

CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
LESBIAN AND GAY ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES – DECEMBER 8, 2011
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

A. **ROLL CALL**

The West Hollywood Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board was called to order by Co-Chair Elisabeth Sandberg at 7:05 p.m., Thursday, December 8, 2011, in the Community Conference Room at City Hall, 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood.

Present: Ivy Bottini, Lucas John, Shawn Mimbs, Andrew Oldershaw,
Matt Palazzolo, Enrique Reveles, Elisabeth Sandberg,
Sue Sexton, Ruth Tittle.

Not Present: Creo Bettencourt

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

B. **POSTING OF AGENDA**

Staff reported that the agenda had been posted at City Hall and other locations as required.

C. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved, after being amended to move Item IV.A. above Item III. By unanimous agreement, the Advisory Board approved the necessity of an urgency item regarding Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and President Obama, by finding that the matter had arisen after the posting of the agenda, and that action was required before the next meeting. This was added as Item IV.G

D. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Oct. 13, 2011, meeting were approved on a motion by Enrique Reveles, seconded by Ruth Tittle. The minutes of the Nov. 8, 2011, meeting were approved on a motion by Shawn Mimbs, seconded by Matt Palazzolo.

E. **ADJOURNMENT REQUESTS**

There were no adjournment requests at this time, but at the conclusion of the meeting Sue Sexton requested that the meeting be adjourned in memory of Cassidy "Chase" Vickers, a transgender woman who was killed in Hollywood on Nov. 17, 2011.

II. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Stephanie Harker spoke in opposition to proposed changes in Plummer Park. She said the \$41.3 million project would decimate the history of the park, and that many residents were unaware of the plans until the mitigation plan was announced in August 2011. She objected to tearing down two WPA-era buildings, to the loss of 54 old-growth trees, and to underground parking which would net only 69 additional spaces.

Cathy Blaivas spoke in opposition to proposed changes in Plummer Park. She said an organized group, Protect Plummer Park, has gained 1,500 signatures on online or hard-copy petitions, and has been able to slow down the plans. She said they now want extensive public input before changes to the park are made. She objected to the proposed underground parking, and the loss of history in the park.

In response to a question, Advisory Board members said that they had received a presentation earlier in the year, about the plans for the park.

Jimmy Palmieri, Human Services Commissioner, spoke on four things. (1) He asked members to familiarize themselves with a Nigerian law escalating penalties for homosexuality in that country. (2) He urged members to watch Secretary Clinton's Dec. 6, 2011, remarks about LGBT equality to a United Nations event recognizing International Human Rights Day, held in Geneva. (3) He said testing numbers are down 40% this month at The Spot, an HIV-testing center near the corner of San Vicente and Santa Monica boulevards, likely because parking for the previous library has been eliminated, as well as nearby meter parking. He asked members to talk to City Council about improved signage and directional instructions to the new parking facility at the south end of West Hollywood Park. (4) He expressed concern about the displacement of about 400 people attending 12-step meetings in Plummer Park, and said the City needs to adopt a project of finding appropriate and accessible space for this.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. REPEAL OF PROPOSITION 8

Lester Aponte of Love Honor Cherish, with John Lincoln, a teacher and volunteer for the organization, addressed the Advisory Board about plans to pursue repeal of Proposition 8 (Article I, Section 7.5 of the California Constitution) by initiative in 2012. He said this would proceed on a dual track with the lawsuit seeking to have Proposition 8 declared unconstitutional. He said the group has a new executive director, Eric Harrison, and is seeking to raise up to \$1.5 million to enable paid signature gatherers to place the repeal on the ballot. Signatures must be presented by March 2012 for placement on the Nov. 6, 2012, ballot.

The Advisory Board voted unanimously to amend this agenda item to include the possibility of a recommendation to City Council, finding that the matter had arisen after the posting of the agenda, and that action was required before the next meeting, in light of the March 2012 deadline for signatures.

Lucas John moved to recommend to City Council that they support repeal of Proposition 8 by ballot measure in 2012. This was seconded by Enrique

Reveles, and approved by 8 yes, 1 no, and 1 abstaining.

III. TASK FORCES AND LIAISONS

Sue Sexton spoke about the large crowd that attended the Transgender Day of Remembrance, which was held indoors due to rain.

Ivy Bottini attended a planning meeting on Pride Month activities, and said that plans this year are to form a community steering committee to plan these events, instead of the joint committee with the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission that has done this in the last few years.

Andrew Oldershaw spoke about the first meeting of the Advisory Board's task force on addiction recovery and sexual health, which also included Ruth Tittle, Jimmy Palmieri, and Robert Gamboa. They made plans for topics to cover in the next few weeks.

Ruth Tittle said she couldn't attend the November Human Services Commission meeting, and will miss the December one as well

Sue Sexton attended the Women's Advisory Board, which is working on a workplan. They will hold a women's conference in 2012.

Shawn Mimbs is speaking with Steve Campbell, Facilities and Landscape Manager, about the proposal for improved signage and visibility at entrances to the City. A meeting to pursue this is planned in January.

Matt Palazzolo asked the publicity task force to meet briefly after the adjournment of this meeting, for scheduling.

IV. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

B. MISSION STATEMENT

Andrew Oldershaw spoke about updating the Advisory Board's mission statement, either by proposing a new one to the City Council for inclusion in the bylaws, or by informal agreement about goals and priorities.

Members agreed to review the bylaws and send ideas for mission statement text to Andrew Oldershaw for consideration at the next meeting.

C. ECUADORIAN CLINICS

Sue Sexton discussed reports of clinics in Ecuador that purport to change sexual orientation, and have been reported for violence, abuse, and imprisonment.

On a motion by Matt Palazzolo, seconded by Sue Sexton, the Advisory Board voted unanimously to recommend to City Council that the City send a letter to the Republic of Ecuador condemning these clinics.

D. LA PRIDE

Lucas John said LA Pride should be called West Hollywood Pride because it is located in West Hollywood, and that he was raising this for the purpose of internal dialogue. Members discussed aspects of the topic, including the effect of the name on branding and promotion; whether CSW could place more emphasis on being located in West Hollywood; how to be more collaborative with CSW; and whether a name change would be perceived as down-sizing.

The Advisory Board asked for its next agenda to include working on a collaborative event with CSW.

E. LESBIAN VISIBILITY

Elisabeth Sandberg said the Mazer archive is celebrating its 30th year and the Advisory Board should assist with ideas if it has to relocate. Ivy Bottini said the Werle Building has been removed from the park master plan, so there are no near-term plans to remove it.

Members discussed the relative lack of visibility for lesbian businesses, events, and concerns in the city, as well as possible causes and ways to change this. They spoke about the Lesbian Visibility Committee, which sponsors the Dyke March and is working on health issues.

Ivy Bottini said the Go-Go Appreciation event was an example of the sexism and physical objectification that women see in West Hollywood all the time, and which discourages them from coming here.

Andrew Oldershaw spoke about asking women about their concerns by holding a festival for short digital works.

Matt Palazzolo spoke about doing a 1- or 2-day event on healthy minds, bodies, and body image, for gays and lesbians equally, possibly in partnership with CSW, to break down boundaries of race, sex, and politics. Ivy Bottini said some key participants could be invited.

Jimmy Palmieri spoke about the loss of Little Frida's, the restaurant and social space on Santa Monica Boulevard, which was always busy. He said the new library is a great opportunity to recreate this kind of thing.

Ruth Tittle recommended that the Board invite a member from the Lesbian Visibility Committee to the next meeting, to discuss this topic. The Board placed this on their next agenda.

A task force including Ivy Bottini, Elisabeth Sandberg, Shawn Mimbs, and Sue Sexton was formed to invite that speaker and consider how to increase dialogue with women.

F. ROLE OF LABELS

Ivy Bottini spoke about the diversity of labels used for groups and subgroups in the LGBT community, and said she is concerned because some young people want to do away with the labels, which she said would constitute erasing the community's history and visibility.

James Duke Mason, West Hollywood, said he was concerned by the same thing, including gay men who seek to distance themselves from their gay identity, as if they cannot be part of the gay community and also part of the world at large

Shawn Mimbs said the Advisory Board and the City could lead by using some of these words for groups and subgroups in the names of meetings and events.

Andrew Oldershaw said words are powerful and the community can use them with pride, though he would not recommend using certain words that are perceived as pejorative.

This topic was continued to the next agenda.

G. HILLARY CLINTON AND BARACK OBAMA

On a motion by Matt Palazzolo, seconded by Ivy Bottini, the Advisory Board voted, with 1 nay, to recommend that the City Council write to express appreciation to: (1) Secretary of State Clinton, for her remarks to the U.N. observation of International Human Rights Day in Geneva, where she called on all nations to cease abuse of people on the basis of sexual orientation, and (2) President Obama, for his new memorandum on international initiatives to advance the human rights of LGBT persons.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. WORKPLAN

This item was carried over to the next meeting. Staff will distribute the City Clerk's template for a workplan

VI. ITEMS FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD

Matt Palazzolo spoke about a transgender woman on whom agents of the Bureau of Land Management, in El Centro, CA, reportedly used a Taser. He said he contacted the Bureau and they said they had initiated an internal investigation.

Sue Sexton spoke about moving forward with a joint session with the Transgender Advisory Board. Sue Sexton, Andrew Oldershaw, and Matt Palazzolo will work on this.

Sue Sexton said the C.I.T.Y.x1 Thanksgiving event was very successful, and their next event, the Tamale Jam, is coming up on Saturday, Dec. 17.

Shawn Mimbs and Sue Sexton spoke about Texas Gov. Rick Perry's campaign video on the inclusion of gays and lesbians the military.

Ivy Bottini attended a short film program at the Mazer archive, and drew attention to a film called There's No Hole in My Head, concerning lesbians with Alzheimer's.

Elisabeth Sandberg said the LA Opera is performing an abridged version of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* in the West Hollywood Council Chambers at 7 p.m. this Saturday, and 2 p.m. this Sunday. She is now a board member and hospitality chair for the Friends of the Library.

VII. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Staff mentioned the blog Super-Mattachine, written by Stephen Ira, student at Sarah Lawrence College, who is the transgender son of Warren Beatty and Annette Bening.

VIII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Rick Watts spoke about the C.I.T.Y.x1 Thanksgiving event, which was appreciated, and the upcoming Tamale Jam. He recommended that the City include flags which have flown over the U.S. Capitol in presentations to Rainbow Key recipients.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m. in memory of Cassidy "Chase" Vickers, a transgender woman who was killed in Hollywood on Nov. 17, 2011.

Signed:

Elisabeth Sandberg, Co-Chair

Matt Palazzolo, Co-Chair