safety Division, Sheriff's Deputies, and Security Ambassadors for their efforts in managing the recent rally and counterprotests. She also congratulated the newly appointed Commissioners and shared insights from her experience as a former Public Safety Commissioner and her continued involvement in various community engagements and organizations.

8) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

9) NEW BUSINESS

9A. UPDATE REGARDING CALIFORNIA PROPOSITION 36

Special Assistant Hanisee delivered a presentation providing an overview of the newly enacted Proposition 36, which authorizes felony charges and longer sentences for certain drug and theft offenses. The measure aims to reform laws that have significantly contributed to rising rates of homelessness, drug addiction, and theft across California.

Commissioner Eng shared her thoughts on the underlying causes of homelessness, the availability of drug treatment, and sought clarification on the concept of a citizen's arrest.

Commissioner Blau inquired about the impact of the "Zero Cash Bail" policy on retail theft.

Commissioner Hallman asked about the observable effects of the enacted Proposition 36 and the new regulations regarding juvenile arrests and offenses.

Commissioner Pilarski asked about the options available to offenders, specifically whether they can choose between participating in drug programs or serving jail time.

Vice Chair Harrison asked how many individuals have opted for diversion programs as opposed to serving jail time.

Commissioner Nickle affirmed that Proposition 36 aims to support individuals dealing with both homelessness and drug addiction in their recovery journey, and he asked whether an enhancement applies when three or more people are involved in a theft.

Victor Omelczenko, a West Hollywood resident, emphasized the need for increased funding for the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health to more effectively address mental health issues, drug diversion programs, and homelessness.

Special Assistant Hanisee responded to all the Commission's questions and comments.

9B. REPORT FROM LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT – MONTHLY REPORT

Chief Smith provided a report on fire activity for the month of March, including totals for fires, emergency medical service (EMS) calls, hazardous materials incidents, hazardous conditions, service calls, and good intent calls. He also detailed the number of rubbish, cooking, and structure fires, and discussed preparations for the upcoming City Pride events as well as ongoing fire training for department personnel.

Commissioner Blau inquired about how the Fire Department and Sheriff's Department responds to certain calls for service together.

Victor Omelczenko, a West Hollywood resident, read a statement regarding the City's fire station building and recommended that Fire Station Number 8 be designated as a local cultural resource.

Chief Smith responded to all the Commission's questions and comments.

9C. REPORT FROM BLOCK BY BLOCK SECURITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM – MONTHLY REPORT

Erica Leon, General Manager of Block by Block, presented the March 2025 reports, outlining the number of service calls, interactions with unhoused community members, and safety escort requests. She also highlighted the support provided by Security Ambassadors during the recent rally and counterprotests on the City's west side.

Vice Chair Harrison expressed his appreciation to the Security Ambassadors for their assistance during the rally and counterprotests and asked about the current staffing levels.

Commissioner Pilarski thanked the Security Ambassadors for their service and asked about the reported bicycle mileage and any updates on the Ambassadors' additional training.

Commissioner Hallman inquired about an update regarding Ambassador mobility while stationed at kiosks to enhance visibility in the area.

Chair Eramian praised the Security Ambassadors for their support during the rally and counterprotests and shared his experiences interacting with the team members working.

Erica Leon responded to all the Commission's questions and comments.

9D. REPORT FROM LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT – MONTHLY REPORT

Sergeant Duron welcomed the new Commissioners and presented the crime statistics for March, detailing calls for service, emergency responses, total arrests, and the breakdown of Part 1 and Part 2 crimes, along with their percentages across various City regions. He also provided data on pickpocket thefts and the number of volunteer hours contributed to the Sheriff's station, including those for the LA Marathon. Additionally, Sgt. Duron shared information on calls to the Mental Evaluation Team (MET) and the Sheriff Online Reporting Tracking System (SORTS). He concluded by discussing the turnout for the Battle of the Badges Blood Drive, held in partnership with the American Red Cross, and followed up on previous Commissioner questions regarding medical service calls with the Fire Department, and clarification on Private Persons' Arrests, formally known as Citizens' Arrests

Lieutenant Lapkin provided additional information on the protocols and procedures related to Private Persons' Arrests and welcomed the new Commissioners.

Commissioner Pilarski discussed the bicycle program and suggested using it as an opportunity to further explore improvements in pedestrian safety. She also asked about the DUI arrest data.

Commissioner Blau discussed the monthly traffic citation report and asked further questions about medical calls involving drug activity, as well as arrests related to unhoused individuals.

Commissioner Eng shared her experience participating in the recent blood drive and expressed appreciation to the Sheriff Deputies and Security Ambassadors for their presence during the recent rally and counterprotests.

Commissioner Nickle asked about a recent report concerning an enforcement operation targeting hands-free cell phone use while driving.

Stephanie Harker, a West Hollywood resident, thanked the Sheriffs and inquired whether scooter riders can be cited for riding on the sidewalk.

Victor Omelczenko, a West Hollywood resident, read an email he had sent to the City's Public Safety Division, describing his experience of a near-collision with a car while biking to a City event. He also requested an update on the status of the driver involved in the incident and thanked the Sheriff's Department for their overall service and for help during the rally and counterprotests.

David Eckert expressed his concerns about bicycle and pedestrian safety and proposed the idea of requiring license plates for bicycles.

Sergeant Duron and Lieutenant Lapkin responded to all the Commission's questions and comments.

10) ITEMS FROM STAFF

Manager Shandi provided updates on the Public Safety Division and thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in the Public Safety Awards Ceremony. She also discussed upcoming presentations at future Commission meetings, the recent well-attended American Red Cross CPR, AED, and First Aid community training, and the upcoming Fire CERT training and Alumni meeting. Additionally, she highlighted the forthcoming Civic Leadership Academy and details of the City's Community Safety Department's presentation at the academy. Manager Shandi also provided updates on National Night Out planning for August, addressed traffic and pedestrian concerns, and encouraged the Commission to identify specific traffic areas of concern to relay to the Transportation and Mobility Commission for follow-up.

Director Rivas welcomed the new Commissioners and thanked all the public safety partners for their support during the recent rally and counterprotests. He also spoke about preparations for the upcoming West Hollywood Pride events and emphasized the collective efforts of all public safety partners in ensuring the safety and success of these events.

11) PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments.

12) COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Eng congratulated Acting Captain Lapkin and asked about the anticipated number of participants in the upcoming Fire CERT training and the frequency of those sessions. She also suggested inviting members of the Neighborhood Watch Groups to attend a future Commission meeting to encourage collaboration and engagement.

Commissioner Hallman thanked staff for addressing the traffic concerns raised at a previous meeting and submitted specific areas of concern to be forwarded to the

Transportation and Mobility Commission for review and follow-up. He also welcomed the new Commissioners.

Commissioner Blau welcomed the new Commissioners and inquired about the public safety technology enhancements planned for this year's Pride events. He also expressed concerns about Proposition 36, particularly questioning the effectiveness of its approach to addressing issues such as homelessness. Additionally, he submitted specific traffic concerns and street improvement suggestions for review and consideration.

Commissioner Pilarski thanked her fellow Commissioners for the warm welcome and shared some background about herself, including her career experience and perspective on public safety. She also submitted specific traffic areas of concern along with a few suggestions for traffic improvements.

Vice Chair Harrison welcomed the new Commissioners and emphasized the importance of ensuring traffic safety across all City streets. He also submitted specific traffic areas of concern to be forwarded to the Transportation and Mobility Commission for further review.

Commissioner Nickle shared his recommended traffic areas of concern and welcomed the new Commissioners. He thanked staff for organizing the recent Public Safety Awards Ceremony and highlighted his involvement in several community activities, including participating in the Eastside community cleanup, hosting the WeHo Eastside Neighborhood Watch meeting, attending a Disabilities Advisory Board meeting. He also announced his acceptance of a position on the Los Angeles County LGBTQ+ Advisory Board.

Chair Eramian welcomed the new Commissioners and submitted specific traffic areas of concern to be forwarded to the Transportation and Mobility Commission for further review. He also expressed his gratitude to all of the City's public safety partners for their support during the recent rally and counterprotest and for their ongoing dedication to the City.

Manager Shandi and Director Rivas responded to all the Commission's questions and comments.

13) ADJOURNMENT

The Public Safety Commission adjourned at 8:07 P.M. to the next Adjourned Regular Meeting on May 12, 2025.

DocuSigned by:

Adam Eramian

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Public Safety Commission Chair

DocuSigned by:

Jessica Anukam

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Public Safety Commission Secretary

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<https://www.weho.org/City-government/wehotv>**

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