

**CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
SPECIAL MEETING PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMISSION
MINUTES
September 30, 2015**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Saur called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Commissioner Bass, Commission Rodriguez, Commissioner Dolan and Commissioner Omelczenko, Commissioner Buckles, Chair Saur and Vice Chair Rorie.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Department of Public Works, Steve Campbell, Manager of Facilities and Field Services Division, Kevin Trudeau, Superintendent of Facilities and Field Services Division and Helen Collins, Senior Administrative Analyst, Facilities and Field Services Division.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Vice Chair Frank Rorie led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

ACTION: Approval of the Agenda for September 30, 2015.

Motion by Commissioner Bass, seconded by Commissioner Omelczenko and unanimously approved.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

ACTION: Approval of the minutes dated August 12, 2015.

Motion by Commissioner Dolan, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, and unanimously approved.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Patrick Shandrick, West Hollywood – introduced himself as the Human Services Commission liaison to the Public Facilities Commission.

5. **PUBLIC HEARINGS - None.**

6. **CONSENT CALENDAR - None.**

7. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.**

8. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. 8772 Beverly Boulevard Tree Request

Staff provided an overview of the request by the applicant (Restoration Hardware Modern) to remove and replace the existing Indian Laurel Fig Trees (ficus) with Date Palms. The overview provided the Commission with the background and process for the Council adoption of the West Hollywood Design District Master Plan, which included 8772 Beverly Blvd. Staff recommended that the request be denied since it is not in-line with the West Hollywood Design District Master Plan adopted by the City Council on December 15, 2015, and direct the applicant back through the Planning Department.

A representative for Restoration Hardware (Sandy Hutchins) and the applicant's Arborist (Sean Pennbright) provided background information regarding the request. The applicant stated that they are prepared to remove the existing trees and replace them with Date Palms. They further stated that they would agree to come back and replace the Date Palms with an approved tree in accordance with the West Hollywood Design District Master Plan once it is initiated.

Commissioner Dolan asked if there are any problematic issues with Date Palms and the fruit that they bear and how would they maintain them. The applicant's Arborist stated that they would maintain the area as part of the agreement. Commissioner Dolan inquired as to why they selected the Date Palm. They responded that it is the nicest of all of the palm trees and mentioned that they would be bringing in 36 foot mature trees.

Commissioner Buckles asked the applicant to talk about how their proposal is in compliance with the West Hollywood Design District Master Plan. The applicant responded that it is actually not in compliance with the approved plan and explained that they only received the information regarding the plan a few days prior to the meeting. The applicant's Arborist went on to explain that their best approach is to set-up an agreement or covenant that they would remove the Date Palms once the City starts the implementation of the West Hollywood Design District Master Plan. The applicant indicated that they thought the implementation would be in about two years. Commissioner Buckles inquired in what way is the proposed plan not complaint. The applicant's Arborist stated that the plan calls for shade trees.

Commissioner Omelczenko stated that they were removing 4 Indian Laurel Ficus and replacing them with 4 Date Palms. The applicant's Arborist responded correct, they are removing and replacing with 4 trees. He went on to confirm with

the applicant that this is basically for a two year period as a design and welcoming of the company to the City. The applicant's responded in the affirmative, and added that it is welcoming the new branding and that the applicant understands that it is a temporary installation.

Commissioner Rodriguez inquired about the fate of the removed Palm trees in two years. The applicant responded it is the owners choice, the trees will be stored until they can be repurposed.

Commissioner Bass asked the applicant why they would move forward with replacing the trees and then coming back and replacing the trees in two years rather than just following the West Hollywood Design District Master Plan that the Council adopted last year in December. He went on to state that since the plan is already the rule, why would the applicant not consider just following the rules and plant the recommended trees. The applicant's Arborist responded that there are curb cuts and other improvements that at part of the plan which would make it impossible to do until those improvements are made. The applicant responded that the Date Palms are part of the branding.

Commissioner Saur asked the applicant when they are scheduled to open, they responded October 29, 2015.

Commissioner Rorie inquired if there are other trees of the same species planted in the City. The applicant responded yes it is common in West Hollywood and they deferred to staff for elaboration. Staff stated that there are some as part developments but not many are planted as street trees.

Staff provided clarification on the two year timeline on the implementation of the West Hollywood Design District Master Plan being mentioned in conversation. Staff stated that the recently approved 8899 Beverly Blvd project will most likely provide an impetus for the start of the implementation of the West Hollywood Design District Master Plan much sooner than two years.

Commissioner Bass wanted to mention that on page 46 of the plan there are three trees mentioned. Staff stated that those are recommended tree species.

Commissioner Rorie asked staff to elaborate on the recommendation for the denial, was it because of the accelerated timeframe of the replacement schedule. Staff responded that while that is problematic, the basis for the denial is because the Council approved the West Hollywood Design District Master Plan and it is in place and the Commission does not have the authority to overrule the Plan or go against the Council. As an alternative the Commission could make a recommendation rather than a denial that it go to Council to ask for a variation. Staff stated that they did not think that from a government procedure perspective that it would be the best path for this item to go directly back to Council. Staff would recommend that it go back to Planning and through the

appropriate channels.

Commissioner Rorie inquired if the previous approval of the trees on Melrose was done before the approval of the rules now in place. Staff responded yes. Commissioner also inquired if there was any water impact. The applicant responded that it would be the same or a less. Commissioner Rorie asked how much the applicant was planning to invest in the tree project being proposed. The applicant responded approximately \$25,000.

Commissioner Dolan stated that coming from a design and fashion background he understands the importance of continuity and creating a product and he thinks requesting a variance from Council would be appropriate. Commissioner Dolan then inquired if they were provided a temporary variance would they be willing to remove them at a later date. The applicant responded yes.

Commissioner Buckles inquired if opening on October 29, is contingent on the trees going in. The applicant responded yes it is.

Commissioner Omelczenko stated that he was following up on Commissioner Bass' comment earlier with staff. When the City Council passed the West Hollywood Design District Master Plan December 15, 2014 after much discussion and deliberation by the Avenue working group and with residents input it decided that the best trees for the plan were the Ginko, Australian Flame and the London Plane. Commissioner Omelczenko continued by inquiring; that for the applicant to be able to put in their requested tree would it require them to go back to Council and would this be the first change in plan. Staff stated yes. Commissioner Omelczenko inquired if any of the plan has been implemented yet. Staff responded not that they are aware of however, the project at 8899 Beverly Blvd., is moving forward quickly and there is some funding as part of the project that will implement portions of the plan. Commissioner Omelczenko then inquired if the trees at 8890 Beverly Blvd. are similar, staff responded that it is possible but they could not confirm. Commissioner Omelczenko asked the applicant if they considered or if they did a design that would show what it would look like with one of the recommended trees. They responded no they did not but as it stands now they would like to use the Date Palms.

Commissioner Rodriguez posed the question to staff that no matter what is planted now it would need to be removed when the plan is implemented. Staff responded that there is not a clear answer to that question until the plan is designed down to that detail and they look at all of the issues at that location. Staff added that there are a couple of different things in play with any trees that would be planted now. So Commissioner Rodriguez asked if it likely that no matter which tree is planted that it would need to be removed, staff responded yes that is likely. Commissioner Rodriguez asked the applicant if they are allowed to remove the existing trees are they confident they could get the new trees in by the 29th of Oct. The applicant responded yes. Commissioner

Rodriguez asked staff if any business has previously requested to plant trees different than the trees specified for that area. Staff mentioned that yes the City has had that request for Santa Monica Blvd as an example and the requests have been denied because once a plan has been developed generally the City sticks to that tree.

Commissioner Bass asked if the Commission would consider reframing the conversation because he doesn't feel that the variation from the Design District Plan is within the purview of the Commission since it is a Council approved document. He mentioned that the request is to remove the trees, and when other agencies such as Cedars have come before the Commission to request to remove trees the Commission has been obligated to deny the request because the tree removal guidelines state that trees should not be removed to improve the façade of the building. Commissioner Bass stated that while both Cedars and Restoration Hardware are outstanding members of the community he does not feel that the Commission has a choice other than to deny the request. Therefore, he would like to move that the Commission deny the request as stated in the staff report.

ACTION: Deny the request as stated in staff report (Deny the request to replace the existing trees with Date Palms).

Motion by Commissioner Bass, seconded by Commissioner Omelczenko.

Discussion:

Commissioner Dolan stated that this is Design District and it is unique and he thinks it should be taken into consideration.

Commissioner Dolan proposed a friendly amendment to the motion to forward the item to Council. Commissioner Bass responded that he does not see it as a friendly amendment but as an alternate amendment if his fails.

Commissioner Rorie stated that he is a rules guy and he knows exactly what Commissioner Bass is referring to in the Tree Guidelines. One of the reasons he recalls it is because on a previous occasion the Commission made an exception for the trees at the Sunset Gateway. He went on to discuss the ambiguities in the existing guidelines. He stated that the way he would normally view this is that he would want to enforce what the Council has approved however, in this case there are enough unique factors in play he does not feel comfortable preventing the applicant from making a request to allow the City Council to weigh-in.

Commissioner Bass stated he wanted to clarify his motion; he inquired that if the Commission was to deny the request then could the applicant appeal that decision to Council. Staff responded that Commissioner was correct. In

addition, staff provided clarification on the approval of the 8225 Sunset Gateway tree removal by noting that the proposed removal provided a substantial public benefit.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that he completely supports the plan and believes in the continuity and he supports all the work people put into the plan and once it gets started we should follow the recommendations in the plan. Commissioner Rodriguez went on to say that it is beyond him why Restoration Hardware would want to spend that kind of money for something that will eventually need to come out but since there currently is no continuity with a hodge podge of trees planted on Beverly Blvd he would support taking out the ficus now and relocating them.

Call for the Vote:

Yes: 4 (Buckles, Saur, Bass and Omelczenko)

Noes: 3 (Rorie, Dolan and Rodriguez)

B. Water Conservation – Landscape

Staff introduced the representatives from MIG, the City's newly contracted On-Call Landscape Consultant. MIG provided a presentation to the Commission on water conservation and provided examples of design elements for public spaces.

Commissioner Rodriguez reminded the consultant of the City's unique situations on the medians and all of the events and he mentioned that in most instances they shouldn't be as inviting as seen in the presentation for the sake of pedestrian safety. He summarized by saying they can't be inviting, they need to accommodate the large scale City Events and they need to be drought tolerant.

Commissioner Omelczenko asked staff what the total square footage of all the medians in the City; he commented that it would help him focus. Staff responded that they did not have that exact number readily available. Commissioner Omelczenko stated that he is glad to see this item moving forward.

Commissioner Bass stated that he echoes Commissioners Rodriguez' comments and visually he rejects the hardscape. He does understand that we are asking the impossible.

Commissioner Dolan stated that this plan is long overdue and he welcomes the start of this project. He then asked if this is only for the west side or will it include the east side as well. Staff stated that it encompasses the entire length of Santa Monica Boulevard.

Commissioner Buckles commented that she is excited about this project and added that one of her major motivations to join the Commission was her concern about the turf on the medians and she is happy it is being addressed and she is confident that a solution will be found to address that issue. Commissioner Buckles posed two questions to the Consultants: the first question she inquired if

in the landscape approaches presented did any of them include California Native plants and the second questions inquired about the fact that while we are in an extended drought we are anticipating an El Nino year with heavy rains and will that play role in plant selection.

The Consultant responded by addressing Commissioner Buckles questions about the native plants and the anticipation of El Nino and Commissioner Rodriguez' comment about accommodating events. The Consultant responded by saying that MIG sees all of these things as a welcomed challenge. He went on to explain that the design should incorporate several different elements to include indigenous plants, hardscape, place making and iconic features while still keeping in mind Safety and the Special Events and Activities that take place in these spaces. As for the anticipated El Nino, he stated that it will play a role in the overall design to include plant selection.

ACTION: Receive and File.

Motion by Commissioner Bass, seconded by Commissioner Rorie, and unanimously approved.

C. West Hollywood Park Master Plan Phase II Implementation Project

Staff introduced the item and noted that Commissioner Bass and former Commissioners Ettman and Woodell were members of the Design Ad Hoc Committee for the Dog Park.

Joanna Hanmaker for the Community Development Department provided an overview of the project and the City Design Consultant (Brett Jacobson) responded to the Commissioner questions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Stephanie Harker, West Hollywood: commented that it is a good design, she then questioned if the artificial turf would be hot and would it be difficult to clean.

END OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Rorie inquired why not use green mesh fencing instead of black. The Consultant responded that the black is actually more transparent and is less visually intrusive.

Commissioner Dolan reiterated the question from public comment about artificial turf – too hot, hard to clean. The Consultant responded that hot turf usually associated with rubber substrate is not the type of turf being proposed, and he added that turf can be cooled and cleaned with water. Commissioner Dolan also made the following comments:

- There are existing storm grates, linear openings, in both small and large dog parks, so they need to be dealt with so that dogs legs don't get stuck.

- Fabulous design
- Prefer a mural on back wall of small dog park
- If cost prohibits move of landscape utility box, perhaps a dog house can be built over it, or decorated with a dog motif

Commissioner Dolan also inquired if they could ask the Council to add the grassy knoll for a dog run. Ms. Hanmaker responded that the City Council had many opportunities to add that area and decided against it because they did not want the dog park to surround the basketball courts. Commissioner Bass added that the Commission previously sent a recommendation to add the grassy knoll in and Council rejected it.

Commissioner Buckles commented that it is a great design.

Commissioner Rodriguez made the following comments:

- Exciting, looks great
- Love the rounded corners, K9 turf, fencing, lighting, seating
- We try to move the landscape utility box
- Can we limit the number of dogs per person in the RULES
- Thank you for showing the tree outlines so we can see tree locations and a view of the park
- Not a fan of trash cans for poop bags that require touching a handle with ones hands.
- The rendering for the small dog park has a large dog in it.
- Is the water bowl filled on demand? The Consultant commented that yes it is.
- Good sloped areas

Commissioner Omelczenko stated that design looks good. He then inquired if the team looked at old dog park vs young dog park. Ms. Hanmaker commented and it was confirmed by Commissioner Bass that the team did discuss with Ad Hoc that some dog companions may bring a small dog to the large dog park if his/her dog is comfortable with dog parks, and that nobody would enforce the size of dogs using the park. The Consultant added that design of the two off-leash dog areas does not dictate that they are operated in a specific way. Commissioner Omelczenko inquired if Will rolling hills be okay for arthritic dogs. The Consultant responded that there are expansive areas of flat turf in both parks as well as mounds.

Commissioner Bass made the following comments:

- Love the design and can see his and many of the PFC and Ad Hoc comments in the final design.
- PFC does want to go on record that they would like the landscape utility box moved out of the large dog park.
- Make sure plants such as jasmine are safe for dogs to eat.
- Appreciate benches being designed so as not to hide behind them (some seats have backs) and so that benches are cantilevered so that dogs are not prone to urinate on the supports.
- Likes low fences.
- Really appreciates the responsiveness of the Design Team to PFC comments.

ACTION: To recommend the final design as presented with a strong recommendation to move the landscape utility box.

Motion by Commissioner Bass, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, and unanimously approved.

D. Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations:

Olivia Walker the Recreation Manager provided an overview of the process her Division is employing to update the park ordinance. In addition, she is requesting a representative from the Commission to participate as part of a focus group.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Stephanie Harker, West Hollywood commented that she looks forward to the community participation.

END OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Omelczenko expressed his concerns with the Boot Camps and asked that when developing the guidelines to please look at that issue. Commissioner Omelczenko mentioned that he would be happy to be the representative.

Commissioner Buckles mentioned that they need to keep the senior population in mind when developing rules.

Commissioner Bass stated that he echoes Commission Omelczenko's comments about the Boot Camps and he is thrilled this is happening.

Commissioner Dolan mentioned that when developing guidelines that it should be kept in mind that park is for recreation.

Commissioner Saur mentioned that permits should be required for those types of activities so they can give back.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that workout for commercial enterprise and amplified sound should not be allowed.

Commissioner Saur designated Commissioner Omelczenko as the representative and Commissioner Rorie as the alternate.

E. Public Art Selection Committee

Staff provided an overview of the process and requested a representative from the Commission to serve on the selection Committee.

Commissioner Bass and Commissioner Dolan both expressed interest in serving as the Commissions representative.

Commissioner Rorie proposed that staff check and see if the Commission can provide two representatives and if not then he recommended that Commission Bass serve as the primary and Commissioner Dolan can serve as the alternate.

F. Commission Meeting Schedule

Through a consensus the Commission agreed to cancel the October 14, 2015 Public Facilities Commission meeting due to a conflict with Annual Congress. In addition, the Commission also agreed to cancel the November 11, 2015 Public Facilities Commission meeting and hold a special meeting on November 5, 2015.

9. **EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR: None.**

10. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Stephanie Harker, West Hollywood thanked staff for moving the benches back at Plummer Park and for resurfacing the basketball half court.

11. **ITEMS FROM STAFF:**

Staff reminded the Commission of the Annual Congress. Also staff let the Commission know that at meeting on November 5, 2015 the Commission will be presented with designs for the Werle Building and Kings Road Park Community Building Improvements.

12. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Commissioner Dolan reminded everyone of the upcoming AIDS Walk, low cost vaccination clinic and to have a Happy Halloween.

Commissioner Buckles had no comments.

Commissioner Omelczenko talked about his concerns regarding the Coffee bar under the stairs in the West Hollywood Park Phase II Project Design. He went on to inquire when the Innovation Group will be coming to the Commission as requested by Councilmember Meister. Staff stated that they will let the Commission know as soon as they know. Commissioner Omelczenko asked the status of the Dogs/Children in Cars signs, staff informed the Commission that the signs are in and they will be going up in the next week or so. Commissioner Omelczenko mentioned that his hope would be that when the televised Commission meeting is rescheduled that the Agenda will be full and include important items. He concluded by thanking staff for the new Plummer Park Sign on Vista.

Commissioner Rodriguez recapped the Hart Park Off-Leash Dog Committee meeting.

Commissioner Bass thanked everyone for a great meeting. He inquired as to when the City Hall Parking Garage Plaza is slated to open. Staff stated that most likely November. Commissioner Bass encouraged his fellow Commissioners to attend the Congress. He went on to congratulate Commissioner Saur on her appointment as the new Chair. Commissioner Bass also wanted to qualify his comments regarding Restoration Hardware. He wanted it to be clear that he likes Restoration Hardware and feels they are a great West Hollywood Business.

Commissioner Rorie thanked the Chair for a great meeting.

Commissioner Saur thanked the Commission for its help getting her through her first meeting as Chair.

13. **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned, at 9:09 pm to their next meeting, which will be held on Thursday, November 5, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Building at Kings Road Park, located at 1000 N. Kings Road, West Hollywood.



Helen Collins, Recording Secretary



Donna Saur, Chair

A copy of the audio recording of this meeting can be obtained from the City Clerk's office upon request. (Disclaimer: Staff records the meetings for the sole purpose of composing the official meeting minutes; therefore the recordings are not of commercial quality.)