

**BUSINESS LICENSE COMMISSION
CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024
WEST HOLLYWOOD PUBLIC MEETING ROOM - COUNCIL CHAMBERS
625 N. SAN VICENTE BOULEVARD**

6:00 PM – REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eisenberg called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Cockeram led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Commissioner Barry
Commissioner Cockeram
Commissioner Eng
Commissioner Hang
Commissioner Vulin
Vice Chair Yusupov
Chair Eisenberg

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Community Safety Director, Danny Rivas
Neighborhood & Business Safety Manager, Vyto Adomaitis
Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez
Commission Secretary, Falyn Kingi
West Hollywood Sheriff's Station, Sgt. Jason Duron

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approve the Business License Commission agenda of Tuesday, February 6, 2024.

ACTION: Approve the agenda of Tuesday, February 6, 2024.

Motion by Vice Chair Yusupov, seconded by Commissioner Vulin, and approved.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commission Secretary, Falyn Kingi, stated that a change was made to add more language to a comment Commissioner Barry made on item 7B, to include his concerns about setting a precedent. Approve the Minutes of the previous Business License Commission Meeting of Tuesday, January 9, 2024, as amended.

ACTION: Approve the minutes of Tuesday, January 9, 2024.

Motion by Commissioner Eng, seconded by Commissioner Barry, and approved as amended.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

None.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. AN UPDATE REGARDING THE EXTENDED HOUR BUSINESS LICENSE #EXT-004735 FOR HEART WEHO

SUBJECT: The West Hollywood Business License Commission will receive a six-month update on the Extended Hour Business License #EXT-004735 for Heart WeHo, located at 8911 Santa Monica Boulevard.

Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, provided background information as reflected in the staff report dated February 6, 2024.

Commissioner Barry inquired about the type of calls that were received. West Hollywood Sheriff's Station, Sgt. Jason Duron responded.

Commissioner Hang congratulated Heart WeHo for their successful business venture. Additionally, he commended Heart WeHo for their holiday event focused on LGBTQ Asylum Seekers and Undocumented Individuals.

Chair Eisenberg inquired about the crime statistics presented in the staff report. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, and West Hollywood Sheriff's Station, Sgt. Jason Duron, provided clarification on the calls for service.

Commissioner Vulin spoke about the Commission's concerns at the initial hearing regarding disturbance to the neighborhood regarding noise and loitering. Furthermore, requested staff clarify that there were no complaints during the extended hours between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez confirmed that there were no complaints received in the last six months.

Commissioner Hang inquired about the process of documenting incident locations. West Hollywood Sheriff's Station, Sgt. Jason Duron, responded.

Vice Chair Yusupov invited Mr. Nicholls to address the Commission.

PAUL NICHOLLS, APPLICANT, spoke about the location of the business, which is located on a popular corner, and explained that incidents reported as occurring at Heart WeHo may not actually involve the business. He stated that there have been no fights inside the club and spoke about pickpocketing and their efforts to address the issue.

ACTION: Receive and file.

B. UPDATE ON ACTIVE CANNABIS ESTABLISHMENTS

SUBJECT: The West Hollywood Business License Commission will receive an update regarding complaints and the City's Code Enforcement efforts to monitor neighborhood security patrols required of cannabis establishments operating within the City.

Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, provided background information as reflected in the staff report dated February 6, 2024.

Commissioner Cockeram inquired about the next steps for MedMen and what happens to the license. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, responded.

ACTION: Receive and file.

9. NEW BUSINESS

None.

10. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Neighborhood and Business Safety Manager, Vyto Adomaitis, provided an update on Doughbrik's Pizza and their extended operating hours with no complaints to the City's Code Enforcement. He informed the Commission that between July 11, 2023, and January 12, 2024, there were five service calls for false alarms reported to the West Hollywood Sheriff's Station. He then announced that the City Clerk's Office is hosting a Mandatory Training for Boards and Commissions on the California Public Records Act, social media, and the City's Media Policy, to be held on February 29, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the West Hollywood City Council Chambers. He also conveyed that Deputy City Attorney, Grace Yeo, has embarked on a new career path and extended well wishes to her. Lastly, he informed the Commission that the next Business License Commission meeting will take place on March 5, 2024.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

12. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Eng raised a question about the recent City Council agenda item concerning the extension of the Cannabis deadline and the Tax Rebate, and its potential impact on the Business License Commission's operations. Community Safety Director, Danny Rivas, clarified that the item on the City Council agenda entailed a second reading of a proposed ordinance. He further provided an overview of the ordinance regarding the pause on Cannabis applicants striving for operational status, temporary 1% tax rebate, waitlist provisions and negotiations with Emerald Village to increase and enhance marketing efforts for local cannabis businesses.

Commissioner Eng inquired about the exclusion of consumption lounges and the plans after July 1, 2025, when the waitlist expires. Community Safety Director, Danny Rivas, explained the existing waitlist provision and clarified that as of now, no plans have been formulated for 2025. He indicated that the absence of plans for 2025 is one of the reasons for the implementation of the pause.

Commissioner Vulin asked if there is anything that was encouraged regarding the Cannabis applications that come before the Commission to ensure that the original spirit of the application is kept in place. Community Safety Director, Danny Rivas, responded.

Commissioner Hang requested clarification on whether AEON was in the process of incorporating a health aspect into their business and were merely awaiting Planning approval and if there were any City initiative to attract minority owned cannabis companies to the City. Code Enforcement Supervisor, Yessica Benitez, confirmed that the business was working with the Planning Division. Community Safety Director, Danny Rivas, mentioned that he would communicate with City staff to explore the feasibility of such an initiative. Lastly, Director Rivas informed the Commission that if the Cannabis Consumption Area Edibles license holders are not able to become fully operational, the license will not be allowed to be placed on the waitlist.

Commissioner Hang inquired if there were any bench markers that are required to come before the Commission. Community Safety Director, Danny Rivas, explained the requirements that each applicant must satisfy before scheduling the public hearing.

Commissioner Eng spoke about whether staffing issues might have hindered applicants from obtaining approvals or guidance. Community Safety Director, Danny Rivas, responded.

Chair Eisenberg inquired about the possibility of additional licenses being issued and ownership transfers being permitted during the cannabis pause. Community Safety Director, Danny Rivas confirmed that no additional licenses would be granted and that transfers would not be permitted during this pause period tentatively until July 1, 2024.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The West Hollywood Business License Commission adjourned at 6:48 P.M. to its next adjourned meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. at West Hollywood Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers, 625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the Business License Commission of the City of West Hollywood at a meeting held this 2nd day of April 2024.

DocuSigned by:

Elyse Eisenberg

ELYSE EISENBERG, CHAIR

ATTEST:

Falyn Kingi

FALYN KINGI, COMMISSION SECRETARY