

WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES – APRIL 13, 2010
WEST HOLLYWOOD CITY HALL

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Deb Farmer at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 13, 2010, in the Community Conference Room of West Hollywood City Hall, 8300 Santa Monica Blvd.

A. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The pledge of allegiance was led by staff.

B. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Ruth Cislowski, Steven L. Davis, Debra Farmer, Charles Henry, Shirley Roberts, Hywel Sims, Mark Zangrando.
Not Present: None.

A quorum was present at all times. Commissioners Henry and Roberts joined the meeting in progress. City staff members present included Sam Baxter, Director of Human Services; Daphne Dennis, Social Services Administrator; David Giugni, Leslie Isenberg, Craig Rhea, and Jeff Book. Council Deputy Hernan Molina was also present for part of the meeting.

C. **POSTING OF AGENDA**

The secretary reported 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 form.

II. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the March 9, 2010, meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Zangrando, with Commissioners Cislowski and Sims abstaining due to absence.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from the public.

IV. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. ADVISORY BOARD CHAIRS

The Commission met with chairs of the city's advisory boards, including Farhad Yusupov of the Russian Advisory Board; Karina Samala of the Transgender Advisory Board; Ric Rickles of the Senior Advisory Board; Mara Brown of the Women's Advisory Board; and Suzanne Dietrich of the Disabilities Advisory Board, to discuss social services priorities of the community.

Mara Brown spoke about rape crisis and domestic violence help; single mothers with children; increasing awareness of existing programs; library programming; mental health; children/family programs; and pets. Karina Samala spoke about employment and job services; medical and mental health programs; legal services and advocacy with law enforcement; education, housing, drug recovery, transportation, and social events.

Ric Rickles spoke about the loss of Partners adult day health care center, and about bus shelters, transportation, Dial a Ride for shopping, expanded hours for Dial a Ride and City Ride, affordable housing, and wellness education. Commissioner Henry asked to agendaize a discussion of Dial a Ride in comparison to taxi coupons. Daphne Dennis said she would provide more information at the next meeting on the transition of people who had been using the Partners center.

Commissioner Zangrando provided notes from Senior Advisory Board and Sofia Gelman. Farhad Yusupov spoke about legal services; workplace rule abuses; domestic violence; awareness of programs; teen-age and recreation opportunities; and replacement of services that are not as relevant to the community today.

Commissioners Farmer and Henry spoke about a possible centralized office for Russian-speaking programs. Commissioner Henry asked if staff could facilitate a meeting between the Russian Advisory Board and the Russian Community Center.

Suzanne Dietrich spoke about social work at the Comprehensive Services Center, JFS Nutrition, Project Angel Food, and the need for additional social workers to work with younger people with disabilities.

Commissioner Henry moved to form a new task force consisting of commissioners, advisory board members, and possibly agency representatives, to look at how all residents can receive more information about existing programs. This was seconded by Ruth Cislowski and approved.

Leslie Isenberg had attended the Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board, and said their concerns included a new drug-resistant strain of HIV; services for the partially sighted or blind; working with the Braille Institute; LGBT youth and seniors; animal lost and found services; the Trevor Project; and foster parents.

B. SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Daphne Dennis introduced a discussion of social services priorities leading to the Request For Proposals, and highlighted the need for intensive case management; HIV testing/education/outreach; homelessness; mental health services; and substance abuse services.

Commissioner Henry said there may be a need for a Russian services day so programs can present information in a targeted way that will be more accessible to community members.

Commissioner Cislowski recommended including medical, employment, legal, and family services, and focusing on target populations.

Commissioner Henry asked about income verification for accessing services. Daphne Dennis said current policy requires access for persons who say they can't afford to pay, except for some agencies that have their own verification procedures, not including the Saban Free Clinic. She said she will ask the food programs how they are helping clients access Food Stamps and related programs. After discussion, the Commission expressed the intent to see the eligibility guidelines for individual agencies during the contracting phase of the process.

Commissioner Henry said minutes of commission meetings – not just Human Services, but all commissions – are not being posted on the city's website, and he will encourage the Council to change this.

Commissioner Zangrando asked about the numbers used in an LA Weekly article on the rate of growth in social services spending. Daphne Dennis said she would check on the growth in comparison to the city's overall budget.

Commissioner Cislowski asked why the Commission was considering a three-year funding cycle rather than two-year. Commissioner Henry said it was due to seeing relatively little change between the years of a funding cycle, the time-intensive nature of the RFP process, and conducting a needs assessment every six years would work well with having two three-year funding cycles, so that every other funding cycle would be preceded by a needs assessment.

Commissioner Farmer said she agreed with Commissioner Cislowski's additions to the list of priorities, as well as food information.

A motion to adjust the RFP in those ways was made by Commissioner Henry, seconded by Commissioner Zangrando, and approved. Commissioner Henry said he would like to see the total number of unduplicated West Hollywood residents served by each agency.

The Commission voted unanimously to recommend release of the RFP and accept the document and meeting timeline accompanying it, on a motion by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Henry.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. AB 2590 (LOWENTHAL)

David Giugni reported on Assembly Bill 2590 (Lowenthal), dealing with release of information by the Department of Health Care Services.

Commissioner Henry moved to table items VI and VII from the agenda. This was seconded and approved. Commissioner Davis left the meeting at this point.

Dr. Aaron Aronow said he opposes AB 2590 because it eliminates consent to having one's information released to third-party service providers.

Brad Sears, executive director of the Williams Institute at UCLA, presented a letter from Being Alive, opposing the legislation, and said the ACLU is also opposed. He said the bill increases the chance of accidental disclosure, and that fear of disclosure can discourage testing.

Council Deputy Hernan Molina said there are other ways to address the purpose of the bill rather than requiring disclosure as the text currently states.

Commissioner Henry said he spoke with clinic staff about the bill and that while all supported better disease management practices, there was concern that this is not the way to do it.

On a motion by Commissioner Sims, seconded by Commissioner Roberts, the Commission voted 6 to 0 to recommend to City Council that the City oppose AB 2590 as currently written.

VI. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION

This item was tabled.

VII. ITEMS FROM STAFF

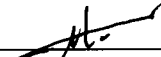
This item was tabled.

VIII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no additional items.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Signed: 

Steven L. Davis

Attest: 