

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

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2024 – 7:00 P.M.**

**WEST HOLLYWOOD CITY HALL  
1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR – COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM  
8300 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD, WEST HOLLYWOOD CA 90069**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Whittington called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm

**A. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT:**

Read by Chair Whittington

*“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.”*

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner White led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. ROLL CALL**

**Present** Commissioner Ron Cortes  
Commissioner Chiedu Egbuniwe  
Commissioner Shane Ivan Nash (*Arrived at 7:13*)  
Commissioner Michael Roberts  
Commission Vice Chair Alec White  
Commission Chair Amber Whittington

**Absent: Commissioner Renee F. Sotile**

**Also** Commission Liaison Jennifer Del Toro  
**Present:** Recording Secretary Moya Márquez

**D. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 10, 2024 AGENDA**

The Commission was asked to approve the October 10, 2024 Meeting Agenda as posted.

**ACTION:** Approval of the October 10, 2024 Agenda as posted was **motioned by Commissioner Cortes, seconded by Commissioner Roberts, and approved unanimously.**

**E. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 MINUTES**

The Commission was asked to approve the September 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes.

Commissioner Cortes asked for a revision to the September 12, 2024 minutes as presented by staff to indicate that he was the one who suggested that the Commission should provide feedback on the Historic Rainbow District designation initiative.

**ACTION:** Approval of the September 12, 2024, meeting minutes as amended was **motioned by Commissioner Cortes, seconded by Commissioner Roberts, and approved unanimously.**

**F. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**2. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**A. LGBTQ+ COMMISSION WORKPLAN**

The Commission received and filed the revised workplan for the 2024-25 year.

**ACTION:** The Consent Calendar was approved as part of the approval of the agenda.

**3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. RAINBOW KEY AWARDS**

The Commission received an update from staff on the following: the dates for the 2024 Ceremony; an update on the Rainbow Key Award Guidelines; and the 2025 nomination cycle.

Staff reported that all five awardees indicated their availability on Saturday, January 18 and Sunday, January 19. The Commission expressed consensus on having the 2024 Awards Ceremony on Saturday, January 18, 2025.

Staff also reported that the City Attorney had minor revisions to the Rainbow Key Award Guidelines, and that those updates would return to a future meeting to the Commission. An initial staff review of the proposed changes indicated that they are primarily clarifications to language and would not significantly alter the intent of the awards.

Finally, staff recommended that the 2025 nomination cycle should begin early next year following the 2024 awards ceremony

**ACTION:** Approval of the Ceremony date as Saturday, January 18, 2025 was **motioned by Commission Vice Chair White, seconded by Commissioner Egbuniwe and approved unanimously.**

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A. WEST HOLLYWOOD GREEN BUSINESS PROGRAM**

The Commission received a presentation on the City's new Green Business Program and provided feedback on outreach strategies to target and incentivize participation by LGBTQ+-owned businesses in the community.

Paige Portwood, Planner at the City of West Hollywood, introduced the administrator for the new Green Business Program, Suzie.

Suzie explained the Green Business program. It's a program that has been operating in California since the 90s, but became a stand-alone program within the state in the mid 2010s. West Hollywood is the 51<sup>st</sup> City to join the state networks. It primarily serves small-to-medium size businesses, and is entirely free and funded by the City of West Hollywood.

Participating business receive onsite assessment of their practices, and are offered solutions and tools to help meet green goals. After completing the program, the City offers up to \$1,500 reimbursement for green purchases, which may include the replacement of lightbulbs to LEDs, HVAC repair, or the purchase of green products. Once completed, the business receive window decals and are listed on the California Green Business Network Directory.

Also receive free onsite assessment on green practices. Will provide free tools for the assessment, including free product samples.

Suzie explained that the goal is to eventually certify at least 15 West Hollywood business. So far, nine have signed up. She asked the Commission for suggestions in reaching out to the local businesses.

Commissioner Nash asked if nonprofit organizations were eligible, and Suzie replied in the affirmative.

She mentioned they mailed out 880 letters to businesses in April. But that the program will not certify medical facilities or hotels.

Commissioners suggested reaching out to the Chamber, the City's Economic Development department and Communications department. They also indicated they would share the information with any businesses they know.

**ACTION:** None. Received and filed. No action taken.

##### **B. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

The LGBTQ+ Commission received an update from Hernan Molina, Governmental Affairs Liaison, on the bills the City supported/opposed during the

2023-2024 legislative that ended on August 31, 2024.

Hernan Molina, the City's Governmental Affairs Liaison, explained some basics about the State's legislative session. Like Congress, the State's legislature runs in a two-year cycle. The last day to pass a Bill was August 31. The Governor signed Bills through Sept 30.

This session broke records in number of bills introduced: with over 5,000 introduced. The City's legislative team consists of Hernan and two contracted lobbyists: one state and one federal.

The next session starts on January 6. As bills start being introduced in January and February, Hernan will start sharing new bills with as much context is available. In March and April, the City will then start deciding what bills to support.

Staff indicated that the Commission will select Commissioners to serve on the Legislative Subcommittee at the meeting in November.

**ACTIONS:** None. Received and filed. No action taken.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**6. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Cortes suggested that the workplan item should be a standing item on every agenda moving forward so that staff can present updates as needed. Staff responded that they will clear this request with the City Clerk to see if it's feasible.

**ACTION:** Approval of creating a standing workplan item on every agenda moving forward, following City Clerk approval, was **motioned by Vice Chair White, seconded by Commission Chair Whittington and approved unanimously.**

Commissioner Cortes also mentioned that he attended the City's Bi+ Visibility Week event on Sunday, September 22, 2024 along with Commissioner Sotile. He mentioned he spoke with attendees at the event about the importance of Bi+ Visibility. He also shared the December 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for the City's Moving Art Grant.

Commissioner Egbuniwe welcomed Commissioner Nash to the Commission. He mentioned that the Circa Festival launched in September, with support from the City of West Hollywood, and the LA County LGBTQ+ Commission. He also discussed other LGBTQ art programs he's attended.

Commissioner Nash acknowledged the new owner of the Abbey, who made a video that directly addressed some of the issues that have been reported at the bar.

Commissioner Roberts reported that he is enrolled and attending the City's Civic Leadership Academy to learn about how the City functions. He spoke positively about the program and encouraged other Commissioners to enroll.

Vice Chair White wished everyone observing an easy and meaningful Yom Kippur. He mentioned he attended the Equality California Awards Ceremony on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Whittington reported that Lambda Legal was hosting their award ceremony on October 25<sup>th</sup>. She also attended an event hosted by the Victory Institute, which helps new community LGBTQ+ leaders get elected.

## **7. ITEMS FROM STAFF**

Moya Marquez, Recording Secretary, shared that the City is Co-Sponsoring a free Drag Queen Comedy event on Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024. They asked the Commission for help in spreading the word.

Jennifer Del Toro, Staff Liaison, discussed the new requests in the workplan, and how staff will approach the requests. In regard to the item on Preserving LGBTQ+ History: staff will bring a comprehensive update, where community partners like the ONE Institute, the Lavender Effect, and other organizations will be invited to speak about the relevant work that they do.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

The LGBTQ+ Commission adjourned at 8:13pm to its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. to be held in West Hollywood City Hall - 1st Floor Community Meeting Room at 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069.

APPROVED BY A MOTION OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMISSION ON THIS 14th DAY OF NOVEMBER 2024.

  
Amber Whittington | Commission Chair

  
Moya Márquez | Recording Secretary