

**CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
LGBTQ+ COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2025 – 7:00 P.M.

**WEST HOLLYWOOD CITY HALL
1ST FLOOR – COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM
8300 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD, WEST HOLLYWOOD CA 90069**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Whittington called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm

A. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

Read by Chair Whittington

"The West Hollywood LGBTQ+ Commission acknowledges that the land on which we gather and that is currently known as the City of West Hollywood is the occupied, unceded, seized territory of the Gabrieleño Tongva and Gabrieleño Kizh peoples."

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner White led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. ADMINISTER THE OATH OF OFFICE TO NEWLY APPOINTED
LGBTQ+ COMMISSIONER**

The Oath of Office will be administered to newly appointed member Steve Penafiel.

D. ROLL CALL

Present Commissioner Ron Cortes
Commissioner Chiedu Egbuniwe
Commissioner Steve Penafiel
Commissioner Michael Roberts
Commissioner Renee F. Sotile
Commission Vice Chair Alec White
Commission Chair Amber Whittington

Also Present: Commission Liaison Jennifer Del Toro
Recording Secretary Moya Márquez

E. APPROVAL OF THE MAY 8, 2025 AGENDA

Staff requested to move item 4.B. and 4.A. to be heard before Item 3.B, in that order.

ACTION: Approval of the May 8, 2025 Agenda as amended was **motioned by Commissioner Roberts, seconded by Commissioner White, and approved unanimously.**

F. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 13, 2025 MINUTES

The Commission was asked to approve the March 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

ACTION: Approval of the March 13, 2025, meeting minutes was **motioned by Commissioner Egbuniwe seconded by Commissioner White, and approved unanimously.**

G. PUBLIC COMMENT

JOE GREEN, WEST HOLLYWOOD, reported that the Disability Advisory Board has started planning for their Health and Wellness event in October. He congratulated new member Penafiel and reported that he enjoyed the Rainbow Key Awards Ceremony. Finally, he reported that the County has paused all preventative health programs in anticipation of multiple layoffs.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

None.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. WEHO PRIDE 2025

The LGBTQ+ Commission received an update on WeHo Pride 2025.

Kerry McCormick, West Hollywood Events Coordinator shared updates on the evaluation panel for the West Hollywood Community Pride Grants. She reported that nine groups were selected to receive a grant to hold a Community Pride Event, totaling about \$100,000.

Kerry also reported that the Commission, if so interested, is able to volunteer to table at the City's Booth during the WeHo Pride fair.

Finally, Kerry reported that the Commission is being asked to present a welcome message at the opening of the WeHo Pride event on the main OutLoud stage on Friday evening.

ACTION: None. Received and filed.

B. LESBIAN AND QUEER WOMEN'S VISIBILITY WEEK

The LGBTQ+ Commission debriefed about 2025 Lesbian and Queer Women's Visibility Week programming.

Recording Secretary Marquez reported that the City had one event for Lesbian and Queer Women's Visibility Week, which was a film screening of about 25 people in attendance. They reported that unfortunately, the other planned event fell through due to the organizer's inability to secure a location. Finally, they also reported that Commissioners Cortes and Sotile were on site at the Council Meeting in late April to receive a proclamation for the Week.

Staff Liaison Del Toro spoke about how the event had low turnout, and that the Commission should discuss upcoming celebratory events like Lesbian and Queer Women's Visibility Week and Bi+ Visibility Week.

Commissioners suggested potentially hiring influencers to help promote events for younger people.

Commissioner Cortes spoke about the Co-Sponsorship program and moving towards an organic process of creating events.

Staff Liaison Del Toro spoke about how the Commission will have its workplan reviewed and approved by the City Council at a future meeting.

Commissioner Sotile shared stories about past events for the Lesbian and Queer Women's Visibility Month and suggested that the City look into partnering with the June Mazer Archives. Commissioner Sotile also brought up a discussion on potentially changing the name of Lesbian and Queer Women's Visibility Week to Lesbian Visibility Week in alignment with the week's traditional naming

ACTION: None. Debriefed about 2025 Lesbian and Queer Women's Visibility Week programming.

C. RAINBOW KEY AWARDS – AWARDS CEREMONY FOR 2024 HONOREES

The LGBTQ+ Commission debriefed about the Rainbow Key Awards Ceremony for 2024 honorees.

Commissioner Roberts suggested playing music beforehand from the event.

Commissioner White suggested advertising more and having the event in the evening.

Commissioner Sotile suggested hiring a celebrity to try to bring more people, and suggested having a rainbow on the award.

Commissioner White suggested having one graphic for each honoree as a digital campaign.

Commissioner Cortes reported that the event was not well attended, and that the event was too long.

Recording Secretary Marquez reported that the Commission will be asked to review the nomination forms for the awards at the following meeting in June.

ACTION: None. Debriefed about the Rainbow Key Awards Ceremony for 2024 honorees.

D. LIAISON APPOINTMENTS

This item was tabled to a future meeting.

ACTION: Motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes and to table item 3.D. **was motioned by Commissioner White, seconded by Commissioner Roberts, and approved unanimously.**

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. ARTS GRANT PROGRAM – APPOINT PEER REVIEW PANELIST

The LGBTQ+ Commission appointed a member to participate on the Arts Project Grant Peer Review Panel on Wednesday, August 20, 2025; as well as potentially join the Thursday, September 11, 2025 meeting of the Performing Arts and Cultural Affairs Subcommittee at 5pm.

West Hollywood Grants Coordinator Eva Angeloff shared information on all of the Arts Grants that the City provides to individual artists and nonprofit organizations. She asked that the Commission choose one Commissioner to sit on the Peer Review Panel for all the applicants, and one alternate to participate in case the original selector can't attend.

ACTION: The selection of Commissioner Egbuniwe as the primary, and selection of Commissioner Cortes as the alternate to serve on the Arts Grant Program Peer Review Panelist was **motioned by Commissioner White, seconded by Commissioner Whittington and approved unanimously.**

B. PRESERVING LGBTQ+ HISTORY

The LGBTQ+ Commission received a presentation from ONE Institute in their mission-driven work/programming.

Tony Valenzuela, Executive Director of the ONE institute, shared information about the organization. Originally, ONE Began as a magazine which ran from 1953 – 1967. The magazine is considered a window into queer American life in the 1950s-60s.

The organization today archives LGBTQ+ history, and hosts events during LGBTQ+ History Month in October, called the Circa Festival. He shared information on events coming up in LA and West Hollywood.

Mr. Valenzuela reported that ONE lost about \$40k due to cancelled grants recently.

Commissioner Sotile asked about archiving personal West Hollywood records and footage. Mr. Valenzuela suggested the library as a solution for that, but that the ONE Archives will gladly archive important historical information, however, such information would become the property of ONE Archives.

ACTION: None. Received and filed.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

6. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Cortes welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Penafiel. He also congratulated all reappointed Commissioners. He thanked Staff Liaison Del Toro for her work. He also reported that the LGBTQ Suicide Monument meeting will be held the following Saturday. He also shared information on Catholic LGBTQ+ groups in WeHo.

Commissioner Egbuniwe thanked welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Penafiel, and shared that he attended art events across the County. He asked to adjourn the meeting in the memory of his 19 year old dog, Sam, who recently passed.

Commissioner Penafiel thanked everyone for welcoming him, and shared that he looked forward to being part of the Commission.

Commissioner Roberts welcomed the newly appointed Commissioner Penafiel.

Commissioner Sotile shared her excitement for the Lesbian and Queer Women's Visibility Week proclamation. She also welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Penafiel. She shared that she attended the Picasso Pets event and met the new cat mayor. She asked to adjourn the meeting in memory of Fire Captain Rebecca Marodi who appears to have been killed by her wife in an instance of intimate partner violence. She also asked to adjourn in memory of Virginia Giuffre and queer activist Jill Sobule.

Vice Chair White reported that he attended various events across the County. He also shared info on new businesses.

Chair Whittington welcomed the new Commissioner Penafiel. And asked to adjourn in memory of Chanel, her dog.

7. ITEMS FROM STAFF

None.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The LGBTQ+ Commission adjourned in memory of Sam, Fire Captain Rebecca Marodi, Virginia Giuffre Jill Sobule, and Chanel, at 9:17pm to its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, June 12, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. to be held in West Hollywood City Hall - 1st Floor Community Meeting Room at 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069.

APPROVED BY A MOTION OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMISSION ON THIS 12th DAY OF June 2025.



Amber Whittington | Commission Chair



Moya Marquez | Recording Secretary