

**CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2019  
6:30 P.M.**

**PLUMMER PARK COMMUNITY CENTER,  
ROOMS 5 & 6  
7377 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 6:30 PM
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** led by Councilmember Lauren Meister
3. **ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners Present:** Balbone, Berger, Laflen, Norton, Sol, Waack, Williams

**Commissioners Absent:** None

**Others present:** Sergeant Jon Klaus, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Acting Assistant Chief Michael Brown, Los Angeles County Fire Department; Battalion Chief Brian Kane, Los Angeles County Fire Department; Megan Currier, Community Services Liaison, Los Angeles County Fire Department; Shea Gibson, Block by Block; Lisa Belsanti, Director of Communications; Janet Jimenez, Assistant to the City Manager

4. **ADJOURNMENT REQUESTS**

Commissioner Norton requested that the meeting be adjourned in the memory of the victims of the recent mass shootings in Gilroy, El Paso and Dayton.

Commissioner Sol requested that the meeting be adjourned in the memory of the 22 law enforcement officers and firefighters who have passed away since the July meeting.

5. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**ACTION:** Motion by Commissioner Sol to approve the August 12, 2019 agenda, seconded by Commissioner Williams and approved.

## **POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda for the August 12, 2019 Public Safety Commission meeting was posted at City Hall, Plummer Park, the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station, and the West Hollywood Library.

### **6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**ACTION:** Motion by Commissioner Sol to approve the July 8, 2019 minutes, seconded by Commissioner Williams, and approved.

### **7. SWEARING IN OF NEW COMMISSIONER**

Councilmember Meister swore in new Commissioner Kerri Balbone.

### **8. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Yola Dore, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding issues on the Eastside and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Daniel Harrington-Tyrell, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding a recent public safety related incident he experienced in Plummer Park, and suggested staff look into the possibility of installing emergency call buttons in the park.

Jasmine Duckworth, City of West Hollywood Staff, spoke regarding the recent National Night Out events and thanked the Commission for their support; and shared with the Commission that she will be sending out a post event survey.

Brian Rubenstein, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding Plummer Park and the ongoing safety issues at the restrooms and the southern outdoor patio off the senior center.

Cathy Blavis, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding various items on the Eastside: improvements that have been made to a private property on Vista and how it has cut down the number of individuals roaming in the area; anti-Semitic graffiti on private property; increased frustration and anger from residents on the eastside; the success of the recent town hall meeting on the eastside and how much everyone enjoyed it.

### **9. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND LIAISON REPORTS**

Commissioner Williams asked if the Commission could make a recommendation to the City Council to take a stance on banning assault weapons. She shared her disappointment that the recent RSO newsletter didn't include a reminder about smoke detectors, and asked that staff work with work with Rent Stabilization to add such a reminder in the next RSO newsletter. She requested that the Commission's

2019-2020 work plan that was tabled at the July meeting, be agendaized for the September meeting. She echoed the comments of the public speakers, who suggested installing emergency call boxes in the park and organizing another town hall to discuss Public Safety

Commissioner Waack thanked Jasmine Duckworth for this year's National Night Out. He stated that there weren't as many events this year, but those groups that did have events did a great job. Thanked Fire, Sheriff and all those who attended the various events.

Commissioner Balbone thanked Jasmine Duckworth, Fire, and Sheriff for a great National Night Out.

Commissioner Berger commented on the success of this year's National Night Out events. He asked for an update on the status of the joint operation with the Red Cross on smoke detectors, and future self-defense classes the City may offer.

Chair Laflen commented that extra security guards have been added to patrol the parks. Requested an update from the Innovation Division regarding the status of installing call buttons in Plummer Park.

## **10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Staff requested that item 10B. be heard before 10A.

### **10B. REVIEW OF DRAFT PUBLIC SAFETY MASTER PLAN**

Commissioners received presentation from the Communications Department on the draft Public Safety Master Plan.

Commissioner Sol expressed concerns with the text and layout of the document, as it appears that the pictures currently don't coincide with the topic/heading they are adjacent to. She commented on the grammar throughout the document, and the need for another review of the text.

Commissioner Berger asked for clarification regarding the Community Impact Team (CIT) and Entertainment Policing Team (EPT), as he was under the impression that EPT was replacing CIT.

Sergeant Klaus clarified that CIT is the overarching umbrella of policing in the City, and it includes both EPT and the Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving Team (COPPS).

Commissioner Berger stated that in the past there was a monthly "Coffee with the COPPS" and asked if that event is still taking place.

Sergeant Klaus stated that the “Coffee with COPPS” is not a quarterly event and the next one is scheduled for Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chair Berger asked for an update of the Mental Evaluation Team(MET) and if there are available stats to show their success rate; and also asked if the City’s Emergency Operations Plan is in digital format and available to the Commission and to the public. He also asked if the City could reinstate the Public Safety walk-about.

Commissioner Waack requested that the plan include information regarding scooters, bikes, wearing helmets, and riding on sidewalks. Additionally would like the plan to include information about CERT.

Commissioner Williams asked staff if the Ring camera program was still in effect, and if a section could be added in the plan to address about smoke detectors and a property owner’s responsibility regarding such.

Commissioner Balbone stated that the draft plan is a great start, but she would like to see it be more actionable for the public. She stated that there are no phone numbers included for the City’s various programs, Code Enforcement is not included, and the Public Safety Commission and its monthly meetings are not listed. She asked if a map can be included that shows where Public Safety resources are located throughout the City including: Public Safety facilities, defibrillators (AED’s), cooling centers and shelters. Lastly she asked if a section on Public Safety Tips can be included.

Commissioner Norton stated that there appears to be conflicting information in the plan regarding the number of establishments in the City vs the number of establishments that the Sheriff’s patrol each night. Recommended that in the text of the document, illegal hot dog vendors be changed to illegal food vendors.

Chair Laflen asked staff what is the purpose of the document.

Lisa Belsanti stated that the intent of the document is to lay out the overview and priorities of the City, as they relate to Public Safety. The document is not intended to be a workplan. She expressed that the feedback that the Commission has provided may already exist in current collateral material, or perhaps additional outreach about safety tips needs to occur.

Chair Laflen asked who the document is intended for.

Lisa Belsanti stated that the Public Safety Master Plan is similar to a visioning document, and the document serves as a guide for the public to be aware of the Public Safety arena throughout the City.

Chari Laflen stated that the document is a way to share with the public what the City does for safety, rather than a directory of all the services or resources related to public safety.

Lisa Belsanti stated that the City is currently updating a directory that will be available to the public, which includes the various services and resources available to the public.

#### **10A. UPDATE ON THE EXTENSION OF RAIL SERVICE**

Commissioners heard a brief presentation from the David Fenn and Joanna Hankamer of the Planning and Development Services Department regarding the progress of the extension of rail service through West Hollywood.

Commissioner Sol thanked staff for their presentation. She asked if staff was engaging voters who ultimately will be paying the taxes that will cover the costs associated with the construction of the rail, and asked that staff reach out to the younger generation and connection with local educational institutions.

David Fenn thanked Commissioner Sol for her comments and that staff will include such outreach efforts in future events.

Vice Chair Berger asked if staff there is a crime impact report or predictions on how crime will be affected by bringing rail through the City, and what preparation is staff doing to address any possible increases in crime. He stated that there will be a change in demographics as it pertains to vehicular use, and how will the City prepare for an increase in bike usage.

David Fenn stated that staff is currently looking at crime stats from other cities who have rail service and will come back to the Commission with an update; Metro is required to make improvements for the first and last mile around rail stations to anticipate the increased pedestrian and bike traffic near the stations.

Commissioner Balbone echoed Vice Chair Berger's comments on the need for a crime impact analysis, she also asked that staff look closely at evacuations plans for the various stations, and stated that public safety around the stations will be important as it relates to the City's various large scale special events.

Commissioner Waack asked what the Metro board will decide at their next meeting, if they will be deciding to move forward with the project or what route they will move forward with.

David Fenn stated that they will narrow down the current five route options to either two or three options and study those in further detail through an EIR, at the end of the EIR review the board will select the final route.

Commissioner Waack asked if after a route is chosen, if the City will then decide how to help pay for the project. He also asked how long of a process it is to dig the tunnels and ultimately finish the project.

Joanna Hankamer stated that before Metro will move forward with a project, a local jurisdiction needs to show the ability to bring additional funding to the project, and an EIR needs to start in the beginning of 2020 in order for the rail to be completed by 2028.

Commissioner Williams expressed concern with the negative impacts the construction of the rail will have on the business community and the City's special events. She stated that consideration needs to be given to existing businesses, and especially protecting the small businesses.

David Fenn stated that Metro is improving their programs and outreach to assist businesses during the construction phase, the work will be similar to the reconstruction of Santa Monica Blvd but not as impactful. The majority of the work will be underground, with the major disruptions on the street level being the stations located along the route.

Chair Laflen asked what intersection the stations will be located at.

David Fenn stated that the stations would be at the major intersections along the final route, but the exact placement of the station at a particular intersection will be determined after the EIR is completed.

Chair Laflen stated that crime will be impacted at the transit stations and asked who will be responsible for patrolling the station, if it will be Metro or West Hollywood Sheriff.

David Fenn stated that different stations throughout the Metro area are handled differently, and it's up to each City to work with Metro to determine how they will be patrolled.

Joanna Hankamer stated that Metro is responsible for patrolling the metro line from station to station and the City will be asked to supplement patrols.

Chair Laflen expressed her concerns regarding public safety with the station itself and around the station. She stated she's supportive of rail service, but has concerns will how the public safety issues will be handled.

Joanna Hankamer stated that once riders step off of Metro property, the City is responsible for public safety. Staff is looking at all aspects that will be affected by the proposed rail and how to best address them all.

#### **10C. PLUMMER PARK SAFETY ISSUES**

Staff shared that City Staff and members of West Hollywood Sheriff's station conducted a walkthrough of the park, in an effort to identify areas of improvement with regards to lighting, fencing and possibly cameras.

Chair Laflen asked if there have been any discussions to fence off the entire park.

Staff stated that there have been preliminary discussions to fence off specific areas in the park, but not the entire park.

Cathy Blavis, City of West Hollywood, stated that since the last town hall, they noticed quite a difference in the park and it felt safer, and that the door of the public restrooms near the tennis courts needs to be modified in order to increase safety.

Commissioner Williams thanked Brian Rubenstein for his letter and shared her concerns with the Commission purview regarding the restrooms. Asked staff if the Public Facilities Commission (PFC) has discussed the public restrooms in Plummer Park and is aware of the public safety concerns. If PFC is not aware of the issues, asked that the Commission make a recommendation to share Mr. Rubenstein's letter and the comments about the restrooms with PFC.

Staff stated that Mr. Rubenstein's letter was shared with Helen Collins, the PFC staff liaison, however unaware if PFC has discussed the matter in the past. Staff asked that Joanna Hankamer provide the Commission with an update about Plummer Park.

Joanna Hankamer shared with the Commission that an item will be coming to the City Council in September, to discuss short term and long term improvements in Plummer Park.

Commissioner Williams asked that an update about Plummer Park be brought to the Commission at the next meeting.

Commissioner Balbone asked that PFC be made aware of the recommendations regarding the public restrooms and the fencing in the southern area of the park.

Vice Chair Berger asked for a status update on the undercover operations and the additional security guards added to the park. Stated that he received complaints and videos of the public restrooms throughout the park being a mess, and that they weren't being cleaned. He shared that all park restrooms are checked and cleaned periodically throughout the day. He made a motion to recommend to City Council to mandate that the single use restrooms be remodeled and updated to multi-stall restrooms in the immediate future.

Chair Laflen shared concerns that restrooms are not the purview of the Public Safety Commission but rather the PFC; however she stated that a short term workable solution is to remove the doors from the single stall restrooms and partition the toilet from the sink area.

Commissioner Waack stated he will attend PFC on Wednesday and share the Commission's concerns with PFC.

Commissioner Williams stated she would second Vice Chair Berger's motion if it was amended to state that the recommendation would go to PFC and not City Council.

Staff provided clarification as to which body the Commission's recommendation would go to.

Commissioner Sol stated that changes can be done in a timely manner, if the Commission speaks to the right people.

Chair Laflen made a motion to recommend to City Council that in the short term the restrooms at Plummer Park be assessed so law enforcement can see what's happening, that the public not be able to lock them, that they not be single use and they be safe/useable for everyone.

**ACTION:** Motion by Chair Laflen, seconded by Commissioner Sol and approved.

Chair Laflen asked Commissioner Waack to report back at the next meeting after he attends the upcoming PFC meeting.

Commissioner Williams thanked Captain Ramirez and his staff for the increased patrols in the park and the eastside, as there has been a noticeable difference and the Commission greatly appreciates all the hard work.

**10D. SEPTEMBER PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING – PROPOSED TIME CHANGE / EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EVENT**



Staff provided a brief presentation on the item.

Chair Laflen asked for clarification on the item as to when the meeting would start and the location of the event.

Vice Chair Berger suggested that based on the feedback received by members of the community the event take place on a Saturday in Fiesta Hall, and that the name of the event be changed.

Chair Laflen stated that since the Commission is looking to do the event immediately, the Commission should move forward with holding the event after its September meeting and gauge the interest of the community for future events.

Vice Chair Berger stated that he believes that a Saturday date would be a better option for the community.

Commissioner Williams stated that the ad-hoc committee agreed that the event would happen in conjunction with the Public Safety Commission meeting, and that the Commission should move forward with the recommendation before them. Historically Saturday events hosted by the Commission have not been well attended.

Vice Chair Berger asked if it was a Brown Act violation for the ad-hoc committee to determine a date for the event, without first bringing it to the Commission.

Staff provided clarification and stated that it was not a Brown Act violation.

Commissioner Waack stated that it was too late to change the date of the event and they need to move forward with the recommended date, and asked that future events include self-defense training.

Commissioner Balbone stated that for the future a broader event on public safety be held on a Saturday, and that the Commission stays with the recommended date for emergency preparedness. She requested that even though the next agenda will be shortened to accommodate the event, that it still includes updates on the activity in Plummer Park

Staff confirmed that moving forward all agendas will include Plummer Park safety issues; and reminded the Commission that due to the abbreviated agenda for the September meeting, the Commission's work plan will be moved to the October meeting.

Commissioner Williams suggested that the ad-hoc committee follow up with Public Safety staff about the programming for the event.

Staff advised the Commission that the current ad-hoc committee will continue to work on the event until it's complete.

**ACTION:** Motion by Commissioner Balbone, seconded by Commissioner Waack and approved.

#### **10E. REPORT FROM FIRE DEPARTMENT – MONTHLY REPORT**

Battalion Chief Brian Kane introduced Acting Assistant Chief Mike Brown and reviewed the Fire Department statistics for July 2019, including suppression, rescue, and fire prevention activities. Stated that the Fire Department is currently preparing for CicLAvia

#### **10F. REPORT FROM SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT – MONTHLY REPORT**

Sergeant Klaus reviewed the Sheriff's Department's statistics for July 2019, including crimes, response times, and calls for service. He spoke about increased patrols in Plummer Park, he shared a success story from the nuisance property at Poinsettia Place, and that undercover operations continue throughout the City.

Commissioner Sol asked that Rocco's be added to the list of stats for pickpockets and requested that the Sheriff's be proactive and schedule a DUI checkpoint in the near future.

Sergeant Klaus shared that a DUI checkpoint took place the Friday before the Commission meeting, and one individual was arrested for DUI.

Commissioner Williams asked if any information could be shared on the recent rapes that took place.

Sergeant Klaus shared that one of the incidents is being investigated the by the Department's sex crimes division, the victim of the second incident refused to cooperate with the investigating Deputy.

Vice Chair Berger requested clarification on whether the walkthroughs that the EPT and COPPS team conduct through Plummer Park are at the same time or if they are staggered.

Sergeant Klaus stated that the walkthroughs are staggered and there are additional Deputies that conduct foot beats during the day as well.

Chari Laflen asked if overall crime in the City is down.

Sergeant, Klaus shared that the 6-months stats show that crime is down.

Michael McCue, City of West Hollywood, asked if the City has a way for the members of the community to share various concerns with the City directly.

Chair Laflen shared with Mr. McCue that the City currently has an application called the West Hollywood App.

**10G. REPORT FROM BLOCK BY BLOCK SECURITY AMBASSADORS – MONTHLY REPORT**

Mr. Gibson reviewed the monthly report from July 2019, including pedestrian assistance, crosswalk assistance, homeless issues, and disturbances. He shared that the decrease in numbers in the last two weeks of July was due to mechanical issues with bikes; however a new fleet of bikes is already in circulation. He and his team have increased their patrols in Plummer Park. He and his staff are currently preparing for CicLAvia.

Commissioner Williams thanked Mr. Gibson and his team for the increased patrols at the 7-11 at Santa Monica Blvd and Martel Ave., but incidents are still taking place when ambassadors are not in the area. She asked if the ambassadors can focus on the trash receptacles near 7-11 when they are patrolling the area.

Vice Chair Berger reminded everyone that residents can text Block by Block directly to report an issue at 323-821-8604.

Commissioner Waack asked how the City is preparing for CicLAvia.

Staff shared that they have been working closely with LA County Fire, West Hollywood Sheriff's and LA City Fire to prepare for the event, listed the various street closures taking place the day of the event, and shared the various messaging efforts to let everyone know about the closures.

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

**11A. CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD CENSUS 2020 COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Williams stated she is happy to serve, as she has previously working with the census.

**ACTION:** Motion by Vice Chair Berger to elect Commissioner Williams to serve on the Complete Count Committee, seconded by Commissioner Norton and approved.

## **11B. NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION**

Commissioners received a presentation from Danny Rivas, Code Compliance Division on a proposed amendment to the Municipal Code, regarding property maintenance, vacant property, and construction mitigation standards that address quality of life issues.

Commissioner Williams stated that Athens Services had instructed residents that to leave the doors on freezers and refrigerators when left on the sidewalk for bulky item pick up.

Danny Rivas stated that staff will reach out to Athens Services and remind them of the City's municipal code.

Vice Chair Berger asked of if the Letter of Agency and extension on building permits after 180 is included in the proposed amendments.

Danny Rivas stated that the Letter of Agency is already in the municipal code, and the City Attorney is looking into the 180 day time frame extension.

Vice Chairs Berger asked if property owners can opt to not file a Letter of Agency.

Danny Rivas stated that property owners can't opt out on filing a Letter of Agency, they will be required to file on an annual basis.

Commissioner Balbone asked if the same provisions apply to vacant and abandoned properties in both residential and commercial zones.

Danny Rivas stated that property maintenance standards will apply to properties in all zones. He also shared with the Commission that Code Compliance will be coming to City Council in the near future with an ordinance regarding human trafficking notices.

Commissioner Williams asked if manicure establishments are include in the list of businesses that will be required to post notices.

Danny Rivas stated he will follow up on Commissioners Williams question.

## **12. ITEMS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES**

None

**13. ITEMS FROM STAFF**

None

**14. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**15. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Sol asked staff to have Hernan Molina to report back to the Commission on the new proposed state bill 223.

Vice Chair Berger reminded everyone that September is emergency preparedness month

Commissioner Williams commended Danny Rivas on his work with Code Compliance and the communication with the Commissions.

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

The Public Safety Commission adjourned at 8:53 PM in memory of the 22 law enforcement officers and firefighters who have passed away since the July meeting and the victims of the recent mass shootings in Gilroy, El Paso and Dayton. The next meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2019 at 5:30 PM at Plummer Park – Rooms 5/6 at 7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, CA 90046.

  
Public Safety Commission Chair

  
Staff Liaison

**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.)***