

**MINUTES
CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
LGBTQ+ COMMISSION**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023
7:00 P.M.**

**WEST HOLLYWOOD CITY HALL
1ST FLOOR – COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM
8300 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Egbuniwe called the meeting to order at 7:07pm.
- 2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** Read by Chair Egbuniwe
“The West Hollywood LGBTQ+ Commission acknowledges that the land on which we gather and that is currently known as the City of West Hollywood is the occupied, unceded, seized territory of the Gabrieleño Tongva and Gabrieleño Kizh peoples.”
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Commissioner Sotile led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 4. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Patrick Ryan Blood, Ron Z. Cortes, Chiedu Egbuniwe, Nik Kacy, Renee F. Sotile, Amber Whittington

ABSENT: Alec White

5. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

ACTION: Motion to approve the October 12, 2023, Agenda as posted by Commissioner Blood, seconded by Commissioner Kacy, and approved.

6. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

ACTION: Motion to approve the September 14, 2023, Meeting Minutes by Commissioner Blood, seconded by Commissioner Sotile, and approved.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Victor Omelczenko – notified the Commissioners about an upcoming event during the Circa: Queer Histories Festival, presented by ONE Institute at the LGBTQ Center. Victor informed the Commission about a panel discussion taking place on Sunday, October 15, 2023, beginning at 3pm about why queer historic sites matter, and informed the Commission of his involvement with the West Hollywood Preservation

Alliance and their work throughout West Hollywood.

***Commissioner Cortes arrived at 7:13pm**

Mike Che, City of West Hollywood Arts Coordinator, provided an update on various City programs including the following:

WeHo Pride Arts Festival Update

Arts Festival Curator/Producer (RFQ) recently closed. Finalists' presentations will take place at the next Arts & Cultural Affairs Performing Arts Subcommittee meeting scheduled for November 2, 2023 at 5pm in the Community Meeting Room of City Hall.

Poet Laureate Events

Installation event for incoming City Poet Laureate, Jen Cheng – Sunday, October 22, 2023, at Plummer Park | 5:00pm.

Jen Cheng Writing Workshop with LA County Library – Saturday, October 28, 2023, 10:30am.

Circa Festival takes place all month and events include:

Poetic Voices of Older Queer Women (includes City's incoming Poet Laureate, Jen Cheng) – Saturday, October 14, 2023, at LA LGBT Center | 2:00pm.

Connie Norman Film 'AIDS Diva', the development of which was partially funded through a City Arts Grant will screen on October 17 at 7:00pm.

WeHo Reads:

WeHo Reads: Creating Hope in Times of Trouble online event – Wednesday, October 18 at 6:30pm.

Literary Death Match – Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at 7:00pm in the City Council Chambers.

Other:

Little Free Library Microgrants to fund a free book exchange are available.

Next Drag Story Hour is on Saturday, December 16th at 11:00am in the West Hollywood Library Community Meeting Room.

Mike also invited the Commissioners to subscribe to the City's Arts newsletter to be informed and updated on upcoming events and programming.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

A. LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE

Jennifer Del Toro, Community & Legislative Affairs Supervisor and Staff liaison provided a brief report to the Commission.

Victor Omelczenko expressed excitement for the Commission's interest in creating a legislative subcommittee.

The Commissioners asked staff to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the legislative subcommittee members.

ACTION: *The Commission appointed Vice-Chair Whittington and Commissioner Blood to the legislative subcommittee. Motion by Commissioner Cortes, seconded by Commissioner Kacy, and approved.*

B. LIAISON APPOINTMENTS

The LGBTQ+ Commission received a schedule of the City's Advisory Board and Commission meeting and discussed which bodies the Commission was interested in appointing liaisons to.

During public comment, Victor Omelczenko updated the Commissioners about the Historic Preservation Commission's recommendation that two Classical Revival style-buildings at 7900 and 7906 Santa Monica Boulevard be designated as local cultural resources. Victor also invited the Commissioners to attend Historic Preservation Commission meetings which are held on the 4th Mondays of each month at 7:00pm. The Commissioners deliberated and voted by consensus to assign Commissioners as liaisons to various Commissions and Advisory Boards.

ACTION: *The Commissioners deliberated and voted by consensus to assign the following Commissioners as liaisons to the following Boards and Commissions:*

Commissions

- **Arts & Cultural Affairs**

4th Thursday of the month at 5:00pm

- Commissioner Cortes
- Commissioner Kacy (alternate)

- **Business License**

1st Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm

- Commissioner Blood

- **Historic Preservation**

4th Monday of each month at 7:00pm

- Chair Egbuniwe

- **Human Services**

2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm

- Commissioner Blood
- Commissioner Cortes (alternate)

- **Planning**

1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:30pm

- Chair Egbuniwe

- **Public Safety**

2nd Monday of the month at 6:00pm

- Vice-Chair Whittington
- Commissioner Blood (alternate)

- **Transportation**

3rd Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm

- Commissioner Blood

Advisory Boards

- **Disabilities**

4th Wednesday of the month at 6:00pm

- Commissioner Blood
- Vice-Chair Whittington (alternate)

- **Senior/Older Adults**

4th Wednesday of the month at 2:00pm

- Commissioner Cortes

- **Social Justice**

4th Tuesday of the months of January, April, July, and October at 6:00pm

- Vice-Chair Whittington
- Commissioner Kacy (alternate)

- **Transgender**

1st Wednesday of the month at 6:00pm

- Commissioner Kacy
- Chair Egbuniwe (alternate)

- **Women's**

4th Thursday of the month at 7:00pm

- Vice-Chair Whittington
- Commissioner Sotile (alternate)

C. PROPOSED LGBTQ+ SUICIDE MEMORIAL REVIEW PROCESS APPOINTEES

The LGBTQ+ Commission received a report from Helen Collins, Facilities and Field Services Manager on the proposed LGBTQ+ Suicide Memorial and asked the Commission to appoint three members to the Public Facilities Commission Ad Hoc Committee who will gather more precise and detailed information on the proposed LGBTQ+ Suicide Memorial. The Commission appointed Commissioner Kacy, Commissioner Cortes, and Commissioner Sotile to participate on the Public Facilities Commission Ad Hoc Committee.

Commissioner Cortes asked staff to provide clarity on where the memorial will be located.

Commissioner Blood asked staff to clarify how the Commissioners could best assist staff in providing feedback on the proposed LGBTQ+ Suicide Memorial.

Chair Egbuniwe expressed interest in hearing about Commissioner Sotile's experience serving on this committee previously. Commissioner Sotile informed the Commission of her experience serving on this subcommittee last year.

Commissioner Kacy, Commissioner Blood, Commissioner Sotile, and Commissioner Cortes expressed interest in participating on the Ad Hoc Committee.

ACTION: *The Commission appointed Commissioner Kacy, Commissioner Cortes, and Commissioner Sotile to participate and work with the Public Facilities Commission Ad Hoc Committee in gathering more precise and detailed information on the proposed LGBTQ+ Suicide Memorial.*

**The Commission took a 10-minute recess.*

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. RAINBOW KEY AWARDS

The LGBTQ+ Commission received an update from the Rainbow Key Awards subcommittee and staff on the 2023 Rainbow Key Awards Ceremony including the proposed dates and other production elements in connection with the event. The Commission voted in favor of the subcommittee's selected date of Saturday, December 9, 2023, at 5:00pm for the 2023 Rainbow Key Awards Ceremony, and suggested Tuesday, January 30, 2023, at 5:00pm as an alternate date.

Commissioner Kacy asked the subcommittee and staff to clarify that the Commission and staff will have the bandwidth to host this award ceremony in December 2023 if a December date is selected and approved. Staff confirmed that their workplan was reviewed and considered in working with the subcommittee to select a December date for the 2023 Awards Ceremony.

ACTION: Approve the Rainbow Key Awards subcommittees recommendation to hold the 2023 Rainbow Key Awards Ceremony on Saturday, December 9, 2023, at 5:00pm and reserve the date of Tuesday, January 30, 2023 at 5:00pm as an alternate date.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Victor Omelczenko thanked the Commission for the discussion and forthcoming work on the Rainbow Key Awards 2023 Ceremony.

11. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Kacy

Apologized for not being able to attend the September 14, 2023, Commission meeting, and emphasized the importance of increasing access to LGBTQ+ Commission meetings,

including the possibility of televising Commission meetings. Commissioner Kacy also encouraged the Commission to attend future West Hollywood Sheriff's Transgender Focus Group meetings.

Commissioner Cortes

Commissioner Cortes reminded the Commission about his interest in the Commission agenda and a discussion related to how the LGBTQ+ Commission can collaborate to provide services to protect the LGBTQ+ population that suffers from addiction. Staff notified the Commission that an update on recently requested items from the Commission will be presented at the November meeting.

Commissioner Sotile

Commissioner Sotile extended gratitude to Commissioner Blood and provided a brief attendance report of events she attended since the last LGBTQ+ Commission meeting including the Bi-Pride event in Plummer Park, WGA Bi-Pride Picket Line, Mayor Pro Tem's Erickson's 'Day in the Park', Metro K line Community Meeting and West Hollywood Sheriff's Transgender Focus Group. Commissioner Sotile also shared information about the Women's Advisory Board's Silent Witness project, West Hollywood's Trap Neuter Release (TNR) program, and asked the Commission to adjourn in memory of Momma.

Commissioner Blood

Thanked staff, members of the public that participated in public comment, and the presenters. Commissioner Blood shared that the West Hollywood Library is distributing free Narcan and stressed the importance of the initiative, emphasized that this month is Disabilities Awareness Month, and echoed Commissioner Kacy's comments on increasing access and accessibility to LGBTQ+ Commission meetings, and echoed the adjournment motion of Momma. Commissioner Blood informed the Commission that he attended the Transportation Commission meeting and encouraged the Commissioners to attend the October 16th City Council meeting and speak about the dockless microbility item. Commissioner Blood also shared his feelings about the meeting.

Vice-Chair Whittington

Vice-Chair Whittington thanked the Commissioners for their work and echoed the comments of Commissioner Kacy and Commissioner Blood about accessibility to LGBTQ+ Commission meetings. Vice-Chair Whittington invited the Board to attend Lambda Legal's West Coast Liberty Awards which will take place on Wednesday, October 18th at 6pm and will take place at The Lot at Formosa in West Hollywood. Vice-Chair Whittington also thanked the Commission for nominating her as Vice-Chair and notified the Commission of her involvement on George Gascon's LGBTQ+ Advisory Board.

Chair Egbuniwe

Chair Egbuniwe thanked the Commissioners for their work and shared information about the Circa Festival. More information can be located at circafestival.org. Chair Egbuniwe also notified the Commission of his attendance at the Bi-Pride event in Plummer Park and provided an attendance report of other events attended since the last LGBTQ+ Commission meeting. In addition, Chair Egbuniwe shared his feelings about the meeting.

12. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Staff gauged interest in the Commission changing the start of meetings to 6pm. The Commission expressed interest in pursuing this change and staff informed the Commission that an item would be brought back on a future agenda.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The LGBTQ+ Commission adjourned at 9:13pm in memory of Momma to its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, November 9, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. to be held in the West Hollywood City Hall - 1st Floor Community Meeting Room at 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069.

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Chiedu Egbuniwe

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Chair Egbuniwe

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Jasmine Duckworth

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Recording Secretary | Jasmine Duckworth