

WEST HOLLYWOOD HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES – JANUARY 8, 2002
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 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 8, 2002, in the Community Conference Room at 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood.

B. ROLL CALL

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Cislowski.

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 Daphne Dennis, Social Services Administrator; Nancy Beard, Recreation Services Administrator; Diane Kahn-Epstein 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 December 11, 2001, meeting were read and approved on a motion by Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Davis.

III. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Garrison Smith thanked the Commission for support of the youth holiday party, which drew more than 110 participants, all of whom received gifts and enjoyed the event. With

regard to a policy and procedure manual, he said they are still working on it and will get it to the Commission as soon as possible.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. SOVA FOOD PANTRY

A staff member of Sova Food Pantry provided an update on their provision of a four-day emergency supply of groceries to persons in need of them. About 80 percent of the persons using this service are immigrants from the former Soviet Union. The food pantry project has been transferred from the Jewish Community Centers Association to Jewish Family Services, and they are working on new opportunities for outreach and networking. The transfer will be handled in an amendment to the contract with the city.

B. PROGRAMS IN THE SCHOOLS

Diane Kahn-Epstein reported on programs in the schools, including a recent City Hall display of student art on the topic of hopes and heroes. Members of City Council have attended classes to encourage students to read and become leaders in the community.

With regard to the Light Up the Library project, Diane said they are in need of volunteer assistance. The time is 2:30 to 5:00 p.m., any day.

Commissioner Mackler spoke about the possibility of making a presentation on the program to the board of the LA Unified School District, and keeping School Board Member Caprice Young informed of its progress.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. RECREATION PROGRAMS, JANUARY-JUNE 2002

Nancy Beard provided an update on recreation programs. She spoke about the Martin Luther King event held at Plummer Park on the King holiday, and said the City has secured the only west coast exhibition of Russian artist Ivan Djeneff, which will be at the Plummer Park Community Center. A Russian cultural event is under consideration for May.

Tennis and basketball courts at West Hollywood Park have been resurfaced. The tiny tot program there is very full. Natalie Mignon is working on an afterschool program for graduates of the tiny tot program.

The division is considering ways to take recreation activities to the schools, for children who don't come to the parks very often.

Bonnie Smith's toy program was once again a remarkable success, with gifts going to some 700 families. The Commission asked for a letter to be sent to Bonnie thanking her for this extraordinary effort.

Commissioner D'Amico asked about Council review of CSW, and Nancy Beard said the item was going to Council on January 22. Commissioner Davis noted that the parade must be identified as West Hollywood, and not Los Angeles.

Commissioner Davis asked for a trip to Catalina to be included in an upcoming schedule, and said it would be beneficial to organize a Friends of the Parks group to make purchases for minor enhancements the City couldn't otherwise provide.

Commissioner Mackler noted the omission of Yom Hashoah from the special events list in the recreation brochure, and staff will check to see that this is included in the future.

Regarding a youth advisory board, Nancy Beard said they are still recruiting.

B. PATH/FOUNDATION HOUSE

Joel Roberts presented information on PATH's move to its new facility on Saturday, January 19. It is a 20,000 square foot services mall, featuring 19 agencies that provide a wide range of services relevant to the homeless. They believe it will be a national model for services. The new building is near Vermont and the 101, and faces Madison Avenue. There will be a grand opening on April 11. Social services staff is touring the building on January 22 from 10 a.m. to noon.

VI. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION

Commissioner Cislowski asked whether members were going to the planning commission meeting on affordable housing, to be held January 17. Commissioner Griffin is planning to attend.

Commissioner Mackler said there was no chairs meeting last month, but one will be held this month.

Commissioner Davis gave a positive report about the Club Freedom event held New Year's Eve, noting that almost the only problem was a lack of parking. Commissioner DeCrescenzo said the young people from GLASS loved the event, and that program directors did also.

VII. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Daphne Dennis said staff is still looking for a facilitator for the commission retreat, and that plans should be finalized soon.

The condom distribution report from Tripp Mills was provided.

VIII. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Cassandra Ramirez, a member of the Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board, spoke about her new project, the Transgender Resource Center of Southern California, located at 8350 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 111. She said the transgender population is larger than some appear to think, and yet is very closeted. More publicity helps people be more comfortable with being visible. She said many people lose all their resources in the transition, and therefore the population is in great need of health care, violence protection, and other services. Many service providers need training and familiarity with these issues.

The Commission thanked the speaker and indicated it would like to hear more about this when the Resource Center is up and running.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. The next regular meeting is at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 12, 2002.

Signed: _____

Steven L. Davis

Attest:

J. Brook