

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

**Monday, December 11, 2023
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 6:03 P.M.

2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Eramian led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

Commissioner Blau
Commissioner Eramian
Commissioner Freiberg
Commissioner Nickle
Vice Chair Saltzman
Chair Hallman

Commissioners Absent:

Commissioner Harrison

Others Present:

Danny Rivas, City Director of Community Safety, Jessica Anukam, City Public Safety Specialist, Helen Collins, City Facilities and Field Services Manager, Battalion Chief Zackary Cates, Los Angeles County Fire Department, Lieutenant Fanny Lapkin and Sergeant Jason Duron, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Erica Leon, General Manager, Block by Block.

4) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION: Approve the agenda of December 11, 2023. **Motion by Vice Chair Saltzman, seconded by Commissioner Nickle and approved by the Commission.**

5) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Approve the minutes of November 13, 2023. **Motion by Vice Chair Saltzman, seconded by Commissioner Eramian and approved by the Commission.**

6) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mikie Freidman, West Hollywood, expressed the importance of the city's proactive response to abandoned buildings, scooters, and public restrooms in West Hollywood.

Kelli Palotai, West Hollywood, raised concerns about outside individuals occupying and causing issues in her neighborhood's back stairwell of the Ralphs store.

Nicholas Roybal, West Hollywood, spoke out against the recent hate crimes occurring near the City and commended the Sheriff's Department in attendance at the last City Council meeting. He also requested that the lampposts throughout the City be cleaned.

Rick Watts, West Hollywood, spoke about the concerns with the abandoned properties in the City.

7) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7A. REPORT FROM LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT – MONTHLY REPORT

Battalion Chief Cates introduced himself to the Commission and reported on fire activity for November 2023. He provided details regarding the total fires reported, emergency medical service runs, hazardous materials calls, regular service calls, and good intent calls.

Commissioner Eramian inquired about the recent structure fire on Sierra Bonita Avenue.

Commissioner Nickle inquired about the recent rubbish fires and expressed concerns about vacant properties.

Battalion Chief Cates responded to all the Commissioner's questions and comments.

7B. REPORT FROM LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT – MONTHLY REPORT

Sergeant Duron reported on the crime stats for November 2023 which was brought to the Commission in a new format. This report included calls for service, number of arrests, response times, and stats for Part 1 crimes, the statistics of which he broke down by different areas of the City. Sergeant Duron also highlighted notable incidents that occurred in the City last month.

Commissioner Blau inquired about the particular Ralphs store brought up in several conversations between the Commission and community members. He also inquired about the Sheriff's Crime Impact Team (CIT) operations.

Commissioner Nickle inquired about some recent activity, including the bike takeover incident, the fire set in a Crescent Heights mailroom, and burglaries throughout the City.

Commissioner Eramian inquired about the unhoused outreach service statistics.

Commissioner Freiberg inquired about the year-to-date observation and pickpocket statistics. She also asked about the Sheriff's Department protocol regarding pickpocketing and nightclub surveillance cameras.

Chair Hallman asked for an update on a robbery at the Pleasure Med dispensary. He also inquired about extra patrols in stores during the holiday season.

Sergeant Duron and Lieutenant Lapkin responded to all of the Commission's questions and comments.

7C. REPORT FROM BLOCK BY BLOCK SECURITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM – MONTHLY REPORT

Erica Leon, General Manager of Block by Block, provided the reports for November 2023 which included the number of business contacts, an increase in engagement with the unhoused community, and an increase in calls for service. She also mentioned the plan to increase residential patrols during the holiday season, focusing on conducting more patrols in busy areas. She clarified some of the security ambassador definitions inquired at the last City Council meeting.

Commissioner Blau inquired about the Block by Block residential patrol program, patrols on the City's east side and near abandoned properties, and LGBTQ+ training for the security ambassadors.

Commissioner Nickle asked for clarifications on some of this month's report metrics.

Nicholas Roybal, West Hollywood, inquired about the recent LGBTQ+ sensitivity training hosted by the Department of Justice (DOJ) for the Sheriff's Department and expressed his concerns about the security ambassadors.

Erica Leon responded to all the Commissioners and public questions and comments.

8) NEW BUSINESS

8A. EXPLORATION OF ALTERNATIVE AND ADDITIONAL PUBLIC RESTROOMS

Helen Collins, Facilities and Field Services Manager, provided a brief overview of the proposed plans for some of the public restroom facilities in the City. The input and feedback from the Commission will be presented to the City Council for consideration.

Commissioner Freiberg asked how the change affected other cities that updated their public restrooms. She also inquired about adding "emergency buttons" inside the restrooms.

Commissioner Eramian expressed his concerns about the possibility of increased crime with the 24-hour public restroom access and inquired about the plans to mitigate such activity.

Commissioner Nickle inquired about the count of the unhoused population on the City's east side and provided observations regarding the funds allocated for the public restrooms.

Commissioner Blau inquired how the security ambassadors will be positioned in the new restroom plans.

Chair Hallman provided feedback on the proposed plans' restroom layout and inquired about the security staffing to cover the patrols near the facilities.

Helen Collins and Director Rivas responded to all the Commissioners and public questions and comments.

9) ITEMS FROM STAFF

Director Rivas gave an update on the structure fire at 1030 Sierra Bonita Avenue and clarified the roles and functions of the City's Neighborhood and Business Safety Division. He also provided information on the status of the property at 1280 Sweetzer Avenue, the City's Semi-Annual Public Safety Update, and a follow-up on the Public Safety Technology Security Enhancements from the August 2023 Special Meeting with the City Council.

Chair Hallman asked about a solution to secure vacant properties in the City.

Director Rivas responded to all the Commissioner's questions and comments.

10) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Alberta Bligh, Hollywood, expressed her concerns on how the Mental Health Court is handling a situation involving a gunman who came to Larchmont Charter School where her child attends.

11) COMMISSIONER COMMENTS / ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Freiberg thanked all the City's public safety partners, and staff for all their hard work and help for the year.

Commissioner Nickle shared his experience attending events and the Sheriff's Department ride-along he recently participated in. He also requested an update on Fire Station 8 and responded to earlier comments and complaints about Block by Block.

Commissioner Eramian thanked all the City's public safety partners, and staff for all their hard work and help for the year.

Chair Hallman shared his experience attending recent community events and reminded the Commission of the ethics outlined in their bylaws about gatherings outside the regular Commission meetings. He also thanked all the City's public safety partners, fellow Commissioners, and staff for all their hard work and help for the year.

12) ADJOURNMENT

The Public Safety Commission adjourned at 8:20 P.M. to its next regular meeting on January 8, 2024.

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Public Safety Commission Chair

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Public Safety Commission Secretary

Video and audio of this meeting can be obtained by visiting, <https://www.weho.org/city-government/wehotv>

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