

WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES – DECEMBER 11, 2001
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. CALL TO ORDER

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Peter Mackler at 6:06 p.m., Tuesday, December 11, 2001, in the Community Conference Room of City Hall, 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood.

B. ROLL CALL

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner DeCrescenzo.

Present: Ruth Cislowski, John D’Amico, Steven Davis,
Teresa DeCrescenzo, Ponsella Gratton, Dr. Bill Griffin,
Peter Mackler

Excused: none

Absent: none

A quorum was present at all times. Staff present included Lloyd R. Long, Director of Human Services; Daphne Dennis, Social Services Administrator; Tom West, David Giugni, 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

Minutes of the November 13, 2001, meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Griffin. The vote was 6-0, with Commissioner DeCrescenzo abstaining due to absence from that meeting.

A discussion of by-laws was added to the agenda as Item IV. D.

The incoming chair of the commission, Peter Mackler, presented a plaque to the outgoing chair, Teresa DeCrescenzo, with the thanks of the commission for an outstanding year.

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

B. JFS COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES CENTER

Vivian Sauer, associate executive director of JFS, and Susan Alexman, director of the comprehensive services center, spoke about their programs and attendance. Their case management program is full; they have a HUD visitation program which began last year; and they have a teen specialist working with youth to express themselves through art.

They said they were concerned with the myth that the comprehensive services center was exclusively for residents of Russian heritage, and said they are doing additional outreach and education to let the entire community know what is available. They are concerned by rising costs, which have provoked residents to move out of the city, and by issues such as non-renewal of Section 8 housing.

Commissioner Gratton clarified that 55 is the age at which services are available to seniors.

Commissioner Mackler asked about their financial relationship with the Jewish Federation. Vivian Sauer said there is no direct Federation funding to the West Hollywood programs, and therefore cuts in Federation spending will not affect local programs in the way it is affecting the Jewish community centers.

C. JFS PARTNERS

The director of Partners ADHC discussed their medical, social, and recreational program, which has been in operation since 1994. The program continues to be recognized as a model, with the California Department of Aging being one recent group to send a committee to learn about Partners as a possible guide for other cities and areas.

Commissioner DeCrescenzo asked if Partners has a contract with the county department of mental health. The director said not at this time, but will look into it.

Regarding JCCA cutbacks, Vivian Sauer said JFS is going to pick up SOVA Food Pantry as a project. The JCC on Olympic Boulevard is scheduled to close, but not until June 2002.

Commissioner Cislowski asked if it were true that some for-profit centers are paying clients to attend their programs, and the director said she understood it to be true, because the programs can bill Medicare for the clients' attendance, and rebate some of the payment to the client. The topic is under investigation.

Commissioner Davis asked if the program needed medical supplies such as walkers, wheelchairs, etc., and the director said it did.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. STRATEGIC PLAN WORKSHOP

Daphne Dennis spoke on workshops that were held in October, and how their information is being developed into a revised strategic plan for the city.

B. RETREAT

Daphne Dennis reported that staff is looking to March as a time for a Commission retreat, with a facilitator, probably lasting from noon to 4 p.m. on a Saturday. Further information will be forthcoming.

C. LIAISONS

The Commission designated the following liaisons:

- Chairs Meeting -- Peter Mackler
- Senior Advisory Board -- Steven Davis
- Disabilities Advisory Board -- (Daphne Dennis, staff)
- Lesbian & Gay Advisory Board -- (Jeff Book, staff)
- Public Facilities Commission -- (Sam Baxter, staff)
- PAC/Project Unity -- Ponsella Gratton
- Gateway Project -- Bill Griffin

D. BYLAWS

The Commission discussed the possibility of formalizing an understanding that under normal circumstances, vice chairs would become chair in the year following their service as vice chair. After discussion of possible exceptions and situations that could arise, the consensus was to leave the policy as a common understanding among commissioners, without mandating it as part of the bylaws.

The Commission requested that items from the public be listed at the beginning and the end of the meeting.

V. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION

Commissioner Mackler commented on the International World AIDS Day program on December 1, and thanked Tom West for organizing this. Tom West said that awards were presented to unsung heroes at the event, including people like Tripp Mills.

Commissioner Mackler reported the most recent chairs' meeting was well run by City Manager Arevalo. The meetings are going to have themes, so that each one will enable attendees to learn more about a particular area of city activity. Human Services is planned for the fourth Tuesday in May.

VI. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Daphne Dennis introduced David Giugni, a new member of the Social Services staff.

Tom West noted that New Year's Eve will be the fourth annual Club Freedom event, a no-alcohol, no-drug party at West Hollywood Park which has increased in popularity and attendance each year.

Regarding the Commission's vote last month to recommend funding for STORE, Daphne Dennis reported that by the time the item was presented to Council, it was no longer an urgency item, because of the Center's statement that it would provide funding, and its signature on a lease. Council was informed of the Commission action. More information will be provided to Council in January regarding the broader program at the Store site, amid economic challenges to the city budget.

VII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Tripp Mills provided the monthly condom report from WeHo Cares.

III. A. ALTERNATIVE LIVING

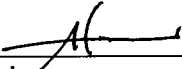
Janet Witkin provided a report from Alternative Living from the Aging, which was postponed from earlier in the meeting due to a fire in an ALA facility today. She said that given the cost of living in the city, where an average single costs \$985 and an average one-bedroom apartment \$1239, ALA is a cost-effective program. The challenge is persuading people to share accommodations, and the reality that not all people are appropriate for shared housing.

Commissioner Cislowski asked what happens with those who cannot be helped, and Janet Witkin said they are referred to other affordable housing alternatives.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. in memory of Paul Stark and Dorothy Kirby. The next regular meeting is at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 8, 2002.

Signed: _____



Steven L. Davis

Attest:

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