

CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
LESBIAN AND GAY ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES – JANUARY 13, 2005
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. ROLL CALL

The West Hollywood Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board was called to order by Co-chair Ivy Bottini at 7:12 p.m., Thursday, January 13, 2005, in the Community Conference Room at 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood.

Present:

A quorum was present at all times. Jeff Book, staff liaison, was present.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of minutes was carried over to the next meeting, on a motion by Chris Clarkin, seconded by Bill Gordon, and carried.

II. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Sam Lucas, former member of the Advisory Board, thanked board members for their support and updated them on his return to West Hollywood after campaign activities in Florida and elsewhere. He has returned and will be working locally.

III. WEST HOLLYWOOD AS VACATION DESTINATION

As requested by Councilmember Prang, the advisory board proceeded to a roundtable discussion of ways to improve West Hollywood as a vacation destination. Audience members were welcome to join in the discussion.

Dan Berkowitz noted the Tom of Finland Foundation has considered a museum, and has a proposal that would involve about 700 sq. ft. of exhibition space.

Chris Clarkin spoke about increasing the volume of LGBT-related show space, perhaps through the Pacific Design Center and the Avenues of Art and Design.

It was suggested to plan more destination events for the city, which would prompt people to visit for specific purposes. Themed weekends such as Fantasy Fest in Key West, and the gay-themed holidays at Walt Disney World, were examples. This could include air/hotel packaging.

Consideration was given to a lesbian and gay hall of fame, as a way of honoring icons and providing a focal point for visitors. Sam Lucas said he had spoken recently with Brad Burlingame of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, who was also interested in increasing museum space, and G/L themed attractions. Dan Berkowitz recommended involving the bureau at an early stage, since they have funding and contacts.

The board will address this subject at the next meeting, and invite the CVB to attend and provide statistical information on visitors.

Jimmy Palmieri spoke about offering a Gay Key to the city, which would be a 4- or 5-day package of activities and tourism. Ellen DeGeneres's TV show was suggested as a stop on this tour. This could be a Gay Passport, Pink Key, a Lavender License.

Elaine Surrani recommended doing classes and seminars of LGBT interest, not just for tourist involvement, but for people who live nearby as well.

Nadia Sutton spoke about sister cities as a way to reach out for visitors.

Sue Sexton spoke about the importance of projecting an inclusive image for the city, so that people will not feel excluded or uninvited on the basis of gender, color, or background.

Ponsella Gratton spoke about the city's increased diversity over the last 10 to 12 years, and Chris Clarkin said this would be a good topic for a future conversation on the nature of the city in 2020, and how it can be influenced today.

Discussion included how keep the city safe and gay-friendly, perhaps making it a convention destination, which would require a convention-size hotel, keeping the city diverse, and hiring a media company to expand awareness of West Hollywood.

Opportunities for inexpensive travel were discussed.

Historical places in the community, art on the boulevard, the use of the streets for working artists, were discussed. Creation of a map with key locales, hot spots, and historical information; the possibility of a kiosk information system, and comparing what we already have with what we would like to have, were also mentioned.

Jimmy Palmieri spoke about the Alexander Inn in Philadelphia, and a map of gay-friendly spots nearby.

Elisabeth Sandberg spoke about the hospitality of Amsterdam, where people graciously open their homes for soirées and musicales. Chris Clarkin spoke about putting our best foot forward, and perhaps using sensitivity training so people will deal well with visitors.

Ivy Bottini spoke about senior residences such as a new artist colony in Burbank, and the potential for themed buildings of this sort.

Community assets such as the themed flags, Women's Shakespeare Company, Gay Men's Chorus, and Vox Femina were mentioned.

IV. ITEMS FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD

Jimmy Palmieri provided an update on the Foot Locker lawsuit, in which the company has taken responsibility, made a settlement, and provided for periodic sensitivity training for its employees.

He invited visitors to the taping of his show this month, on the topic of Coors.

Sue Sexton invited people to speak at Council regarding the lesbian visibility budget.

Elaine Surrani spoke about an adoption problem dealing with a friend.

Dan Cullinane from Alyson Press will join the youth subcommittee.

V. ITEMS FROM STAFF

City Council has asked the Advisory Board to discuss and recommend a position on the Names Reporting issue that has arisen. The Board will take this up at the next meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Advisory Board adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

The next regular meeting is at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, February 10, 2005, in the Community Conference Room.