

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

**MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2022
6:00 P.M.**

VIA TELECONFERENCE

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

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

Commissioners Absent: None

Others present: Acting Captain Bill Moulder, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Sergeant Mike Yost, 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; Jessica Anukam, Public Safety Specialist

4. **ADJOURNMENT REQUESTS**

Commissioner Oliver requested that the meeting be adjourned in the memory of the fourteen people who recently lost their lives in Israel.

Commissioner Balbone requested that the meeting be adjourned in the memory of the 1,842 civilian Ukrainians who have lost their lives in the war, with an acknowledgement that the number of those lost is likely much higher.

5. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Oliver to approve the April 11, 2022 agenda, seconded by Commissioner Hallman and approved.

POSTING OF THE AGENDA

The agenda for the April 11, 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 March 14, 2022 minutes, seconded by Chair Berger and approved with Vice-Chair Roshay abstaining.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chelsea Byers, resident of West Hollywood, spoke as a Human Services Commissioner about the social services three year RFP funding cycle. Ms. Byers then spoke as a private citizen and thanked the Commissioners for raising public safety issues to a transparent and collaborative level.

Rick Watts, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding a vacant property at 1280 North Sweetzer which is causing a fire hazard and an attractive nuisance for criminal activity.

Adam Darvish, resident of West Hollywood, spoke in support of reimagining Neighborhood Watch and also of the recent incident where a car crashed into his home which alerted him to the various resources available to residents.

Anthony Arenas, resident of West Hollywood, spoke in support of reallocating funding from law enforcement to social services to transform conditions.

Myra Friedman, resident of West Hollywood, expressed concern for the dangers caused by scooters and a recent incident where a woman was struck in the crosswalk and injured by a scooter. Ms. Friedman spoke in support of keeping the amount of Sheriff's Deputies at the same level.

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Hallman said that he is not a "de-fund the police" person and said that the Public Safety Commission's vote from the February meeting started an important conversation. Commissioner Hallman said that he is proud to be a Public Safety Commissioner and a longtime Eastside Neighborhood Watch Block Captain. Commissioner Hallman spoke regarding the requests made by the community that are not yet met. Commissioner Hallman spoke favorably regarding Commander Ed Ramirez.

Commissioner Oliver echoed Commissioner Hallman's comments. Commissioner Oliver thanked Acting Captain Moulder and Deputy Kim for a recent ride-along and said that it was an enlightening experience. Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of all Commissioners participating in a future ride-along. Commissioner Oliver spoke regarding his new role as a Sheriff's volunteer and suggested having Sheriff

Volunteer Dimitri Kermani speak at a future meeting. Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of the need to bring more accountability to the Sheriff's Department.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding the recent public safety discussion at the City Council meeting on April 4, 2022. Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding the large number of thefts of cell phones and packages which are driving the crime statistics. Commissioner Soon-Shiong said that only 2 out of 249 crimes have been solved. Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding the large number of people experiencing homelessness who are arrested. Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding the lack of transparency in the overhead costs in the County's cost model for Sheriff's Deputies. Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding reaching out to the non-profit Civilytics to conduct an independent review. Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding the current lawsuit by the City of Compton regarding overcharging for Deputies. Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding fear and morals and how reallocating resources to social services is necessary. Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke regarding LASD Deputy gangs and the recent arrest of a Sheriff's Deputy.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the upcoming focus group with the City Council and members from the Public Safety Commission, the Women's Advisory Board, the Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board, and the Transgender Advisory Board to discuss nightlife safety on Monday, April 25, 2022. Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding her participation in the recent city clean up event this past weekend. Commissioner Balbone said that she respects every member of the Public Safety Commission and encouraged all to take a balanced view and to represent all of the community, including those with opposing views. Commissioner Balbone said that the Sheriff's contract is complex, and that West Hollywood Sheriff's Station's reports are public and published every month. Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the arrests of people experiencing homelessness involving aggravated assaults. Commissioner Balbone spoke in support of listening to the community.

Vice-Chair Roshay thanked her fellow Commissioners for their comments and participation. Vice-Chair Roshay spoke regarding the various impacts and experiences that residents have. Vice-Chair Roshay spoke regarding the importance of finding creative solutions to solve shared public safety issues. Vice-Chair Roshay encouraged all to lean into our volunteers and other resources to solve public safety issues. Vice-Chair Roshay spoke in support of a city led police department to better meet the needs of West Hollywood constituents.

Chair Berger thanked his fellow Commissioners for their comments and participation.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9A. REIMAGINING NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Staff introduced Jessica Anukam, Public Safety Specialist, who will be assisting with the reimagining Neighborhood Watch program.

Manny Rodriguez, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding the importance of Neighborhood Watch and how many issues beyond public safety are discussed and solved within the Neighborhood Watch program.

Victor Omelczenko, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding National Night Out and the need to list all of the Neighborhood Watch groups and their captains for the public.

Dimitri Kermani, Sheriff's Volunteer, spoke in support of Neighborhood Watch working closely with the Sheriff's Volunteers.

Commissioner Roman spoke in support of using social media to bring people together within the Neighborhood Watch program. Commissioner Roman spoke in support of a city led police department where officers can be trained to monitor social media posts and to rely on technology to keep everyone connected.

Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of using technology to bridge the divide between law enforcement and the community.

Chair Berger spoke regarding being on a previous Neighborhood Watch sub-committee where neighbors shared that more participation is seen when there is an issue affecting their neighborhood. Chair Berger spoke in support of a new name such as "Neighbors Together" and involving CERT and resiliency training. Chair Berger spoke in support of business involvement to provide supplies, addressing livability issues, planting parkways, and other ways for residents to help their own blocks. Chair Berger spoke regarding the importance of community conversations and community buy in.

Commissioner Hallman spoke regarding his experience as an Eastside Neighborhood Watch Captain and said that coming out of the pandemic is a good time to reassess the program and to examine all options.

Chair Berger spoke regarding the need to provide remote options for meetings since residents are busy. Chair Berger spoke regarding the possibility of reestablishing a sub-committee to examine the issues.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding connecting with residents at previous National Night Out events to hear their public safety concerns. Commissioner Balbone asked Commissioner Hallman in his capacity as a

Block Captain if there are effective ways to meet the diverse needs of various renters, homeowners, and businesses in the City.

Commissioner Hallman said that it is a lot of work to keep a Neighborhood Watch group involved. Commissioner Hallman said that groups usually become more active when there is a pressing crime issue or a pending development in the area. Commissioner Hallman spoke regarding a successful demonstration by the Los Angeles County Fire Department to encourage participation. Commissioner Hallman spoke regarding using email blasts that could be helpful to the neighbors, for example his group recently sent information out to neighbors regarding the Los Angeles Marathon.

Commissioner Oliver said that the app he was referring to earlier in the meeting is Nixle and said that the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station does post to Nixle. Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of getting the official information from the proper first responder source to ensure accuracy.

Chair Berger spoke regarding a successful training and presentation from the Los Angeles County Fire Department to encourage participation. Chair Berger spoke in support of hosting welcoming parties for new neighbors. Chair Berger spoke in support of using the name, "Neighbors Together".

Vice-Chair Roshay thanked Commissioner Hallman for his work as a Neighborhood Watch Captain. Vice-Chair Roshay said that there should be different models as one size will not fit all.

9B. CAMERAS IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

Staff gave a brief overview of the existing ALPR camera system and said that funding estimates will be provided to the City Manager for his and the City Council's consideration during the regular budget process.

Vice-Chair Roshay asked clarifying questions regarding ALPR cameras. Vice-Chair Roshay asked for the intersection at Sunset and Holloway to be considered. Vice-Chair Roshay expressed concern regarding more traditional surveillance cameras in the hands of law enforcement.

Commissioner Roman spoke regarding law enforcement contacting him for footage to help solve crimes. Commissioner Roman said that there needs to be reliable footage and said that he is in favor of cameras.

Commissioner Balbone asked if there is data to support the ALPR cameras leading to arrests and asked for a comprehensive report.

Commissioner Oliver asked if there is an accounting of time spent by Detectives going door to door to ask for camera footage. Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of cameras in the business districts. Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of adding ALPR cameras, including at the Sunset at Holloway location.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong asked if there is a number of false arrests that can be included in the data brought back to the Commission.

Vice-Chair Roshay asked for additional information regarding funding for ALPR cameras.

Commissioner Oliver said that the City does benefit from the economy of scale by partnering with the County.

Adam Darvish, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding the accident on his street and spoke in support of residential cameras.

Victor Omelczenko, resident of West Hollywood, thanked Vice-Chair Roshay for encouraging transparency and asked for additional information regarding the ALPR cameras at the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and La Brea.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding potential safety vulnerabilities such as at the new West Hollywood Park facilities.

Vice-Chair Roshay spoke regarding the importance of monitoring cameras carefully and preventing bias.

Commissioner Oliver spoke in favor of cameras in commercial corridors but said that he is not in favor of cameras in residential neighborhoods.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong spoke against cameras and spoke regarding preventing bias.

Chair Berger spoke regarding an incident where a victim was attacked, and no cameras were available to assist the investigation. Chair Berger spoke regarding the expectation of privacy balanced with the ability to solve quick crimes like follow-home and smash and grab robberies. Chair Berger spoke in support of a rebate program for businesses.

Commissioner Oliver suggested sharing data with the City of Beverly Hills.

Staff confirmed that law enforcement agencies already share information with each other regarding active cases or suspects.

9C. REPORT FROM FIRE DEPARTMENT – MONTHLY REPORT

Assistant Chief Drew Smith said that there have been three structure fires in the last two weeks in the City. Chief Smith said that resources show up quickly to keep fires as small as possible.

Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding the fire on Melrose and San Vicente over the weekend and thanked Chief Smith for the Fire Department's response. Commissioner Balbone asked if there are safety requirements for portable heaters with propane tanks.

Chief Smith outlined the safety requirements for portable heaters with propane tanks.

Commissioner Oliver thanked Chief Smith for the Fire Department's response to the fire at Councilmember Horvath's residence. Commissioner Oliver asked how often the Los Angeles County Fire Department requests outside resources and asked if there needs to be more resources in West Hollywood.

Chief Smith spoke regarding the beneficial mutual aid agreements with the Beverly Hills Fire Department and the City of Los Angeles Fire Department.

Megan Currier, Community Services Liaison, spoke regarding her attendance at the Ogden Neighborhood Watch meeting and said that she is looking forward to getting CERT back up and running and working with the community.

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

Shea Gibson, Block by Block, gave a brief report on March's activities. Mr. Gibson spoke regarding increased patrols and an increase in requests for safety escorts.

Commissioner Roman thanked Mr. Gibson and the Security Ambassadors for their active patrols. Commissioner Roman asked if the Security Ambassadors have to rely on Sheriff's Deputies.

Mr. Gibson said that Security Ambassadors notify Sheriff's Deputies when needed and said that Deputies are very responsive.

Commissioner Roman asked for clarification regarding the additional funding for security patrols that was recommended by the City Council.

Staff confirmed that the funding will be included in the proposed FY 22-23 budget for City Council's consideration.

Commissioner Roman asked that Security Ambassadors continue to be active on the westside.

Vice-Chair Roshay asked for information on how the communications staff are helping to publicize Block by Block's services, and staff gave a brief overview of communications efforts.

Commissioner Hallman asked for clarification regarding the fixed post security guards in the parks, and staff gave a brief overview of fixed post security.

Commissioner Balbone spoke in support of the security escorts and working with the Chamber to help publicize and coordinate escorts.

Vice-Chair Roshay asked for clarification regarding the difference between the PACWEST Security Guard contract and the Block by Block contract, and staff gave a brief overview.

9E. SHERIFF'S REPORT – MONTHLY REPORT AND DISCUSSION ON ISSUES WITH REPORTING CRIMES

Sergeant Mike Yost said that Part I crime is up as compared to this same time last year, but he noted that the previous years of 2020 and 2021 were substantially lower than normal. Sergeant Yost spoke regarding residential burglaries, grand theft autos, mail thefts, and aggravated assaults. Sergeant Yost said that thefts continue to drive the increase in Part I crimes. Sergeant Yost said that there were 44 pickpocket crimes total in March and of those 26 were considered grand thefts and that there were 2 arrests. Sergeant Yost spoke regarding the Deputies and Firefighters who were honored at the April 4, 2022 City Council Meeting for responding to a recent structure fire. Sergeant Yost spoke regarding the additional patrol checks and saturation patrols that have been and continue to be conducted to address the rise in crime. Sergeant Yost spoke regarding a recent 911 call for service that Commissioner Roman had asked about previously and said that once the cell phone call reached the Sheriff's Station that it took 4 minutes for the Los Angeles County Fire Department to arrive. Sergeant Yost said that he has attempted to find out the transfer issue with both California Highway Patrol and/or LAPD.

Commissioner Roman said that he is baffled how a 911 call gets lost in transfer. Commissioner Roman asked for additional clarification on undercover pickpocket operations.

Acting Captain Moulder spoke regarding the additional patrol checks and saturation patrols that have been and continue to be conducted to address the rise in crime, including the multiple pickpocket thefts.

Commissioner Roman asked why it took so long to begin undercover operations to address pickpocket thefts.

Acting Captain Moulder said that he encourages all to report crimes as soon as possible and said that the recent spike really began after the shut down due to the pandemic ended.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong asked why the data is compared month to month instead of as a trend over a period of months. Commissioner Soon-Shiong asked how the prevention of crime is measured in light of the crime suppression operations.

Acting Captain Moulder said that one of the biggest goals is to take a proactive approach to prevent someone from being victimized, but that it is difficult to quantify an exact number of possible crimes prevented.

Commissioner Soon-Shiong asked for the arrest and solve statistics to be included in the Part I crime charts.

Acting Captain Moulder spoke regarding the crime trends that the Station reviews and the operations they undertake to address them. Acting Captain Moulder offered to include the additional information in the charts.

Chair Berger asked for clarification on the term "solved".

Acting Captain Moulder explained the process with the District Attorney's Office and how they determine a case is filed and/or solved. Acting Captain Moulder explained "probable cause" and "beyond a reasonable doubt".

Commissioner Oliver welcomed Sergeant Yost to the Public Safety Commission meeting and acknowledged the Deputies who ran into a burning building to save residents. Commissioner Oliver asked Acting Captain Moulder how often the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station has to activate outside assistance from LAPD and the Beverly Hills Police Department.

Acting Captain Moulder spoke regarding mutual aid with other agencies and the internal process for extensive immediate aid within the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Commissioner Oliver asked if asked if there are sufficient law enforcement resources in the City.

Acting Captain Moulder referred to Commander Ramirez' comments from the recent City Council meeting on April 4, 2022.

Commissioner Oliver asked if there are currently enough resources for dedicated foot patrols.

Acting Captain Moulder said that current foot patrols are funded by supplemental overtime and park foot patrols are funded by grants. Acting Captain Moulder spoke regarding reviving the bicycle patrols. Acting Captain Moulder said that adding funding for additional foot patrols could be considered by the City.

Commissioner Balbone recommended showing trend lines and suggested further conversation to discuss the best way to present data. Commissioner Balbone spoke regarding prevention and the difficulties with measuring prevention and reaction and the importance of finding a balance. Commissioner Balbone suggested looking at both Part I and Part II crimes when analyzing solve rates.

Commissioner Oliver spoke regarding proactive work by law enforcement and law enforcement volunteers. Commissioner Oliver spoke regarding a recent rescue of a toddler by Deputies.

Yola Dore, resident of West Hollywood, congratulated Commander Ramirez and Acting Captain Moulder for their service to the community. Ms. Dore spoke in support of funding more officers and in support of a sub-station on the eastside. Ms. Dore expressed safety concerns with scooters.

Manny Rodriguez, resident of West Hollywood, expressed concern for Commissioners having their cameras off during the meeting. Mr. Rodriguez said that there would be more funding needed to have more officers walking beats instead of in their cars due to the distances they need to travel to respond quickly.

Dimitri Kermani, Sheriff's Volunteer, thanked the Commissioners for their attendance at the recent City Council meeting. Mr. Kermani spoke regarding the recent increase in violent incidents and in support of more Deputies in the City.

Victor Omelczenko, resident of West Hollywood, spoke regarding the upcoming FY 22-23 budget process and encouraged Commissioners to participate in the upcoming budget meetings. Mr. Omelczenko spoke regarding the murder of Kayla Hurst and in support of more transparency and data.

Roxann Holloway, resident of West Hollywood, thanked Commissioner Soon-Shiong for her work on the public safety issues and spoke in support of the City encouraging building owners to install cameras.

Staff spoke briefly about previous concerns regarding criminal report taking, including allegations of West Hollywood Station personnel discouraging residents from filing criminal reports. Commander Ed Ramirez and his supervisory staff have briefed all station personnel on the issues with reporting, including sharing specific examples and complaints with Deputies. This includes offering re-training when appropriate and emphasizing sensitive/critical reports such as sexual assaults. In addition, the West Hollywood Station is not assigning outside overtime personnel to the desk where calls are answered at this time, and any overtime personnel from other areas working the field are briefed by West Hollywood personnel.

9F. COMMISSION WORK PLAN

Staff thanked Commissioners Oliver and Hallman for their assistance with the revisions to the Emergency Plan.

10. ITEMS FROM STAFF

10A. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION CALENDAR

Staff asked that all comments be made in the future during Commissioner comments to reduce the emails circulating before meetings. Staff reminded the Commission that the May meeting will be held in person in Plummer Park Rooms 5/6 until the Commission is moved officially to the City Council Chambers. Staff said that the May meeting is slated for an update from the Center for Policing Equity.

Staff said that a future meeting could include a discussion with the Social Services Manager on existing contracts providing mental health services.

Commissioner Balbone suggested postponing the social services discussion until the Human Services Commission is farther along in their RFP process.

Staff introduced the process for the upcoming Community Safety and Well-being Plan and said that a special meeting will be scheduled for the Public Safety Commission. Staff said that community safety has been a long-standing priority for the City, and that staff have been working for several months on engaging a consultant to assist in developing a comprehensive community safety and well-being plan. The City has contracted with StrategyCorp, a professional services firm based in Ontario, Canada, to guide the City through the process. StrategyCorp's team is experienced in working with local and regional governments, police organizations, and the

nonprofit sector to develop and implement community safety efforts. The project will include the creation of strategic goals, prioritization of new and existing community safety & well-being initiatives, and an implementation plan for moving forward. The ultimate goal is to develop a single integrated strategy to help streamline efforts and optimize our community's safety and social service ecosystem.

StrategyCorp will be interviewing the Public Safety Commission as a body, at a special meeting to be schedule by Zoom, to gather perspectives on service gaps, risks/barriers, and opportunities for improvement.

Commissioner Roman spoke in support of placing the pickpocket concerns on the next Public Safety Commission meeting agenda, and Acting Captain Moulder said that he will give an additional update at the next regular meeting during the Sheriff's report.

Commissioner Oliver spoke in support of having a Sheriff's Volunteer present at a future meeting and the potential for the City funding the program.

Chair Berger reminded all that Richard Best, Sheriff's Volunteer, recently attended a Public Safety Commission to speak about the Sheriff's Volunteer program.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Victor Omelczenko, resident of West Hollywood, thanked the Commissioners and the members of the public for their participation and encouraged all to participate in the budget process.

12. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Oliver congratulated Commissioner Roman on becoming a parent for the second time.

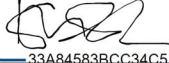
13. ADJOURNMENT

The Public Safety Commission adjourned at 9:44 PM in the memory of the fourteen people who recently lost their lives in Israel and the 1,842 civilian Ukrainians who have lost their lives in the war. The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2022 at 6:00 PM in Plummer Park Rooms 5/6.

DocuSigned by:


43D664DD38D044F

Public Safety Commission Chair

DocuSigned by:


33A84583BCC34C5

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.)