

**WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES – MAY 11, 1999**  
**COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. CALL TO ORDER

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Chairperson Steven Davis at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 11, 1999, in the Community Conference Room at City Hall, 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Steven Davis, Teresa DeCrescenzo, Bob Graney, Pamela Komac,  
John Nieto, Shirley Roberts, Renée Rosenfeld  
Excused: none  
Absent: none

A quorum was present at all times. Staff present included Lloyd Long, Director of Human Services; Daphne Dennis, Social Services Administrator; Tom West, Tamar Springer, Diane Kahn-Epstein, and Jeff Book. Mayor Pro Tempore Jeffrey Prang and Council Deputy Howard Jacobs were also present.

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. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Komac asked for the record to reflect that at the April 20, 1999, meeting, she had inquired about animal control, and about how certain duties were transferred from the Human Services Commission to the Public Facilities Commission, and asked that these items be on this agenda.

With this amplification, the minutes of the April 20, 1999, meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner DeCrescenzo, seconded by Commissioner Graney.

### III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

David Mason Eichman, chair of the Transportation Commission, notified the Commission that two years of extensive improvements to Santa Monica Boulevard will begin in July. The extensive changes will include new paving, sidewalks, trees, and design. At times, traffic will be reduced to a single lane while the alterations are made. He asked Commissioners to encourage the public to contact the staff of the Transportation Department if they have questions or problems.

#### A. DISCUSSION WITH MAYOR PRO TEMPORE PRANG

Mayor Pro Tempore Prang addressed the Commission about his recent negotiations with AIDS Healthcare Foundation, which had been circulating petition initiatives regarding condom distribution, parking regulations, and the social services funding process. The initiatives were placed on hold so that Council could address these matters legislatively. On May 3, Council (1) declared West Hollywood a “Safer Sex City Dedicated to HIV Prevention Education,” and directed Public Information staff to publicize the City’s safer-sex programs; (2) directed staff to return with a proposal to expand the current condom distribution program and research funding mechanisms; (3) directed staff to review the social services funding process, soliciting input from the agencies, stakeholders, and the Human Services Commission, and return to the Council with recommendations; and (4) directed Community Development staff and the Planning Commission to review parking regulations to see if some flexibility can be allowed for social services agencies, while still protecting against encroachment into residential neighborhoods.

Mayor Pro Tempore Prang said that these proposals were always intended for review and discussion with staff and Human Services Commissioners, and that they had been taken first to Council because that was necessary in order to place the initiative process on hold.

Commissioner Roberts asked whether, if the Commission recommends additional condom distribution, additional funding might be available, and Mayor Pro Tempore Prang said that it might.

Mayor Pro Tempore Prang introduced his deputy, Howard Jacobs, who worked on the negotiations with AHF. Mr. Jacobs encouraged the Commission to adopt a timeline and schedule meetings so that recommendations can be returned to the Council by August or September.

With regard to condom distribution, Mr. Jacobs referred Commissioners to an article indicating a rise in “barebacking,” or unprotected sex. He said the current distribution program has not met the demand, that its condoms are not convenient-

ly available, and that a number of high-risk establishments are not participating. He encouraged consideration of establishing a requirement that establishments serving alcohol be required to make condoms available, and display signs indicating that alcohol impairs judgment and increases the risk of HIV transmission.

Regarding the social services funding process, Mr. Jacobs referred Commissioners to the grading systems used by the cities of Los Angeles and Santa Monica, recommended the use of clear criteria, supported a cost-of-living adjustment for agencies that are meeting expectations in the second year of the two-year funding cycle, and endorsed formation of an independent committee, appointed by the Human Services Department director, to review and grade social services funding proposals prior to adoption of funding recommendations by the Commission.

Commissioner Graney asked how the topics of condom distribution and the social services funding process came to be linked, and Mayor Pro Tempore Prang said it was an element of the compromise he negotiated with AHF. Mr. Prang said the Commission could deal with them separately or together.

Regarding mandatory signage and distribution of condoms, Commissioner Graney asked whether this had been reviewed with the City Attorney. Mayor Pro Tempore Prang said that the City Attorney had raised some concerns about this area, and that this would need to be reviewed.

Commissioner Graney said he agrees with stopping the initiative process on these items, but that the way this was done, with items being taken directly to the Council, was offensive to the Commission. He said he felt the City had rolled over to the demands of AHF, and then dumped the matter in the Commission's lap to fix.

Commissioner Roberts said she appreciates the work Mr. Prang and Mr. Jacobs have done on the proposals, but is concerned that the City is responding so extensively to the preferences of one agency, when there is an ongoing process of determining and evaluating community needs, and of finding the best ways to meet those needs. As for an independent committee to review social services proposals, Commissioner Roberts said that is already the role of the Human Services Commission, which is composed of independent citizens.

Commissioner DeCrescenzo applauded the work done by Mr. Prang and Mr. Jacobs on the proposals, and said that while the democratic process opens the door to initiatives on all sorts of subjects, she is glad to see a compromise achieved rather than subject the City to the costs and procedures of conducting a referendum. She agreed that current condom distribution efforts are inadequate and need to be reviewed, and said that she continues to have methodological concerns about the software used to evaluate community needs.

Commissioner Davis, as chair and dean of the Commission, said he has long supported the use of incentives and rewards for agencies which meet and exceed their goals, and that he looks forward to working with all the Council offices as the Commission considers these matters.

As a point of information, Commissioner Graney inquired about possible conflicts of interest involving two members of the Commission who are employed by AHF. Lloyd Long said that under ethics rules, these two Commissioners are able to participate in determination of overall social services policies and the general set-up of the funding process, but cannot participate in funding decisions which might redound to their employer's financial benefit, such as the amount of funding committed to specific agencies in the same service category as their employer.

In closing, Mayor Pro Tempore Prang said that if there are areas or issues not being properly addressed, it is the responsibility of the Commission to bring these to the attention of the Council, and that he is looking forward to the meetings and recommendations the Commission will develop in response to these current proposals.

B. SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING PROCESS AND CONDOM DISTRIBUTION

Colleen Johnson of APLA said they support the consensus recommendation made by the Council at its May 3 meeting, and do not regard the initiative process as a good way to go about making public policy on HIV/AIDS. She said APLA supports the Commission's discretion in designing the best process for choosing which social services to sponsor, and which agencies can best provide them.

Cesar Portillo, government affairs director for AHF, commended the Council and the Commission for their work, and said the outcome of the discussions between AHF and Councilmembers Heilman, Koretz, and Prang creates an opportunity for the Commission to take very positive steps on condom distribution. He encouraged the Commission to act quickly on the social services funding process, as this would increase confidence.

The Commission agreed to meet twice in June and twice in July to cover the topics presented by the Council's actions. The actual timing of the meetings will be determined after Commissioners review their schedules. The regularly scheduled June 8 meeting must be rescheduled anyhow, due to a conflict with the runoff election.

C. PROJECT NEW HOPE

Christy Byrne-Yates described this agency's work providing transitional and career training services for persons living with AIDS, many of whom are

confronting the possibility of returning to work as a result of new treatment protocols. She discussed the agency's work in advocacy and career development.

Commissioner Davis asked that this agency be considered for a site visit, perhaps in September.

#### IV. NEW BUSINESS

##### A. SOCIAL SERVICES MID-YEAR REPORTS

Daphne Dennis presented the mid-year report from the social services contract agencies.

The Commission welcomed comments from agency representatives. Those addressing the Commission were: Joan Negash (formerly Lindell), of Jewish Family Services; Vivian Sauer of Jewish Family Services; Lynn Easley of Women Helping Women, along with WHW client Rosa Ochoa and her daughter Jeanette Ochoa; Margaret Hennessy of Bet Tzedek Legal Services; Marc Hauptert of Los Angeles Shanti Foundation; Dennis Melonas of Child & Family Services (West Hollywood Pre-School); Carol Herrault of Light Up a Library (NCJW); Angie Cooper of JVS; Terri Ford of AHF; Joel Hecht of DRS; Ellen Eidem of Los Angeles Free Clinic; Colleen Johnson of APLA; Helen Levin of Russian Community Center; Karen Blakeney of the Gay and Lesbian Center; Wendy Douglas of the Gay & Lesbian Center's STD program; Karen Mall of WeHo Lounge; and Ged Kenslea.

Daphne Dennis said she felt the agencies' responses to questions 2 and 5 were particularly helpful, and Commissioner Davis drew attention to question 4, regarding publications. The social services program guide is currently being updated.

Commissioner Davis expressed concern that Aid for AIDS is entirely closed during its lunch period, and Tom West said he would contact the agency to raise that matter.

The report was received and filed.

#### V. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

##### A. OUTREACH TO GAY AND LESBIAN RUSSIANS

Commissioner Rosenfeld discussed an annual budget item for outreach to gay and lesbian Russians, and said she will put staff in touch with a contact in that community. She also asked about possibilities for reconvening the working group that discussed these issues with the Gay & Lesbian Advisory Council in 1995,

for revisiting the scope of services for the Gay & Lesbian Center's outreach program and encouraging them to work more closely with the Russian Community Center, and for integrating these efforts with Project Unity.

On a motion by Commissioner Rosenfeld, seconded by Commissioner Nieto, and with no objections, the Commission recommended to Council allocation of \$750.00 per year, from funds already budgeted for Human Services, for outreach efforts to gay and lesbian Russians.

B. LIAISONS

1. CHAIRS MEETING

There was no additional report.

2. CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE FOR PRIDE & EQUITY

Bob Graney distributed materials from CAPE and related issues, including the "No on Knight" coalition, the domestic partner tax equity bill, and others.

3. DISABILITES ADVISORY BOARD

There was no additional report.

4. LESBIAN & GAY ADVISORY BOARD

There was no additional report.

5. SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD

There was no additional report.

Since new members of the Commission are likely to be appointed prior to the next meeting, Commissioner Davis asked for plaques to be prepared for the retiring Commissioners. Also, since new members will be present, Commissioner Davis asked that reorganization of the subcommittees and liaisons be scheduled for the next meeting as well.

Commissioner Nieto expressed his appreciation for having served on the Commission for many years, and thanked the staff for their cooperation and work. Commssioner Rosenfeld said she continues to be highly interested in the issues she has pursued as a Commissioner, and regrets that her schedule is making it impossible for her to continue on the Commission at this time.

VI. ITEMS FROM STAFF

There were no additional items.

VII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no additional items.

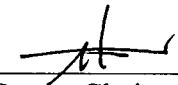
VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

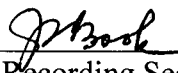
The next meeting is planned for June, and will be at the call of the chair.

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MINUTES APPROVED JUNE 9, 1999

  
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Steven L. Davis, Chair

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Date

  
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Jeff Book, Recording Secretary

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Date