

**MINUTES
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2016**

**WEST HOLLYWOOD LIBRARY COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM
625 NORTH SAN VICENTE BOULEVARD
WEST HOLLYWOOD 90069**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The West Hollywood Human Services Commission was called to order by Chair Jimmy Palmieri at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 8, 2016, in the West Hollywood Library Community Meeting Room, 625 North San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Robert Gamboa.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Elizabeth Anderson, Sam Borelli, Ruth Cislowski, Steven L. Davis, Barbara Meltzer, Jimmy Palmieri, Patrick Shandrick.

Not Present: None.

A quorum was present at all times. Staff present included Elizabeth Savage, Director of Human Services and Rent Stabilization; David Giugni, Social Services Manager; Corri Planck; and Jeff Book.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was unanimously approved on a motion by Commissioner Borelli, seconded by Commissioner Meltzer.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the February 9, 2016, meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Meltzer.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Nir Zilberman spoke about the March 7 City Council meeting. He also said that everyone cares about certain issues, but that is different from taking action about them.

2. Phoenix Lockett, program supervisor with the West Hollywood Career Center located in the Library, spoke about help available there. She said they recently helped with onboarding for the Shake Shack that will be opening on Santa Monica Boulevard.

3. Tory Berger, liaison from Public Safety Commission, spoke about visiting

food programs and SOVA Food Pantry, and talking with people on both sides of the City's eastern border. He said the next Public Services Commission meeting is Monday, March 14, at Plummer Park.

4. Victoria Imtanes, a client of JVS West Hollywood Employment Services and Training (WHEST), spoke about her recent experience in using WHEST's programs, and her success in being hired. She thanked the agency for its help.

5. Michael Wojtkielewicz spoke about the City having granted a monopoly on affordable housing to one agency; not living up to a needs assessment performed some years ago; and lacking metrics to judge its performance in certain ways.

6. Esther Baum, Senior Advisory Board member, said a survey a few years ago found 19% of seniors saying they had no one to call in the event of an emergency. She said the City should develop a program to help people through phone friends who provide a human contact and can be a resource in emergencies.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

There were no items on the Consent Calendar.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM PRIORITIES, 2016-2019 FUNDING

David Giugni said the Commission requested input from the City's six advisory boards (Disabilities; Lesbian and Gay; Russian; Senior; Transgender; Women's) and two relevant commissions (Public Safety and Rent Stabilization) in preparation for determining social services needs priorities later this year. Staff attended meetings of all of these groups, and spoke with them about the boards' views of the current social services needs of the community, how it has changed, and what barriers to access may exist. The chairs of each board and commission were invited to attend this meeting, in case Human Services Commission members had further questions.

Public Comment:

1. Nir Zilberman was critical of the last Human Services Commission meeting's recommendation to use some unspent funds to help Aid for AIDS move to a new location, when there are people in need here, every night. He recommended starting fresh on social services ideas, with the homeless, seniors, and people with disabilities as #1 priorities.

2. Michael Wojtkielewicz spoke about the first floor of the Sierra Bonita building being occupied by a nonprofit real estate developer, instead of being used to provide space for social services agencies at negligible cost, as had been proposed earlier.

Commissioners discussed board and commission comments with Louise Smith, chair of Disabilities Advisory Board; Robert Gamboa, co-chair of Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board; Farhad Yusupov, representing the Russian Advisory Board; Esther Baum, representing the Senior Advisory Board; James Wen, chair of Transgender Advisory Board; Silvia Salguero, chair of Women's Advisory Board; Marcy Norton, chair of Public Safety Commission; and Gail Sanes, chair of Rent Stabilization Commission.

Among the topics discussed were: the impact of staff changes in agencies; a need for improved communications, public information, and linkage to services; the needs of persons with hidden disabilities; need for mental health services; food insecurity; a perceived increase in addictions with meth, heroin, and prescription medicines; stigma on PrEP; a request for an information desk staffed by a knowledgeable social services person, at Plummer Park and possibly also at the Library; the perception that West Hollywood services are not targeted to women; a need for visibility on the City website for seniors, transgender people, and others; lack of a place for the Russian community to ask questions and learn about services, since the closure of the Russian Community Center; a need for bilingual or trilingual (English/Russian/Spanish) capacity on the City website; the challenge to access agency locations, particularly if those here are forced out by higher rents; ongoing informational needs of renters, who fear retaliation for making requests of managers; the opportunity for staff to seek additional information when a person interacts with the City, to explore whether there are services they may need; inclusion of transgender persons throughout City operations, not just in ways that make them feel separated.

The Commission thanked the visiting board and commission members for their input, and the meeting took a five-minute break.

**B. PREPARATION FOR 2016-2019 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:
TRAINING ON EXHIBIT B (BUDGET JUSTIFICATION)**

This item was postponed to the April 19, 2016, meeting of the Human Services Commission. *[Note: This item was further postponed to the May 10, 2016, meeting.]*

**C. AGING IN PLACE, AGING IN COMMUNITY 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
Public Comment:**

1. Nir Zilberman said a five-year plan may be helpful, but doesn't provide help to people who are here now. He said the City should focus on current challenges.
2. Michael Wojtkielewicz criticized the quality of Social Services staff, said the Strategic Plan presented no new ideas, and said portions of it were redundant. He emphasized that mental and behavioral health are national problems.

Elizabeth Savage, Director of Human Services and Rent Stabilization,

introduced John O'Connor, who will be working with implementation of the Strategic Plan, and Sharon Collins, who has helped write the plan. She spoke about highlighting changes from the earlier draft, and about making the report accessible through design, and also by planning to have an audio file on the City website.

Two initiatives emerging from the plan are new efforts to inform those who haven't yet been informed or experienced access to social services, and ways to provide help for people to choose to access services. She said the report will be going to the City Council on April 4.

John O'Connor said the report refers to more than 70 programs, so implementation will take time. One major step will be including values of age friendliness throughout the City organization and its social services agencies, as well as in the community.

Commissioner Anderson recommended clearly identifying the vision and having measurable goals, so improvements in helping people live safely, comfortably and independently can be noted.

Commissioner Borelli spoke about having a theme for "Let Us Help," rather than "Ask for Help," since the latter puts the responsibility on the individual, who may not understand what is available, or may be reticent to access it.

Commissioner Davis spoke about pets, and about a need for the City to be honest about affordable housing and the impact of the Ellis Act. He also spoke about how the City's code enforcement officers should proactively visit establishments and apartments, instead of only responding when there is a request.

Public Comment: Esther Baum spoke about a friend from New York who has cited West Hollywood programs and practices, and seen them adopted by groups at home.

Commissioner Palmieri spoke about family caregiving, pets, the 'Let Us Help' theme, and social media.

4. NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business.

5. EXCLUDED CONSENT

There were no Excluded Consent items.

6. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Corri Planck spoke about pop-up meetings for transit evaluation that will be held during March around the city. She said that Safe Refuge and the Tarzana Treatment Center, which are on a fee-for-service model, have exhausted their funding from the City for the year. Staff will be coming to the Commission in April

with a recommendation on using a portion of unspent funds to continue the services to City residents from these facilities. In the meantime, current clients continue, but new clients would need to qualify under other funding sources until such time as the City approves additional funding.

David Giugni reported that the proposed relocation of Aid for AIDS fell through, so the \$39,500 from unspent funds that the Commission had recommended be used to assist them has been withdrawn and is no longer available to the agency.

David Giugni said that the LA LGBT Center Mental Health Services program has not had to use all of its West Hollywood funding, due to support from other sources. Derek Murray is working with the agency to create a mental health outreach position, to be filled by a clinician who is compiling hours for licensing. This is expected to be in effect for the last six months of the current contract.

David Giugni said the SOVA location at 1140 N. La Brea Avenue will be closing. Staff is talking with the agency about how to continue services, including delivery and pop-up pantries. SOVA pantries remain available at 8846 Pico Boulevard and in Van Nuys.

David Giugni reported that PATH has told the City that it will not be submitting a proposal for social services funding in the new three-year cycle.

Elizabeth Savage said the City Council has been informed about SOVA and PATH. She spoke about the April 16 Kids' Fair.

It was moved, seconded, and approved to place on an upcoming agenda how increased rents are causing a departure of social services agencies from the city.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Nir Zilberman said he will be opening a 16-bed home for sober living. He spoke about not merely talking when people are on the street in need, but taking action now.

2. Josh Kurpies, District Director for Assemblymember Richard Bloom, thanked the Commission for its work, and shared several of the Assemblymember's current priorities, including a "scam-stoppers" event at Plummer Park on June 24, and legislation to address issues in healthcare services, sober living facilities, and affordable housing.

3. Rick Watts, member of Disabilities Advisory Board, said he was disturbed to learn that the City is losing AFA, SOVA, and PATH, and has already lost the non-profit incubator program that was located in the French Market Place. He would like to see the City address the proliferation of pot shops which are selling meth pipes by other names.

8. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Meltzer spoke about the Senior Valentine's Dance, One Billion Rising, an informational meeting for caregivers, the Children's Roundtable, Friends of the West Hollywood Library, and the West Hollywood Ambassador program.

Commissioner Davis spoke about the Senior Valentine's Dance, and about the example set by Lee Walkup in serving as chair of Senior Advisory Board.

Commissioner Shandrick spoke about the loss of the non-profit incubator; about possibly providing rental assistance to nonprofits; about seeing the Bienestar mobile testing vehicle doing good work in the city; and about visiting the Friends Research Institute. He distributed a New York Times article on medical and behavioral modification for substance abuse.

Commissioner Borelli spoke about visiting Friends Research Institute, and about the Transgender Advisory Board, which at its recent meeting was continuing work on the trans voting initiative.

Commissioner Anderson attended a meeting of Scams LA, an FBI-led task force to prevent fraud.

Commissioner Cislowski said she would like to see information on the residential programs' fiscal planning before she considers increasing funding to them for the year. She expressed interest in how things are going with the Senior program at the LA LGBT Center. She spoke about the effort to get a Metro station here. She'd like a clearer understanding of where shelter beds are located, and how the loss of PATH as a City-funded social services agency would affect services. She said Cathy Reback of Friends Research Institute is being honored.

Commissioners asked for an update on service provision, including the rental assistance program.

Commissioner Palmieri spoke about the Housing Works annual dinner, and about the Out in Iran program being held this week. He attended LGAB, which made Rainbow Key recommendations.

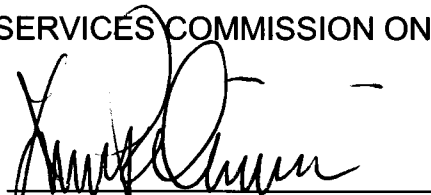
9. ADJOURNMENT

The Human Services Commission was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

The next meeting is a Public Hearing on Social Services Priorities, to be held at 6:00 pm, Tuesday, April 12, 2016, in the West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room/City Council Chambers at 625 North San Vicente Boulevard, 90069.

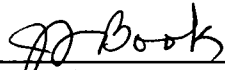
The next regular meeting is at 6 pm, Tuesday, April 19, 2016, in Rooms 1 and 2 of the West Hollywood Community Center at Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, 90046.

APPROVED BY A MOTION OF THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION ON THE 19TH
DAY OF APRIL 2016



Jimmy Palmieri, Chair

Attest:



Jeff Book, Secretary