

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

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2022
6:00 P.M.**

VIA TELECONFERENCE

1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 6:00 PM
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** led by Commissioner Balbone
3. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Balbone, Berger, Hallman, Oliver, Roshay, Roman, Soon-Shiong

Commissioners Absent: None

Others present: Lieutenant Bill Moulder, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Assistant Chief Drew Smith, Los Angeles County Fire Department; Megan Currier, Community Services Liaison, Los Angeles County Fire Department; Shea Gibson, Block by Block; Kristin Cook, Public Safety Director

4. **ADJOURNMENT REQUESTS**

None

5. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Balbone to approve the February 14, 2022 agenda, seconded by Commissioner Oliver and approved.

POSTING OF THE AGENDA

The agenda for the February 14, 2022 Public Safety Commission meeting was posted at City Hall, Plummer Park, and the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station.

6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Balbone to approve the January 10, 2022 minutes, seconded by Vice-Chair Roshay and approved.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chelsea Byers, resident of West Hollywood, spoke in support of working together to solve social service issues. Ms. Byers suggested a better alignment of funding in favor of social services.

Steve Martin, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding good vaccination rates for West Hollywood and unfair perceptions of public safety of West Hollywood. Mr. Martin spoke regarding the proposed restrooms in Plummer Park and suggested a more sensitive design.

Patrick Blood, resident of West Hollywood, introduced himself as liaison from the Disabilities Advisory Board to the Public Safety Commission and spoke regarding the importance of the enforcement of scooters blocking access on sidewalks and driveways. Mr. Blood spoke in support of Mental Evaluation Team.

West Seegmiller, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding his recent health freedom picnic held at Plummer Park.

Stephanie Harker, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding her attendance at the recent Public Facilities Commission which discussed the redesign of the restrooms at Plummer Park. Ms. Harker has concerns about the safety of the public in regard to the multi-stall restrooms and said that she hopes that the issue will be placed on a future Public Safety Commission meeting agenda. Ms. Harker thanked Lieutenant Moulder for assisting her neighborhood with addressing a graffiti incident.

Cathy Blaivas, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding the redesign of some areas of the Community Center at Plummer Park and the importance of making the restrooms safer.

Yola Dore, resident of West Hollywood, introduced himself as alternate liaison from the Disabilities Advisory Board to the Public Safety Commission and said that her greatest concern is for people living with disabilities. Ms. Dore requested that the plans for the redesign of some areas of the Community Center at Plummer Park be presented to the Public Safety Commission.

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding the Los Angeles County Sheriff's budget, including billing rates, overtime expenses, the calculation of FTEs, and comparisons to other cities.

Commissioner Hallman and Commissioner Oliver spoke regarding their attendance at the first Emergency Plan review meeting and said that they will continue to report their work back to the Public Safety Commission.

Commissioner Oliver spoke regarding scooters and the importance of being respectful of persons living with disabilities. Commissioner Oliver spoke regarding a rise in anti-Semitism and hate crimes and thanked the City Council for their work on the issue.

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Balbone to ask Facilities staff to come to a future Public Safety Commission with a presentation on the redesign of some areas of the Community Center at Plummer Park, seconded by Vice-Chair Roshay and approved.

Commissioner Balbone spoke in support of having a safety plan for West Hollywood Park now that construction is coming to completion.

Commissioner Roman spoke regarding the need for security in the park at night.

Vice-Chair Roshay spoke regarding the Commission's work plan and said that input is important before the item goes to City Council.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9A. INPUT ON SOCIAL SERVICES PRIORITIES – DESIGNATION OF DELEGATE FOR 2022-2025 FUNDING PROCESS

Vice-Chair Roshay spoke in support of an additional MIT team and to have the team available during evenings and weekends.

David Giugni and Katie Egan, Social Services Division, spoke regarding the upcoming RFP process and asked for input from the Public Safety Commission on social services priorities.

Commissioner Balbone asked for clarification regarding services for victims of assault.

Vice-Chair Roshay spoke regarding the recent sub-committee meeting with the Women's Advisory Board where representatives from the Santa Monica Rape Treatment Center were present to discuss their services. Vice-Chair Roshay spoke in support of prioritizing their services and making them available to the public.

Commissioner Balbone spoke in support of having a "real time" advocate for victims.

Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of funding a Rape Treatment Center closer to West Hollywood. Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of rental assistance. Commissioner Oliver expressed concern for social isolation caused by the pandemic.

Vice-Chair Roshay spoke regarding the necessity of transporting sexual assault victims to the proper place and spoke in support of having patient advocates.

Chair Berger spoke in support of rapid response from agencies that respond to homelessness and the need for more coordination and less overlap.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding bed availability and recommended having a coordinated system and central location for residents to call for assistance.

Commissioner Hallman spoke in support of improving services for people living on the street.

Commissioner Roman said that there are difficulties with service providers and that it is not worth it. Commissioner Roman said that his business is at ground zero for the problem and that there is a bigger conversation to be had.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the shift in personality among persons experiencing homelessness, the increased volume, and the different level of service needs.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the major changes to the Medi-Cal program which now offers community support services within some management care plans.

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Roman to designate Commissioner Balbone as the Public Safety Commission's representative to the March 8, 2022 Human Services Commission meeting, seconded by Vice-Chair Roshay and approved.

9B. REPORT FROM FIRE DEPARTMENT – MONTHLY REPORT

Assistant Chief Drew Smith said that call volume was average for the month of January and that personnel in West Hollywood respond to 20 – 22 calls per day on average. Chief Smith thanked community members for their support. Chief Smith spoke regarding the good communication and partnership between the Fire and Sheriff's Departments.

Commissioner Roman asked for a breakdown of calls for service.

Ms. Currier referred Commissioner Roman to the monthly report in the Public Safety Commission agenda packet.

Commissioner Roman said that there are too many people responding and that he wants to think of an easier way to respond.

Chief Smith described a typical advanced life support call, determining the proper level of care, how patients are transported to appropriate receiving centers, and the liability of not providing care.

Chair Berger asked if any calls for service have long wait times.

Chief Smith said that there is no lengthy wait time for most calls for service, but he said that during busy times like summer weekends, it can take a bit longer. Chief Smith offered to research any run in question for the Commission.

Chair Berger asked about times where resources have to leave one incident to respond to another.

Chief Smith said that West Hollywood is a very dense population in a vertical arrangement with older construction. A Fire Captain on scene has to determine what level of EMS stays with the patient while a truck may break off to respond to a second call, such as a fire.

9C. REPORT FROM BLOCK BY BLOCK SECURITY AMBASSADORS – MONTHLY REPORT

Shea Gibson, Block by Block, gave a brief report on January's activities and said that activities were normal.

Commissioner Roman spoke in support of Block by Block personnel with the ability to carry weapons like pepper spray and the ability to take on more tasks.

Mr. Gibson said that Block by Block ambassadors are unarmed and would not use pepper spray or other weapons.

9D. SHERIFF'S REPORT – MONTHLY REPORT

Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding the increase in the volume of incidents as compared to January 2021. Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding thefts, vehicle burglaries, and pickpocketing. Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding saturation patrols, plain clothes operations, the work with the Center for Policing Equity, and the upcoming LA Marathon.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong asked if prevention efforts are actually working if there is a rise in grand theft. Commissioner Soon-Shiong said that the Sheriff's Department sets the value of what is stolen.

Lieutenant Moulder said that prevention efforts include monitoring the number of crimes to see if they begin to decrease. Lieutenant Moulder said that state law determines the value for grand theft and that Deputies ask the victim for the value of the item stolen.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong asked for information on LASD interventions to prevent crime, the mechanisms through which LASD officers evaluate whether a theft is in fact a grand theft given that the largest spike in crime is from grand theft, as well as the effect of LASD's interventions in terms of crime prevention.

Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding plain clothes operations in clubs and operations in cars, including work with major crimes and narcotics teams. Lieutenant Moulder spoke regarding the arrests made.

Commissioner Roman said that the Sheriff's Department has no idea what it is doing.

9E. DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC SAFETY PRIORITIES FOR FY 2022-2023 BUDGET AND COMMISSION WORK PLAN

Genevieve Morrill, Chamber of Commerce, spoke on behalf of businesses. Ms. Morrill said that while reform is needed, Sheriff and social services providers are excellent partners and spoke in support of additional public safety resources, including cameras.

Commissioner Roman spoke about the proposed Behavioral Health Crisis Unit and asked for additional information.

Corri Planck, Strategic Services Manager, spoke regarding the proposed Behavioral Health Crisis Unit and said that an update will be given to the City Council at its meeting on March 21, 2022. Ms. Planck described the unit as a third first responder team which is available 24/7 and said that it is not a "one size fits all". She spoke regarding the complexity of the response and the need to identify the best option to assist patients in crisis. Ms. Planck spoke regarding City funded substance abuse recovery programs which supplement those that are covered by Medi-Cal. Ms. Planck spoke regarding the lack of psychiatric beds not only in Los Angeles County but across the country and the need for more mental health receiving centers. Ms. Planck spoke regarding a need to expand the definition of gravely disabled and the system issues with conservatorship.

Commissioner Oliver spoke regarding the importance of overcoming the stigma of mental illness. Commissioner Oliver asked if the City has advocated for change in state law regarding gravely disabled.

Ms. Planck said that staff has had multiple conversations with representatives at the state level.

Commissioner Oliver asked how to advocate for more mental health receiving centers and psychiatric beds.

Ms. Planck said that staff are working with County partners to identify opportunities and will share advocacy efforts.

Chair Berger spoke regarding the work at the County level on alternatives to incarceration. Chair Berger spoke regarding the importance of working together and not being in silos. Chair Berger said that the issues are having somewhere to call, someone to send out, and someplace to go.

Ms. Planck spoke regarding the extensive work between City and County staff, and also with the Westside Cities COG.

Commissioner Hallman said that it seems that we are still missing something. Commissioner Hallman said that while COVID-19 has affected everyone, there has to be a better way to accomplish the goal. Commissioner Hallman spoke regarding a service facility that used to be at Sunset and Formosa where too many individuals created problems for the community.

Ms. Planck spoke regarding the successes of getting people into service. Ms. Planck reminded all that it is not a fast process, and it can be frustrating. Ms. Planck spoke regarding the various impediments including the lack of affordable housing, rent stabilization, and inclusion policies.

Commissioner Roman spoke regarding having a place where people experiencing substance abuse can go.

Chair Berger asked staff to invite the County to test ideas out at West Hollywood Sheriff's Station if possible.

Ms. Planck spoke regarding the work by staff to identify the dispatch structure that will support the Behavioral Health Crisis Unit and said that the City's proposal is broader than what the County is proposing.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the importance of making sure that people who call the wrong number or enter through the wrong door still are connected to the right service.

Ms. Planck spoke regarding the involvement of various teams across multiple sectors to solve the issues.

Chair Berger spoke in support of keeping an eye on the Behavioral Health Crisis Unit but that he does not recommend funding too much at this time.

spoke in support of an expansion of mental health services but also expressed concern for a lack of change in state law. Commissioner Oliver spoke regarding the importance of tackling both issues simultaneously.

Commissioner Roman said funding for police should be reduced and given to the Behavioral Health Crisis Unit. Commissioner Roman said that dispatchers will need to know everything and get the right resource out there. Commissioner Roman said that he was really impressed with a recent response by MET.

Chair Berger said that it is important for the patient to have a place to go.

Commissioner Hallman encouraged his fellow Commissioners to come to a decision.

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Oliver to recommend to the City Council to identify the Behavioral Health Crisis Unit and appropriate dispatch resources as a funding priority, seconded by Vice-Chair Roshay and approved.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong made a motion to reduce the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station by \$3,200,000 or ten sworn officers and to redirect the funding to social services.

Commissioner Roman spoke in support of the motion by Commissioner Soon-Shiong.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the complexity of the items and said that she needs more information on the intersection of calls for service before supporting the motion.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong said it is crucial to divest the Sheriff's Department and invest more into social services.

Vice-Chair Roshay questioned whether the City is receiving the services it should be receiving in terms of consistency and accountability. Vice-Chair Roshay said that the system is not working. Vice-Chair Roshay spoke in support of the motion by Commissioner Soon-Shiong.

Chair Berger spoke in support of reinstating the Entertainment Policing Team Sergeant and Deputy. Chair Berger spoke regarding the difficulties

presented by Prop 47, Prop 57, and AB 109 and the difficulty with filing cases and getting suspects prosecuted.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong against adding Deputies, clarified that AB 109 dollars are increasing law enforcement budgets, and stated that two additional officers would come at the cost of \$600,000. Commissioner Soon-Shiong questioned the efficacy of two additional officers on crime suppression. Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding the increase in poverty and the need to have more funding for social services.

Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of reimagining public safety in a holistic way and adding additional social service options.

Commissioner Roman said that he has no hope in the police to be able to assist. Commissioner Roman spoke in support of installing a camera system.

Vice-Chair Roshay said that Chair Berger is referencing a systemic issue which creates barriers for the community and the deputies.

Commissioner Balbone said that over 60 million dollars is spent on public services while just over 20 million is spent on public safety. Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the funds redirected by the City during the pandemic.

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Soon-Shiong to recommend to the City Council to reduce the Sheriff's Department contract by \$3,200,000 or 10 deputies to redirect the funding to social services, seconded by Commissioner Oliver, and approved with Chair Berger and Commissioner Balbone voting no.

Commissioner Roman spoke in support of hiring a different company than Block by Block who can arm their personnel.

Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of additional funding for Block by Block security ambassadors.

Commissioner Hallman spoke in support of funding for Block by Block

Commissioner Roman spoke in support of funding Block by Block but also in support of looking into another service that provides armed personnel.

Commissioner Balbone expressed concerns about park security, including in the new West Hollywood Park facilities, and said it is imperative for all to work together.

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Oliver to recommend to the City Council that Block by Block be a funding priority, seconded by Commissioner Hallman, and approved.

Commissioner Balbone spoke in support of making cameras a funding priority.

Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of adding Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) cameras throughout city.

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Balbone to recommend to the City Council that safety and ALPR cameras be a funding priority, seconded by Commissioner Roman, and approved with Chair Berger, Vice-Chair Roshay, and Commissioner Soon-Shiong abstaining.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong clarified that her abstention is due to a lack of information around who would oversee this data, what data privacy protections would be in place, and how the data would be used.

Chair Berger, Vice-Chair Roshay, and Commissioner Soon-Shiong abstained because they felt they did not have enough information at this point, including who would have ownership of the data.

10. ITEMS FROM STAFF

10A. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION CALENDAR

Commissioners and staff reviewed the upcoming schedule of agenda items, including a visit from the Building and Safety and Code Compliance Managers in March.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

12. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Balbone requested that the meeting be adjourned in the memory of the lives lost at the Parkland School shooting.

Commissioners discussed the possibility of adding a special meeting if needed.

Commissioner Balbone requested that the questions in the document provided by Commission Soon-Shiong be answered.

Staff said that she will follow up with the City Manager and Budget Officer.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The Public Safety Commission adjourned at 10:15 PM in the memory of the lives lost at the Parkland School shooting. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2022 at 6:00 PM via teleconference.

DocuSigned by:
Tony Berger
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Public Safety Commission Chair

DocuSigned by:
Kristin Cook
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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.)