

**WEST HOLLYWOOD  
DISABILITIES ADVISORY BOARD  
MINUTES  
October 22, 2008**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Tom Pavich called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Debra Chodash led the pledge.

**3. ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Debra Chodash, Suzanne Dietrich, Tom Pavich, Steven Sawyer,  
Link Schrader, Anna Swett, and Rick Watts

**ABSENT:** Joel Ring

**STAFF PRESENT:** Daphne Dennis, Craig Rhea and Kim Patterson

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda for October 22, 2008 was approved.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes for September 24, 2008 were approved.

**6. WELCOME BY MAYOR**

Mayor Jeffrey Prang thanked the DAB for their work and spoke about the need to ensure that people living with disabilities are never treated as second class citizens.

**7. PERFORMANCE BY GAY MEN'S CHORUS OF L.A.**

The Chorus, led by conductor Dominic Gregorio, sang two wonderful songs for the very appreciative audience. DAB member Steven Sawyer participated.

**8. 2008 DISABILITY SERVICE AWARDS**

Mayor Pro Tempore Abbe Land and DAB Vice-Chair Link Schrader presented the Business Award to Fountain Day School.

Councilmember Sal Guarriello and DAB member Rick Watts presented the Non-Profit Award to the Volunteers on Patrol Program of the West Hollywood Sheriff's Department.

Mayor Jeffrey Prang and DAB member Anna Swett presented the Individual Award to Anny Semonco.

**9. REMARKS BY BOARD CHAIR**

Chair Tom Pavich spoke about the DAB's accomplishments as well as the goals of addressing issues such as affordable housing, adaptation, and accessibility.

## **10. REMARKS BY BOARD MEMBERS**

Steven Sawyer spoke about the ways in which the Gay Men's Chorus has helped him participate, given his visual impairment, and he encouraged everyone to find ways to join in the work of the Board.

Link Schrader encouraged the use of "People First", thereby putting people's different abilities and accessibility needs after the acknowledgement that we are all people.

Anna Swett thanked those who have helped her through the challenges of a mental disability and spoke of her 15 years of volunteering that has provided her with an education.

Suzanne Dietrich thanked everyone for participating and acknowledged the difficulties of bipolar disorder.

Rick Watts quoted an inspiring poem by Seamus Heaney and thanked the City for helping him through 24 years as someone who is HIV+.

Debra Chodash thanked the many people who have assisted her with the challenges of cerebral palsy as she has served on the DAB.

## **11. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Lee Walkup spoke about the need for a signal at 8200 Santa Monica Blvd. for crosswalk safety.

Alexander Ghaffari asked for the Board's support of an amended version of the Steve Grissom Relief Fund Bill to provide funds for people who contracted HIV through blood transfusions.

Sam Borelli, Public Safety Commissioner, thanked the DAB for their excellent choices for the awards and encouraged them to continue their good work.

Michael Arrigo, former DAB member, encouraged people to drive more slowly and safely, especially on Fountain Avenue where his dog was hit by a car last week.

Barbara Hamaker, Planning Commissioner, member of the PAC, and now an employee of the West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, described the Sierra Bonita project with 42 affordable units for people with special needs.

Harriet Ikinson, who has two disabled children at Fountain Day School, spoke about HAPPI (Handicapped Artists, Performers and Partners, Inc.) which will have a fundraiser on Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> at Pacific Palisades Theater.

Jeanne Dobrin, 30-year disabled resident of West Hollywood, spoke about Proposition 2 on the November 4<sup>th</sup> ballot and encouraged people to participate in fighting for rental housing, not condos, in West Hollywood.

## **12. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Nancy Foster, First Lady of Long Beach**

Mrs. Foster, wife of Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster, described the agonizing episodes of bipolar disorder that she's experienced and the long battle she waged to finally end the mental pain. She advised people to keep taking their prescribed medications if they have a chemical imbalance. She thanked the community for coming forward to support her and share their own stories after she spoke publicly about her situation.

## **13. ITEMS FROM STAFF**

Craig Rhea made the following announcements:

- The City has an array of Halloween events leading up to the Halloween Carnival on 10/31/08. Regular City Line service will end at noon on 10/31. The City Line will run along Santa Monica Blvd. between Fuller and La Cienega from 5:30pm to 1:30am.
- A General Plan Community Meeting will be held on Saturday, 11/8, at 10am in Fiesta Hall at Plummer Park.
- Access Services will have a Community Meeting on Saturday, 11/8, at 10am at Plummer Park.
- The City's Veteran's Day Event will be held at 11am on Tuesday, 11/11, at the Veterans' Memorial, Santa Monica & Holloway Triangle.
- There is currently one vacancy on the DAB. Those interested in applying should contact the City Clerk's office.

## **14. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/LIAISON UPDATES**

DAB members thanked the guest speaker, staff and the audience for their participation, and encouraged people to vote on November 4.

## **15. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jeanne Dobrin recommended that people not bring their pets to the Halloween festivities.

## **16. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Pavich adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m. to the reception in the back of the auditorium. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 3, 2008 at 6:00pm in the first floor Community Conference Room at City Hall, 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard., West Hollywood, CA 90069.

*Tom Pavich*

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Chairperson – Tom Pavich