

**MINUTES
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
REGULAR MEETING**

**AUGUST 11, 2020
6:00 PM**

TELECONFERENCE

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Reback called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Commission said the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. ROLL CALL: Human Services Commission Secretary Roger Vinalon Jr. took roll call.

PRESENT: Sam Borelli, Barbara Meltzer, Jimmy Palmieri,
Patrick Shandrick, Marquita Thomas, Steven Davis,
Andrew Reback

ALSO PRESENT: David Giugni, Corri Planck, Leslie Isenberg, Katie Egan, Diane Kahn-Epstein, Jenny Ivanova

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

ACTION: Approve the agenda of Tuesday, August 11, 2020. Motion by Commissioner Borelli, seconded by Commissioner Meltzer, and approved unanimously by roll-call vote.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION: Approve the minutes of July 14, 2020. Motion by Vice Chair Davis, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, and approved by roll call vote with abstention by Commissioner Borelli.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR:

A. 2020 GREATER LOS ANGELES HOMELESS COUNT RESULTS
(This item was heard with New Business item 4B)

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. UPDATE ON THE UTILIZATION OF WEST HOLLYWOOD EMERGENCY FUNDS IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
Social Services Manager David Giugni provided an overview of the City's emergency support programs and detailed the emergency funding allocations as approved by City Council. Proposition A funds provided

transportation services for older adults and disabled community members, including transportation to COVID-19 testing sites, water and box fan deliveries, and food deliveries to 146 participants through Project Angel Food. Alliance for Housing and Healing (AHH) awarded 82 grants for rental assistance, while the National Council of Jewish Women awarded 582 grants. Staff will provide City Council with an estimate to fund emergency programs through September 30 at the City Council meeting on August 17, 2020.

Commissioner Shandrick requested an update on the additional emergency funding approved for Bet Tzedek. Mr. Giugni stated the funding provides an additional attorney, paralegal, and infrastructure for eviction defense for three months. Commissioner Shandrick also showed appreciation to AHH for expanding their rental assistance program for older adults affected by COVID-19.

Commissioner Borelli thanked staff and City Council for establishing the rental assistance program infrastructure to protect residents and supported including data on new rental assistance clients in the September report.

Commissioner Palmieri requested clarification on the legal notification of the City's rent increase prohibition. Strategic Initiatives Manager and Acting Director of Human Services and Rent Stabilization Corri Planck confirmed the rent increase prohibition and Annual General Adjustment was announced by the Rent Stabilization Commission. Commissioner Palmieri inquired about residents experiencing difficulties obtaining rental assistance. Social Services Supervisor Leslie Isenberg stated approvals may be delayed as providers verify documentation, and nonresident applicants have been referred to the appropriate jurisdictions. Commissioner Palmieri asked if the eviction moratorium could be extended. Mr. Giugni indicated City Council may approve an extension.

Vice Chair Davis requested clarification on the City's mediation services. Ms. Planck mentioned City Council approved funding to extend eviction mediation services to commercial tenants through the Chamber of Commerce. Vice Chair Davis asked for clarification on processing rental assistance documentation. Ms. Isenberg stated the City's service providers aim to expedite application processing, and less processing time is required for return applicants. Commissioner Palmieri asked for the average processing time frame. Ms. Isenberg stated the process can take days to weeks, depending on how soon applicants can provide the required documentation.

Chair Reback proposed staff coordinate a plan to assist residents in applying for the Los Angeles County Rent Relief program, open from August 17 to August 31, 2020.

Commissioner Thomas asked for clarification on Bet Tzedek’s eviction defense services after the agreement expires. Mr. Giugni stated Human Services plans to pursue a six to 12-month contract extension.

Commissioner Meltzer inquired which cities will be eligible for the County Rent Relief program. Mr. Giugni stated all cities within Los Angeles County, except the City of Los Angeles which has a separate program.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. UPDATE ON THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND QUEER WOMEN’S HEALTH COLLABORATIVE (LBQWHC)

Ms. Planck provided an overview on the collaborative, including background information, the City’s partners, and services provided. Strategic Initiatives Specialist Jenny Ivanova provided an update on trainings provided in the past year. Ms. Planck added West Hollywood supported a successful \$17.5 million budget request for a Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women’s Health Equity Fund to help address health care barriers, discrimination, and disparities in health outcomes.

Vice Chair Davis showed appreciation for LBQWHC’s addition of the term “queer” to its name.

Commissioner Borelli applauded their health care provider trainings on best practices for serving lesbian, bisexual and queer women.

Commissioner Thomas commended LBQWHC’s longevity and continued work towards improving health care, particularly in black communities. Ms. Planck mentioned the online forum on fostering resilience among queer women of color scheduled for August 18, 2020.

B. WEST HOLLYWOOD HOMELESS INITIATIVE: 2020 UPDATE ON FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS AND REVIEW OF SERVICES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Program Administrator Diane Kahn-Epstein provided data on the West Hollywood Homeless Initiative and highlighted key City partnerships in carrying out the five-year plan, including the West Hollywood Sheriff’s Mental Health Evaluation Team (MET) and Cedars-Sinai.

Strategic Initiatives team member Katie Egan highlighted accomplishments of the City’s contracted agency partners over the Homeless Initiative’s first four years. Ms. Egan also provided an update

on the impact of COVID-19 on the Homeless Initiative and the City's homeless services.

Ms. Planck thanked the City's outreach team for their work and dedication, as well as Elizabeth Anderson for her role and contribution to the report.

Commissioner Borelli spoke on witnessing West Hollywood Sherriff's MET successfully assist an unsheltered person and commended them for their work. He also recognized City staff and its partner agencies for placing 110 community members experiencing homelessness into permanent housing from 2016 to 2020.

Vice Chair Davis showed appreciation for the MET and its capacity to connect community members to other agencies and health providers.

Commissioner Thomas requested an update on the City's consultant services for bridge housing and day center facilities. Ms. Planck mentioned Human Services and Rent Stabilization staff have successfully advanced affordable housing development projects and are exploring options to repurpose the Measure H grant funds for rental assistance.

Commissioner Shandrick highlighted the progress West Hollywood continues to make, citing the City's decreased homeless count, success in providing permanent housing, and increased legislative advocacy for treating mental illness.

Ms. Egan provided an update on West Hollywood's COVID-19 testing and mentioned regional partner, The People's Concern, successfully conducted pop-up COVID-19 testing for 10 of the City's homeless community members.

Commissioner Palmieri asked if the City's service providers supply masks to homeless community members. Ms. Kahn-Epstein cited 5,600 masks have been distributed throughout West Hollywood by the City's partnering agencies and service providers.

Commissioner Meltzer asked how MET staff receive requests to assist older adults. Ms. Kahn-Epstein stated requests typically come from community members themselves, friends, and neighbors.

5. ITEMS FROM STAFF:

Mr. Giugni stated he would provide the Human Services Commission links to the LA County Rent relief program and NCJW's rental assistance application, as well as the amicus brief mentioning West Hollywood's support of the state

of Washington's challenge to the Trump Administration's decision to withdraw non-discrimination protections from the Affordable Care Act.

Ms. Isenberg shared Plummer Park Preschool was temporarily closed due to a student testing positive for COVID-19, and mentioned the City website now lists open preschools and day care facilities available for West Hollywood families.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

7. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Meltzer showed appreciation for the Cultural Diversity Certification training hosted by Trans Can Work and for Westside Urban Forum's webinar on how urban design affects social isolation and loneliness.

Commissioner Thomas mentioned the Chamber of Commerce workshop on unconscious bias and requested the meeting be adjourned in honor of John Lewis and C.T. Vivian.

Commissioner Palmieri encouraged community members in 12-step addiction recovery programs to explore Zoom or Google for online group meetings. He also encouraged reading the City's smoking ordinance and to consider its enforceability.

Commissioner Shandrick thanked staff and the City's nonprofit partners for their hard work and encouraged community members to complete the census.

Chair Reback encouraged the public to wear masks and complete the census. He also requested information on making Human Services Commission meetings available to the public and on acquiring vacant lots within the City for social service sites. He encouraged City Council and City residents to develop a smoking ordinance that protects both privacy and public health.

Commissioner Palmieri supported making Human Services Commission meetings available to the public.

8. ADJOURNMENT

In honor of John Lewis, C.T. Vivian, and Caryl Reback, the Human Services Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. to the next regular meeting on September 8, 2020 via Zoom conference.

ATTEST:



Chair



Secretary