

**WEST HOLLYWOOD
DISABILITIES ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
March 28, 2007**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-Chairperson Tom Pavich called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairperson Suzanne Dietrich led the pledge.

3. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Alan Bernstein, Suzanne Dietrich, Tom Pavich, Joel Ring, Steven Sawyer, and Rick Watts

ABSENT: Debra Chodash

STAFF PRESENT: Craig Rhea and Kim Patterson

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The agenda for March 28, 2007 was approved after agreement to move Item 8A ahead of Item 7.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes for February 28, 2007 were approved.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Michael Arrigo, West Hollywood resident and former member of the DAB, informed the Board of the Virtual Focus Group which is part of a research project of the University of Illinois. He also announced that U.S. paper currency is in violation of the ADA and that new paper money will be accessible for the visually-impaired. More information is available at www.money4all.info.

Mandy Jennings, Los Angeles resident and Project Coordinator for The Coalition for Smoke-Free Living in West Hollywood, announced that there will be a meeting tomorrow at Plummer Park about smoke-free living. There is a survey of people living in apartments in regard to smoke drift.

Debra Weiss, West Hollywood resident, also with Smoke-Free Living, requested that the DAB agendize this topic for a future meeting. This was approved by the Board.

7. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Craig Rhea announced several upcoming activities:

- A) Senior Health Fair on May 16 from 10am to 2pm at the Community Center in Plummer Park. Chairperson Dietrich and Rick Watts will staff the DAB booth.
- B) SOVA Food Drive during the month of April.

- C) CONNECT program – Leslie Isenberg is working on publicizing this program on the City's cable channel scroll, cable TV's Senior Buzz, and a mailing of English & Russian flyers to the City's bus pass renewal mailing list.
- D) The Social Club for People with Disabilities meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month at Plummer Park. Contact Inna Khariton at (323) 851-8202 x 108 for more information.
- E) The West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce will hold a Job Fair on Wednesday, April 4, from 10am to 2pm at Plummer Park.
- F) Kids' Fair on Saturday, April 21, from 11am to 3pm at West Hollywood Park.
- G) Installation of new Mayor John Duran at the City Council meeting on May 7th.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

A. RENT STABILIZATION ORDINANCE -

Staff Attorney Stephen Lewis made a presentation about the City's Rent Stabilization Ordinance. At the City's inception, the housing shortage in West Hollywood created runaway rent increases. In response, the City enacted the Rent Stabilization Ordinance and exempted new construction in the hope that developers would be inclined to build new units, thereby easing the housing shortage. In the 1990's, the State adopted the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act, which created vacancy decontrol and locked in any existing exemptions. Jeff Skorneck, Housing Manager, said that the City's Housing Summit recommended educating landlords about the benefits of Section 8 housing, which may include higher subsidized rents for their rental units. Mr. Bernstein suggested that economic incentives be offered to owners of older buildings to make their units more accessible for people with disabilities. The DAB moved to agendize this discussion for the next meeting.

B. WEST HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION PROPOSED PROJECT –

Ric Abramson and Ann Ehrenthal of the WHCHC and Jeff Skorneck, Housing Manager, updated the DAB on the proposed project at Sierra Bonita & Santa Monica Boulevard which will provide 42 units of affordable housing for people with disabilities along with street-level office space, hopefully for a non-profit agency. The project has been unanimously approved by the Planning Commission and will be presented to the City Council on May 21st for financing considerations and for approval of the long-term property lease. Ms. Ehrenthal noted that they are looking at regulatory agreements for this building that will last sixty years. Suzanne Dietrich expressed concerns about the project's proposed landscaping (particularly the bamboo), upkeep of the building, reduced parking, and the installation of reinforced glass for noise reduction.

C. DISABILITY SERVICE AWARDS –

Mr. Sawyer presented a draft of the revised nomination form for review by the Board. The DAB discussed the Rules & Procedures for the Disability Service Awards. Chairperson Dietrich moved to strike #5 of the Rules & Procedures

which prevents Board members from voting in a category in which they have made a nomination. Vice-Chair Pavich broke the tie vote in favor of the motion, so #5 will be eliminated. Further discussion, including whether there should be a separate category for media and whether there should be a monetary award, was tabled until the June meeting.

D. HEDGES AND SIDEWALK ACCESSIBILITY –

This item was tabled due to lack of time.

E. SOCIAL SERVICES URGENT NEEDS PROGRAM –

This item was tabled due to lack of time.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Robert Mack Gordon, an out-of-state attorney, actor and writer, raised concerns about crosswalk safety in West Hollywood.

11. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Chairperson Dietrich asked for the Board's input on the issue of vegetation at the Sierra Bonita project. She is concerned about the use of bamboo. She also drew the DAB's attention to an article in the LA Independent that featured captioner Sandy Eisenberg. She asked that tonight's Board meeting adjourn in memory of former DAB member Lon Buisch who passed away on March 15th.

Mr. Sawyer expressed disappointment that the WHCHC didn't take DAB members' comments into account in regard to the Sierra Bonita project.

Mr. Watts noted that the WHCHC representatives mentioned that they had received comments and feedback from approximately 70 to 80 community members regarding the Sierra Bonita project and that the project had changed because of that.

Mr. Bernstein noted Lon Buisch's passing and expressed thanks for his contribution to the Board.

Mr. Ring reported that the issue of pedestrian safety is still a critical one and that just today he was almost hit in a crosswalk at Crescent Heights. Mr. Rhea said that City Transportation Manager Terri Slimmer is planning on attending DAB's May 23rd meeting to address crosswalk safety issues. In addition, Ms. Slimmer welcomes calls from or will schedule individual meetings with DAB members to discuss these issues.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

Vice-Chair Pavich adjourned the Disabilities Advisory Board meeting at 8:32 p.m. in memory of Lon Buisch. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 25, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Conference Room of City Hall, 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA.

Tom Pavich

Vice-Chairperson – Tom Pavich