

WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES – FEBRUARY 12, 2008
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Chuck Henry at 6:05 p.m., Tuesday, February 12, 2008, in the Community Conference Room at West Hollywood City Hall, 8300 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood.

A. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Cislowski.

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. Staff members present included Lloyd R. Long, Director of Human Services; Daphne Dennis, Social Services Administrator; David Giugni, Leslie Isenberg, 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**

The minutes of the January 8, 2008, meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Farmer, seconded by Commissioner Cislowski.

III. **ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Brad Leathers spoke about Rainbow Bridge Community Services, of which he is no longer executive director. Michael Ralke, board chairman, said they would be recruiting a new leader. Commissioner Henry asked for staff to arrange for Rainbow Bridge to return to an upcoming meeting, for further discussion, and thanked Brad Leathers for his work with the group.

Steve Wayland of PAWS L.A. said they are introducing a new program involving housing referral and information.

IV. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. **REPORT FROM AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION**

David Giugni said that he and Craig Rhea met with AHF staff, and presented a recommendation to (1) add the AHF Pharmacy at 8212 Santa Monica Boulevard to the STD testing program funded by the City, and (2) extend probation through June 30, 2008, which is an additional three months.

Commissioner Davis left the room and did not participate in discussion or action on this item.

AHF representatives spoke about the pharmacy program, and commissioners discussed the status of the agency's progress toward the goals established in the social services contract.

Commissioner Cislowski moved approval of the recommendation. This was seconded by Commissioner Sims, and approved 6 to 0, with Commissioner Davis absent for this item. At Commissioner Henry's request, staff will confirm whether Council approval is required for the contract amendment.

After conclusion of the item, Commissioner Davis re-entered the room and rejoined the Commission in session.

B. REPORT FROM WEHO LIFE

The Commission received and filed the staff report that was presented. David Giugni and Commissioner Henry encouraged commissioners to watch the webisode available on the agency's website. WeHo Life reported that there were 10,761 visitors to the site during January 23-27; 5,714 during January 28-February 3; and 2,151 during February 4-10. Alton Carswell said the agency is working on keeping momentum going.

Commissioner Henry asked what is a reasonable time for a website to gather summary data on rollouts of this kind, and asked about the absence of an "ask the expert" element to the website. A recommendation from staff on the agency's probation is expected next month.

C. REPORT FROM WOMEN HELPING WOMEN

Leslie deBeauvais reported on current issues at Women Helping Women. Commissioner Henry asked if there was demographic information on callers to the helpline, including age and orientation. Leslie deBeauvais said that most of their calls were from women with children.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. SOCIAL SERVICES NEEDS DISCUSSION WITH ADVISORY BOARD CHAIRS

Commissioner Henry welcomed the chairs of the city's advisory boards, who were present to report on needs for social services.

Marcy Norton of the Women's Advisory Board said there are many existing programs that board members are unaware of, and that there was a need for greater visibility and information about how to access programs. She also noted an overlap between women's needs and children's needs, in the area of child

care, affordable day care, and programs for teens. She also discussed health care, assistance with paying for prescriptions, and activities to discourage isolation and keep seniors intellectually engaged.

Ric Rickles of the Senior Advisory Board said constant needs of seniors include housing as a top concern, which is a problem even under rent control. He also provided comments about Dial-a-Ride and the nutrition program. He said there should be a better way of getting information to seniors. He spoke about the Senior Health Fair, the "Senior Moments" publication, and the annual awards to seniors who are active volunteers.

Andrey Pronin of the Russian Advisory Board spoke about employment and educational services; programs for children and teens; and a need for mediation services in the Russian language, to help people who come from a background with a different language, and from experiences with a different kind of legal system. He said existing social services were very good and should continue.

Ivy Bottini, co-chair of the Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board, spoke on behalf of co-chair Jimmy Palmieri and herself, noting that LGAB has a budget for activities for the first time, and would appreciate help with their events. She noted a need for safer-sex packets targeted to women, along the lines of the condom, lube, and information packets that are distributed for men. She also spoke about the crystal meth epidemic, a need for longer periods of stay at rehabilitation clinics, and current projects of LGAB, including proposals for a gay and lesbian museum and an AIDS memorial in West Hollywood. She said the City should be looking at historic sites within its borders, to preserve them before they are lost. She added a need for an around-the-clock hotline service so isolated seniors could have someone to interact with, and noted that the typeface on publications is often too small for seniors to read.

Tom Pavich of Disabilities Advisory Board said they conducted a focus group to discuss social services needs. He spoke about transportation and taxi voucher programs; about outreach and transportation for homeless vets to access V.A. facilities; about a need for less restrictive criteria for Aid for AIDS housing assistance; and about a lack of awareness of programs that already exist.

After a break, the Commission discussed how to ensure that agencies coordinate services both within their own walls and with other agencies; how to guarantee that agencies are prepared for disasters, both for their own staff and for their clients; and exploring the means-testing criteria for access to services. Commissioner Henry said it would be helpful for advisory boards to introduce the topic of social services needs at one meeting, give members a month to think about it, and conduct the discussion at the subsequent meeting.

B. PROBATIONARY STATUS – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

This item was postponed.

VI. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Cislowski spoke about Snow Day in the park. Commissioner Henry spoke about the chairs' meeting on February 6, which heard about the general plan

update process, and about a meeting on space needs for social services agencies, which was held with Hernan Molina, Sam Baxter, Anil Gandhi, Ray Reynolds, and Lloyd Long.

VII. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Daphne Dennis spoke about the Valentine's Dance.

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:


