

WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES – APRIL 13, 2004
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL

I. CALL TO ORDER

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Ruth Cislowski at 6:20 p.m., Tuesday, April 13, 2004, in the Community Conference Room at 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Henry.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Ruth Cislowski, Steven Davis, Dr. Bill Griffin, Charles Henry.
Excused: Ponsella Gratton, Peter Mackler, Shirley Roberts.

A quorum was present at all times. Staff present included Lloyd R. Long, Director of Human Services; Daphne Dennis, Social Services Administrator; David Giugni, Leslie Isenberg, and Jeff Book.

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 request form.

II. MINUTES

The minutes for March 9, 2004, were approved, on a motion by Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Henry.

III. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

1. Laura Wilhelm of Accessible Design & Consulting, Inc., spoke about an eight-part lecture series on home redesign to facilitate independent living, which will be held beginning May 1 at the company's showroom at 1623 Stanford St. in Santa Monica.

2. Norman Chramoff spoke about the proposed senior housing project at 1343 Laurel Ave., which will be considered by City Council on May 3. He encouraged commissioners to support the project and to speak in favor of it at the council meeting.
3. Debbie Kodash, a Disabilities Advisory Board member, spoke about the importance of taking preventive measures against purse snatchers and pickpockets, including safety-minded choices in clothing and other personal items.
4. Quentin O'Brien, director of health and mental health services at the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center, spoke about the clinic's recent discovery that several hundred patients with syphilis had received Bicillin C-R, which is not the preferred treatment, instead of Bicillin L-A, which is. The clinic is in the process of notifying the affected patients and arranging for re-treatment, as well as studying internal procedures to discover how the error occurred and how it can be prevented from happening again.

How many of the affected patients can be contacted and re-treated is not yet known. A broader review of drug selection and treatment procedures is underway, to assure that similar errors have not occurred. The clinic will be working with city staff regarding any effects the temporary redeployment of employees and resources may have on the agency's city contracts, as well as identifying how many of the affected patients are West Hollywood community members. Commissioners asked for the Center to return in a few months with an update on how the re-treatment process is going.

5. Tripp Mills of WeHo Life provided the most recent condom distribution report, and noted that condom distribution is up about 10 percent this year.

Commissioner Davis moved to table Items IV-A and IV-B. This was seconded by Commissioner Griffin. After discussion, the motion and second were withdrawn, and without objection Item V-A was taken up next.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. JOINT STUDY SESSION ON SOCIAL SERVICES PRIORITIES

The Commission had invited the chairs of the Senior Advisory Board, Disabilities Advisory Board, Women's Advisory Board, Russian Advisory Board, and Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board to provide input on social services priorities.

1. On behalf of the Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board, co-chair Jeff Yarbrough recommended that the Commission look into gay and lesbian elder housing (particularly the project being developed at Selma and Ivar); lesbian health screenings; and an anti-bullying educational program in local schools. The Gay & Lesbian Center was mentioned as a possible candidate for reduction.

Commissioner Cislowski said the commission could not directly fund housing, and Jeff Yarbrough said there were many services that would be provided at gay and lesbian elder housing that might be appropriate for public funding.

Commissioners Cislowski and Henry explored the reasons for mentioning the Center as a possible source of reductions. Jeff Yarbrough said it was not based on any perception of over-funding of a particular service, but only because LGAB, in light of the city budget situation, wanted to act responsibly in not recommending new expenditures without identifying potential cuts as well. Commissioner Henry said he appreciated LGAB's effort.

2. On behalf of the Disabilities Advisory Board, chair Norman Cherner said that DAB members felt that whether city-funded projects are accessible to persons with disabilities should receive more consideration. He said DAB members regard Project Angel Food, JFS job services, PAWS, city-funded transportation programs, and the city's Human Services Department as sources of exemplary services to persons with disabilities.

Among the services greatly needed, he said, are reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities by businesses and rental properties; retrofitting of rental units to accommodate particular disabilities; safe and punctual public transportation; affordable health care and housing; greater safety on city streets and sidewalks; a broader definition of disabilities, and a greater effort at including persons with disabilities in all functions. He identified Access transportation services as an agency which needed to improve its responsiveness to persons with disabilities, or lose its public contracts.

Commissioner Cislowski asked for more information about city-funded agencies and their accessibility to persons with disabilities. Commissioner Henry asked DAB to consider documenting the needs of persons with disabilities, in terms of what is actually being experienced, as a step toward identifying ways the city can respond.

3. On behalf of the Senior Advisory Board, Ric Rickles said SAB members are concerned with the rising cost of living, including housing, food, and transportation, as well as greater security while moving through the city, including the use of sidewalks for inappropriate vehicles. As a particular item, he said there was interest in a handyworker-type program that would help seniors remain in place.

Regarding Access transportation, Ric Rickles said he had heard stories of bad experiences with them, but had personally had good experiences with them. He said SAB members are very concerned with proposed changes in the federal Section 8 program; that there is a need for more affordable parking at Cedars-Sinai medical offices; and there has always been interest in having an ombuds-person focused on senior concerns.

He said notices and press releases about public meetings would be improved by including information on how public transportation can be used to reach the meeting site. He said facilitating seniors in having part-time paid work might help by giving seniors more resources to use.

There was a brief recess.

When the meeting resumed, commissioners thanked the advisory board chairs for their input, and asked for letters of appreciation to be sent. The chairs of the Russian and Women's Advisory Boards will be advised of the opportunity for public comment at upcoming meetings.

Commissioner Cislowksi said that after the new social services contracts are finalized, she would like to explore working with the advisory boards on several key areas of mutual interest. She asked for this to be brought back on a future agenda, after the funding process is over.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. SOCIAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH AIDS PROJECT LOS ANGELES.

Daphne Dennis described the social marketing campaign included in this year's contract with APLA, which was intended to provide a link to mental health services and benefits advocacy. In the course of evaluating the project, staff reached a determination that although the product, including distribution of some 5,000 CD-ROMs, was satisfactory, it did not warrant the second round of funding that was contemplated in the original contract, because it never really achieved the link between product and mental health services. With regard to \$78,000 of contracted services with APLA, staff recommended that \$12,000 be used on a billboard campaign and website maintenance for the already-developed social marketing campaign, and that the remaining \$66,000 be reallocated to the dental program, where it would fund 300 procedures. Lee Klosinski of APLA spoke about their evaluation of the marketing campaign, and their interest in the proposed reallocation.

Commissioner Henry moved to support the reallocation of \$66,000 to dental services, in light of the high level of need for the services, and the possible use of mobile equipment to provide the West Hollywood community easier access to the services. This was seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and approved, 4 to 0.

Commissioner Davis expressed some reservations about the change.

B. REPROGRAMMING SOCIAL SERVICES CONTRACT SAVINGS.

With regard to \$23,472 identified as contract savings from 2002-2003, Daphne

Dennis said staff would like to suggest a program that would provide one-time services along the lines of a Handyworker program, to provide specific help in unique situations. JFS has a few small grants that help provide such services today. Susan Alexman of JFS described these funds and how they are used, and the need for this type of assistance.

Commissioner Davis asked if all agencies are notified when there are funds that may be reprogrammed, and Daphne Dennis said this had been handled a variety of ways in the past, including funding a specific need, notifying agencies by letter, and issuing new RFPs. Commissioner Cislowksi said she was supportive of the types of services being suggested, and also wanted to be fair to all agencies that may want to be considered for the funds.

Commissioner Henry moved to support the recommendation, which provides that staff will research the possibilities and return with a more specific item in the near future, and said he did so with the understanding that a standard protocol for dealing with funds that may be available for reprogramming will be developed. This was seconded by Commissioner Davis, and approved 4 to 0.

VI. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

Steven Davis attended the chairs meeting, where there was discussion of the Laurel senior housing project, and of the CSW event.

VII. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Lloyd Long noted that the inauguration of the next mayor is scheduled for Monday, April 26.

VIII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no additional items from the public.

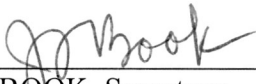
IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Minutes approved May 11, 2004



RUTH CISLOWSKI, Chair



JEFF BOOK, Secretary