

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

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2022  
6:00 P.M.**

**West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room - Council Chambers  
625 N. San Vicente Boulevard  
West Hollywood, CA 90069**

**1) CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Hallman called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M.

**2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chair Balbone.

**3) ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners Present:**

Commissioner Berger  
Commissioner Oliver  
Commissioner Steele  
Vice Chair Balbone  
Chair Hallman

**Commissioners Absent:**

Commissioner Roman

**Others Present:**

Danny Rivas, City Director of Community Safety; Margarita Kustanovich, City Emergency Management Coordinator; Assistant Chief Drew Smith, Los Angeles County Fire Department; Sergeant Mike Yost, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Shea Gibson, Operations Manager, Block by Block; Eugene Maysky, Tenant Outreach Organizer, Coalition for Economic Survival (CES).

#### 4) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**ACTION:** Approve the agenda of December 9, 2022. **Motion by Commissioner Oliver, seconded by Commissioner Berger, and approved unanimously by the Commission.**

#### POSTING OF THE AGENDA

The agenda for the December 9, 2022, Public Safety Commission meeting was posted at City Hall, Plummer Park, and the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station.

#### 5) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chair Balbone requested an amendment for the minutes to reflect the mentioned specified crime spikes for item 8B. Sheriff's Report.

**ACTION:** Approve the minutes of November 14, 2022. **Motion by Commissioner Berger, seconded by Vice Chair Balbone, abstention by Commissioner Oliver, and approved by the Commission.**

#### 6) PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments.

#### 7) COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Steele congratulated Commissioner Oliver on his campaign for City Council. She also inquired about the submitted Request For Proposals (RFPs) for the municipal police force feasibility study.

**ACTION:** Chair Hallman proposed for the HIV Zero Program to provide a presentation on HIV education to the Public Safety Commission at a future meeting. **Motion by Chair Hallman, seconded by Vice Chair Balbone, and approved unanimously by the Commission.**

Commissioner Steele suggested to add the availability of PEP and PrEP services to HIV education.

#### 8) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

##### 8A. REPORT FROM FIRE DEPARTMENT – MONTHLY REPORT

Chief Smith gave thanks to the Public Safety Commission for their support. He also reported on the various fire occurrences and service calls for the month of November 2022. He thanked the City for the holiday fire safety messages that were distributed throughout the community. He also spoke about the national increase of accidental

electrical house fires from electronic devices as well as an increase in unattended cooking fires during the holiday season.

Chair Hallman spoke about his experience as a survivor from a housefire. He also asked if the Fire Department could provide a notification to the neighborhoods when fire drills and demonstrations are taking place.

Commissioner Berger inquired about the reported increase of electrical housefires.

The Commission and Director Rivas had a lengthy conversation about electrical housefire safety and how to bring education and fire prevention to the community on these specific fires.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Berger proposed for education be provided to the community on electrical fire safety in homes. He also suggested for the Commission to direct staff to communicate with the City's Building and Safety Division to advocate to the responsible agency for stricter codes related to residential electrical safety measures to prevent fires. **Motion by Commissioner Berger, seconded by Chair Hallman, and approved unanimously by the Commission.**

Commissioner Berger brought forth a resident's inquiry of what the rules are regarding red curb markings on streets. He requested information about this topic from the Fire Department.

Commissioner Steele added to the conversation on the request to have the Fire Department notify neighbors of fire drills. She suggested to add other similar notifications and alerts distributed out to the community.

Chair Hallman agreed on the community notification.

Commissioner Berger asked Chief Smith if there was anything that is needed to help keep the community safe.

Chief Smith and Director Rivas responded to all the questions and comments made by the Commissioners regarding the alert notifications, providing fire safety prevention education, and red curbs.

## **8B. SHERIFF'S REPORT – MONTHLY REPORT**

Sergeant Yost congratulated Commissioner Oliver and reported on the crime stats for the month of November 2022 which included the volume of calls for service, recent arrests, and Part I and II crimes. He spoke about the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station special team's weekly operations and shared recent community programs. He also talked about the recent personnel training. He concluded his comments by answering Commissioner questions from the last meeting and provided information on recent calls made to the West Hollywood Sheriff's station.

Vice Chair Balbone inquired about the higher spike of vehicle burglaries in the City Center area. She also asked about investigation protocol for forced situations similar to the incident that Sergeant Yost shared.

Commissioner Oliver congratulated newly appointed Sheriff Luna. He also thanked the Fire Chief and Sheriff Deputies for their continued work during the holidays and their work combatting gun violence in the community.

Commissioner Berger spoke about the importance of nightlife establishments working together and communicating when there are issues that affect their businesses and patrons. He also asked how easy it is for an individual to sneak a gun inside a nightclub and asked Sergeant Yost of any specific needs for the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station.

Chair Hallman inquired about the identification system in place at the establishment that experienced an incident previously described by Sergeant Yost.

Commissioner Steele expressed her thoughts of the use of ID scanners for nightlife establishments. She congratulated the newly appointed Sheriff Luna and spoke about a recent community vigil that they both attended. She also inquired about the recent Sheriff's Pulse Nightclub presentation.

Commissioner Berger inquired about a way for quick communication amongst the nightlife establishments as a safety alert.

There was a lengthy discussion with the Commission and Director Rivas regarding the safety prevention and active shooter trainings for the nightlife establishments in light of the recent tragedies in similar establishments. The Commission requested the need for more community engagement and preparation for threatening situations that could take place in West Hollywood.

Vice Chair Balbone acknowledged the increase in arrests in the last year and thanked Sergeant Yost.

Commissioner Steele inquired about recent reported cases; one regarding a scooter incident and another on a reported rape. She also asked for the update on the drink-spiking report.

Sergeant Yost and Director Rivas responded to all the Commissioner's questions and comments to address the recent nightclub incident and to update them on current emergency planning and discussions.

## **8C. REPORT FROM BLOCK BY BLOCK SECURITY AMBASSADORS – MONTHLY REPORT**

Shea Gibson, Block by Block Operations Manager, gave an update on the November 2022 monthly report and their focus on residential patrols throughout the City. He spoke about the updates on operations to enhance security improvements. He also mentioned the recent events and personnel trainings attended by the security ambassadors.

Commissioner Berger inquired about the training for the new security ambassador recruitment.

Vice Chair Balbone asked about a recent incident that took place where Block by Block was present. She asked questions regarding their security protocols during an incident and if security ambassadors ever come across surprising occasions on the street with the added foot patrols.

Commissioner Steele inquired if it was possible to have the security ambassadors out notifying and patrolling the community during a power outage in the affected areas. She also asked about November's decrease in calls for services regarding unhoused individuals.

Shea Gibson, Block by Block Operations Manager, responded to all the questions and comments made by the Commissioners.

## **8D. REQUEST TRACKING AND COMMISSION CALENDAR**

Director Rivas briefly went over the updates to the Commission Calendar and tracking and highlighted completed actions from requests made by the Commission.

## **8E. COMMISSION WORK PLAN**

Vice Chair Balbone suggested that there be educational sessions added to the workplan in light of the rise in rape and sexual assaults during the months of October and June.

Commissioner Steele agreed with Vice Chair Balbone and asked about being assigned to specific workplan tasks and provided a list of these tasks. She also inquired about the time frame of new Commission appointees.

Director Rivas asked the Commission if they should wait until the new incoming Commission appointees are in place to make updates to the Commission work plan.

Chair Hallman recommended to wait until they have a full Commission before making updates to the work plan.

Vice Chair Balbone and Commissioner Steel requested to look into receiving an update of complaints and praises to the Sheriff's Department and other Public Safety agencies the City contracts with.

Commissioner Steele clarified her request for the complaints/praises. She also inquired about the update on the Center for Policing Equity (CPE) study.

Director Rivas responded to all the questions and comments made by the Commissioners. He asked for the Commissioners to provide their updates and feedback on the workplan and tracking documents. He also provided an update and explanation on agency complaint/praise processes.

Chair Hallman spoke about the Commission being mindful of time while moving along the agenda items.

## **8F. SEMI-ANNUAL COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE**

Director Rivas and the Commission had a discussion to go over the contents and expectations of the Semi-Annual Community Safety Update that will be submitted to the City Council. The Commission gave their feedback of the type of reports and data they would like included.

Director Rivas shared a sample of the comprehensive crime statistical reports that will be shared in future meetings during the Sheriff's agenda items. He showed various charts for the Commission's review.

Commissioner Berger inquired about the Entertainment Policing Team (EPT) from the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station. He also asked Seargent Yost how many Sheriff personnel would be helpful to add to staff at the station.

Seargent Yost and Danny Rivas responded to all the Commissioner's questions and comments and explained the current status of the EPT.

Commissioner Berger made a recommendation to reinstate some previous personnel positions back to the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station.

Chair Hallman agreed with Commissioner Berger on the recommendation.

Commissioner Steele stated she would like to see more statistical data to support the possibility of recommending more Sheriff's staff to the City Council.

Vice Chair Balbone recommended a focused analysis to review the areas that need attention in the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station and making an assessment based on the data. She also recommended that all the Commission's requests be shared with the City Council.

Commissioner Oliver and Director Rivas mentioned that this specific topic is not part of this item and would be best discussed in the future during the time of budgetary review.

## 9) NEW BUSINESS

### 9A. COALITION FOR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL

Eugene Maysky gave a brief presentation about the work the Coalition for Economic Survival (CES) does in West Hollywood to help support and fight the rights for low to moderate income tenants.

Commissioner Berger and the rest of the Commission thanked Eugene for the presentation and helpful information available for West Hollywood tenants.

## 10) ITEMS FROM STAFF

Director Rivas briefly provided some updates on the Municipal Police Force Feasibility Study.

## 11) PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments.

## 12) ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Steele asked additional questions about the Municipal Police Force Feasibility Study and gave her input of desirable qualifications the City should consider when reviewing different firms. She also expressed thanks and holiday greetings to the rest of the Commission.

Vice Chair Balbone also said thanks and holiday greetings to the rest of the Commission.

Chair Hallman wrapped up the meeting with closing remarks and also wished the Commission, staff, and City partnered agencies happy holidays.

## 13) ADJOURNMENT

The Public Safety Commission adjourned at 8:48 P.M. to its next regular meeting to on February 13, 2023.

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Public Safety Commission Chair

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Public Safety Commission Secretary

**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.)***