

WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES – APRIL 8, 2014
LIBRARY COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Steven L. Davis at 6 p.m., Tuesday, April 8, 2014, in the Community Meeting Room at the West Hollywood Library, 625 N. San Vicente Blvd., West Hollywood.

A. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Lauren Meister.

B. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Rob Bergstein, Ruth Cislowski, Steven L. Davis,
Barbara Meltzer, Andrew Oldershaw, Jimmy Palmieri,
Anne-Marie Williams.

Not Present: None.

A quorum was present at all times. Staff present included: Elizabeth Savage, Director of Human Services and Rent Stabilization; David Giugni, Social Services Manager; Leslie Isenberg, Corri Planck, and Jeff Book. Council Deputy Michelle Rex was also present.

C. **POSTING OF AGENDA**

The secretary reported that notices for the meeting had been posted as required.

D. **PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

Persons desiring to address the meeting were asked to complete a form.

II. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the March 11, 2014, meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Bergstein, seconded by Commissioner Meltzer, with Commissioner Cislowski abstaining.

III. **ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Lauren Meister spoke about data in the Community Survey and about whether responses from subgroups should be reported numerically or in percentages.

Larry Block spoke about special needs funding, which is exhausted almost as quickly as funds are made available, and about the earnings ceiling on persons with disabilities.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. HOUSING WORKS

Mary Kirchen, executive director, and Rudy Salinas, program director, provided an overview of the work of Housing Works, a City-contracted social services agency that works to create affordable and accessible housing for persons with limited resources. The agency also works with people who received housing via Shelter Plus Care vouchers, through the City. The agency provides wrap-around services and makes an open-ended commitment to continue working with people throughout their lives.

Debt reduction and harm reduction are goals which require the agency to build trust with the client, which it pursues by becoming embedded in clients' lives as a source of support in difficult circumstances. The speakers expressed appreciation to the City and to the West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, which works closely with them.

B. RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Leslie Isenberg provided an update on one-time housing assistance grants provided by the City through NCJW, and loans provided by the City through the Jewish Free Loan Association. The housing assistance grants have a \$1,000 maximum and do not require repayment, while the JFLA program is for the amount of one month's rent, and does seek repayment with notices at 60 and 180 days. Seven percent has been repaid, and loaned out again. Funding renewal will be requested for the upcoming City budget.

Elizabeth Savage said she the JFLA program could be modified to provide regular notices of amounts owed. Commissioners discussed this option as well as moving all the funding under the NCJW housing assistance grants.

C. RE-PROGRAMMING RETURNED FUNDS

David Giugni presented a report on \$53,494.36 which is available through contract savings, returned funds, and unspent funds, including funds which had been intended for the contract with Frontiers Foundation. The staff recommendation was to allocate \$25,000 to NCJW for rental assistance, and the remainder of \$28,494.36 for substance abuse treatment through Tarzana Treatment Center and the Substance Abuse Foundation of Long Beach. He also provided an alternative recommendation of reserving \$16,668 from the Frontiers Foundation and conducting a survey of agencies' interest in help with social media, with \$15,000 going to NCJW and the balance of \$21,826.36 going into substance abuse treatment.

Commissioners discussed priorities for expenditures, and their interest in seeking expanded funding from the City for substance abuse treatment. There was lack of consensus on whether expanded substance abuse treatment funding was more likely to result from using some of these funds for that purpose, or using these funds for other purposes.

Commissioner Cislowski moved to adopt the initial staff recommendation. This was seconded for discussion by Commissioner Palmieri, then not adopted, by a vote of 6 to 1, with Commissioner Cislowski voting in the affirmative.

Commissioner Williams moved to set aside \$5,000 for a consultant to assist with social media planning, with \$20,000 going to NCJW for rental assistance, and the balance of \$28,494.36 going into substance abuse treatment. This was seconded by Commissioner Bergstein. Commissioner Cislowski asked for an amendment to provide that if staff finds another way to budget for the social media consultant, that \$5,000 would be divided evenly between NCJW and substance abuse treatment. Commissioners Williams and Bergstein agreed to this amendment, and the motion overall was approved 6 to 1, with all but Commissioner Palmieri voting in the affirmative.

With regard to a draft social media survey provided, Commissioner Oldershaw said he didn't favor sending the survey out in its current form.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Without objection, Item V. B. was taken up before Item V. A.

B. FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAMS

Marina Berkman of Jewish Family Service spoke about programs to help family caregivers, a topic which Commissioner Meltzer has mentioned as an unmet need within the community. She described what is available through JFS at this point, as well as outside groups such as Leeza's Place and Leeza's Care Connection. JFS support is for those providing care to those 60 or older, and to those caring for people with developmental disabilities at any age.

David Giugni said this presentation was intended as a first step in considering how to respond to these needs. Commissioners expressed interest in having more information, and David Giugni said staff would return with an agenda item after gathering more information from other agencies. Commissioner Davis said the subject may need to be addressed by a subcommittee, as with the homeless services report.

Commissioner Cislowski recommended working with the Disabilities and Senior Advisory Boards on this, and Larry Block said the next meeting of those groups is a joint meeting, which will be televised, on April 23.

A. HOMELESS SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE DRAFT SUMMARY REPORT

David Giugni provided the draft summary report of the Homeless Services Subcommittee, which held four meetings that were attended by agency staff, commissioners, law enforcement personnel, and City staff. The subcommittee recommendations included steps toward an Integrated Mental Health Team, and purchase of bedbug-resistant covers and/or mattresses for City-paid beds at PATH.

Members of the Commission discussed the background of the subcommittee's recommendations; a need to emphasize the City's capacity for legislative advocacy; and a need for creative solutions to housing issues.

Members of the subcommittee and all who worked on the report were thanked. A final report will be brought to the Commission at a later meeting.

VI. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Cislowski spoke about the Women's Leadership Conference and Awards event, where Daphne Dennis, former Social Services manager, was recognized. She said the event attracted different participants than many other city-related meetings.

Commissioner Palmieri spoke about the alcohol- and drug-free zone being planned for the Pride festival, which will probably be called #SIZZLE.

Commissioner Oldershaw said it would be good to know ahead of time what agency was going to be speaking at meetings, and the context of why they were asked to do so. He said he does not have a Tuesday conflict this quarter, and that in June he will begin training in clinical psychology at APLA.

Commissioner Bergstein had asked staff to check on data regarding suicide, which he reviewed, and which indicated that occurrences in West Hollywood had actually declined, year over year, from 2011 to 2012, and from 2012 to 2013. He also spoke about the reemergence of meningitis as a health issue and spoke about the need to bring vaccinations, and boosters for those who need them, to the City.

Commissioner Meltzer produced a panel at the Women's Leadership Conference on "Baby Boomers and Beyond," which was moderated by Val Zavala.

Commissioner Davis attended the substance abuse treatment providers meeting. He asked that the Commission meeting be adjourned in memory of Ric Rickles, longtime resident who was very active in civic matters, including the Senior Advisory Board.

VII. ITEMS FROM STAFF

David Giugni spoke about meningitis vaccinations being available through The Spot in West Hollywood and at the AHF Wellness center at Hollywood/Vermont.

David Giugni said staff is proposing that the June 10 meeting be an expanded meeting of up to four hours, to be held at a different site, with a facilitator to help the Commission consider its direction and workplan. There was a request for food if the meeting is going to be that long.

David Giugni said staff is reviewing Lauren Meister's request for data on the Community Survey, and will report back with further information.

Corri Planck said vaccinations at The Spot are for persons without insurance, and that vaccinations for those with insurance are available at the Schrader location of the Gay & Lesbian Center.

Elizabeth Savage said there is an approval process that precedes providing food at public meetings. She spoke about the recent Budget Fair, which provided community members an opportunity to talk with staff about plans and funding. She spoke about the appearance of Mats Wilander, former #1 world tennis player from Sweden, at Plummer Park, as part of the new tennis program. She commended commissioners, agencies, and staff for their work on the Homeless Subcommittee report, and said she will be away next week at Housing California in Sacramento.

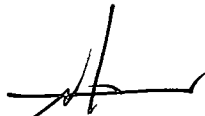
VIII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no additional items from the public.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9 pm, in memory of Ric Rickles.

Signed:



Steven L. Davis, Chair

7-8-14

Date