

**CLERKS RECORD OF THE MEETING
CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS
CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD**

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2023
8:30 A.M.**

**COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM
CITY HALL
8300 SANTA MONICA BLVD.
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA 90069**

1. A. CALL TO ORDER: Councilmember Byers called the meeting to order at 8:31 A.M.

B. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Councilmember Byers, Councilmember Heilman

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager David Wilson, Director of Human Services & Rent Stabilization Christof Schroeder, Human Services Manager Corri Planck, Facilities and Field Services Division Manager Helen Collins, Social Services Supervisor Leslie Isenberg, Director of Community Safety Danny Rivas, Lt. Fanny Lapkin of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, and Recording Secretary Alyssa T. Poblador.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion by Councilmember Heilman, seconded by Councilmember Byers, to approve the November 2, 2023 agenda.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

3.A. PUBLIC SAFETY RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS [C. SCHROEDER, C. PLANCK, D. RIVAS]:

SUBJECT: The Council Subcommittee on Homelessness will receive an update from Community Safety staff and the West Hollywood Sheriff Station (LASD) regarding homelessness response.

Director of Community Safety Danny Rivas provided background information as outlined in the staff report dated November 2, 2023.

Mr. Rivas focused on the three Municipal Code policies noted in the staff report as they relate to public safety response to various calls for service with persons experiencing homelessness, per the request of the subcommittee at the last meeting. He introduced Lt. Fanny Lapkin as the LA Sheriff's Department (LASD) representative.

Councilmember Heilman expressed concern that he does not see coordination between social service outreach teams and the Sheriff's. He further conveyed he has not seen social service teams call the Sheriff's when a person with mental health concerns refuses services.

Mr. Rivas explained that it is difficult to ascertain the origin of a call to LASD since that is not tracked.

Lt. Lapkin added that a phone call from Block by Block or social service providers is now being tracked, but that Sheriff's will only respond when asked. She acknowledged the aim to separate law enforcement and service providers because often when the unhoused member of the community sees law enforcement, they do not want to engage. She further explained how the deputies who join MET Teams are dressed down in civilian clothing so as not to intimidate.

Councilmember Heilman asked if the Sheriff's regularly meet with Block by Block and social service providers, and Lt. Lapkin confirmed that LASD meets with the CARE Teams monthly. Lt. Lapkin commented that all Sheriff's and LASD teams have a list of the unhoused population, know their names, their usual locations, their histories, and their needs.

Human Services Manager Corri Planck strongly expressed that there is frequent communication and coordination with social services, Lt. Lapkin, Captain Moulder, Mr. Rivas and staff in Public Safety, Block by Block, Healthcare in Action, the CARE Team, and the Fire Department. They have had at least 12 briefings in the past two months. All groups know that if any assistance is needed, they can call each other. There is more coordination now between all these agencies than there has ever been. The primary challenge that everyone shares is that a non-violent person cannot be forcibly removed from public space.

Councilmember Heilman repeated that he calls or emails City staff when he sees an unhoused member of the community lying on the sidewalk, but he does not see the person removed.

Ms. Planck commented that every situation is different, and calls are made to each agency as needed. Social service providers will call for Healthcare in Action or Fire for a person down, since utilizing armed law enforcement for a person needing services may further traumatize the individual, and that is never the goal of the CARE Teams nor Healthcare in Action. There are people in the City who are profoundly mentally ill, chronically homeless, and Ms. Planck expressed that West Hollywood does more than any municipality in the Westside Cities Council of Governments and in the region to support conservatorship efforts, conservatorship hearings, and support when the person is inevitably released back onto the street.

Councilmember Byers asked about the frequency of property left unattended and mentioned a piece of luggage she saw over the weekend affixed to a bike rack with a bike lock on Robertson Blvd.

Mr. Rivas confirmed he also saw that and concluded that it was most likely someone visiting from out of town to enjoy Halloween. For instances like this, Block by Block will canvass the surrounding area looking for the owner, and if unable to locate them, Code Enforcement will post a notice allowing 24 hours to remove the property. Code Enforcement documents all of this, takes photos, as these items are not looked at as trash and are recognized as personal belongings. He replied that it is extremely rare after 24 hours that the property is still there. In the rare instance that the property is not claimed, Code Enforcement has a process to store the property for 30 days, but this has not happened in the five years since Mr. Rivas has worked for the City.

Councilmember Byers inquired about the list that LASD keeps on individuals and their needs and histories, and how coordination of that information happens with service providers.

Ms. Planck replied that data from both LASD and Fire are shared with the CARE Team. Case conferencing is part of the homelessness collaborative, and agencies like Step Up, Ascensia, and the LGBT Center for example, do their own case conferencing due to confidentiality issues.

Councilmember Byers requested further information about the Tarzana Treatment Center, which will resume services after a lapse due to the pandemic.

Lt. Lapkin responded that LASD has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Tarzana Treatment Center which stipulates that anyone arrested for being under the influence and has a problem with addiction will have a representative from the Center speak to the person. If the person agrees to do the 6-month treatment program, LASD speaks to the District Attorney to drop the charges for which the person was arrested. With the 12-14 people offered this treatment, two (2) agreed, but both later changed their minds and that is an example of the individualized challenges previously mentioned. When the Tarzana Treatment Center's services return, Lt. Lapkin is unsure if they will be back at the West Hollywood Sheriff station lobby or come from offsite when needed.

Councilmember Heilman commented about a possible philosophical difference of approach on the use of law enforcement, and Ms. Planck agreed that if a person is engaging in unsafe or criminal behavior, Sheriff's should be called. Ms. Planck expressed that this education is shared with businesses regarding Letters of Agency.

Councilmember Byers inquired about what happens when unhoused people are discharged back onto the streets.

Lt. Lapkin responded that if a person is arrested for being drunk in public for example, the person stays until they sober up, are given a citation, then released.

Ms. Planck further explained that for conservatorship hearings, that a person shows up to court medicated since they were on an involuntary hold. If the judge deems the individual has a plan, they are presenting better in court than they do on our streets, the person will be discharged with no resources, no case management, and no tracking. If a member of the West Hollywood unhoused community is released from the Downtown Los Angeles court or other areas, they make their way back to West Hollywood where they feel comfortable, and surroundings are familiar to them.

ACTION: The Subcommittee received an update from Community Safety and Human Services staff, as well as the West Hollywood Sheriff's station regarding homelessness response and provided feedback.

4. NEW BUSINESS: None.

5. ITEMS FROM SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Councilmember Heilman suggested that the Subcommittee go out onto the street and take a walk with the social service agencies in the future.

Councilmember Byers also expressed interest in this, and to do so with the Fire Department. She has also heard from Fire that data and tracking is a challenge, and she would like to know how the City can assist in advocating for solutions.

6. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Facilities and Field Services Division Manager Helen Collins provided an update on the Holloway Project. Currently, the project is out to bid and was extended additional days to get more interest. There is a lot of residential housing construction going on around the project, so contractors are scarce. The switch gear has been procured from Edison. The CARE Team is currently at the Werle Building and staff is working to get them into the property across the street from City Hall early next year. Lastly, for property left in the parks, it is stored at the City Yard for 30 days.

Ms. Planck provided data about the Homeless Concern Line. From January 1 to October 10 there have been 340 total calls to the concern line. These calls came from 272 distinct numbers, 44 of those called the line more than once which were folks forgetting to leave their callback number or to provide additional information. There is an average of 35 calls per month. This does not reflect calls that come into the main Social Services Department number or emails, from Fire, or the

CARE Team, this is just from the Homeless Concern Line. The Homeless Concern Line is (323) 848-6590.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

RAMESSES II SETEPENRE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke of his experiences as a homeless, gay refugee with the Sheriffs in the City.

- 8. ADJOURNMENT:** The City Council Subcommittee on Homelessness adjourned at 9:13 A.M. to its next meeting which will be held on Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 8:30 A.M. in the Community Conference Room, City Hall, 8300 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood CA 90069.



Alyssa T. Poblador, Recording Secretary

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