

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

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2024
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 7:05pm.
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: Ron Cortes, Chiedu Egbuniwe, Nik Kacy, Renee F. Sotile, and Amber Whittington

ABSENT: Alec White

5. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:**

ACTION: Motion to approve the February 8, 2024, Agenda as posted by Commissioner Cortes, seconded by Commissioner Kacy, and approved.

6. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

ACTION: Motion to approve the January 11, 2024, Meeting Minutes by Commissioner Kacy, seconded by Commissioner Cortes, and approved.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Joe Green, Co-Chair Pro Tempore of the LA County Commission on HIV notified the Commission that February 7th was National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and provided a brief update on the Black Caucus' HIV Prevention efforts.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. WEHO PRIDE 2024 PLANNING UPDATE

The LGBTQ+ Commission received an update on WeHo Pride 2024 planning, provided input on selection priorities for the Community Group Grant program, and appointed two Commission members to participate on the selection panel for the Community Group Grant Program for WeHo Pride 2024.

The Commission asked Events Services staff how grants were allocated to each group, how many groups received funding in years past, if fee waivers were offered to group holding events at City venues and non-City venues, and asked how Pride funding was allocated to different groups like the Women's Freedom Festival. The Commission also provided feedback on the lack of City promotion during WeHo Pride for the community events, and on Compton Pride and their experience during Pride 2023. Events Services Staff provided responses to the Commission and clarified that through the WeHo Pride Community Grant Program, groups and organizations would be requesting funding, not stage time.

Events staff also notified the Commission that there will be a Pride Subcommittee meeting tentatively scheduled for March. Date TBD.

Alan Strasburg introduced himself to the Commission, congratulated the Commission on the success of the 2023 Rainbow Key Awards, and asked about the Commission's purview and how their meeting location was determined. Alan also expressed concern with the funding allocations during WeHo Pride.

Andy Sacher, Founding Executive & Creative Director of the Lavender Effect introduced himself to the Commission, spoke on the importance of preserving Queer history, and shared his experience working with Christopher Street West (CSW). Andy also notified the Commission of his intent to highlight an oral history project for the WeHo Pride Community Group Grant Program.

The Commission outlined what the priorities should be as it relates to the Community Group Grant Program Application Process.

Some of the priorities included:

- Having a good balance of grants awarded to both WeHo residents (and co-applicants that are residents) and organizations, as well as non-WeHo based residents, organizations, and non-profits since there are many Queer, Trans, and BIPOC-led groups committed to the LGBTQ+ community within the County of Los Angeles (i.e., Compton Pride)
- Strong considerations for underfunded Queer, Trans, and BIPOC groups, non-profits, and organizations that are community-oriented that may not have fiscal sponsors
- Prioritization of social services including addiction recovery, mental health, Trans-focused, BIPOC-focused, and Sex-Worker centric services.
- More events inclusive of all people
- Increase in funding for community groups
- More accessibility of City venues (parks and facilities) for interested community groups
- Allocation of more City staff to expedite process of reviewing grant submittals
- More improved marketing efforts for community group led events and increased accessibility to events (i.e. events that are free until a certain time)

ACTION: The Commission appointed Chair Egbuniwe and Commissioner Cortes to participate on the selection panel for the WeHo Pride Community Group Grant Program.

B. RAINBOW KEY AWARDS

The LGBTQ+ Commission debriefed about the 2023 Rainbow Key Awards Ceremony and received a brief update on the 2024 Rainbow Key Awards Nominations. The Commissioners were thankful to staff for their work and efforts in assisting to plan and coordinate the Awards Ceremony and made suggestions to improve the quality of the event in the future. Some of those suggestions included, receiving applications earlier to allow for more time to plan and review, increased funding for the event, travel stipend to cover travel expenses and accommodations for awardees coming from out of town, implement step and repeat and bouquet of flowers for awardees, send run of show and call time information to presenters a day before the event and send calendar invite for tech rehearsal, include more entertainment, and invite a previous award recipient to close out the event.

Staff notified the Commission that 32 nominations have been received, which is double the number of nominations received last year. Staff also informed the Commission that during their March meeting, the Commission will review the nominations and vote on nominees at their regularly scheduled meeting in April.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. SACRAMENTO LEGISLATIVE ACTION DAY FOR APPOINTED OFFICIALS

The LGBTQ+ Commission received a brief update on the Sacramento Legislative Action Day for Appointed Officials.

ACTION: The LGBTQ+ Commission appointed Vice Chair Whittington to attend the City Council approved Sacramento Legislative Action Day for Appointed Officials, which will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, from 8:00am to 6:00pm in Sacramento, California. The Commission appointed Commissioner Kacy as an alternate.

B. LESBIAN & QUEER WOMEN'S VISIBILITY WEEK

The Commission received an update on Lesbian & Queer Women's Visibility Week, which will take place the week of April 22nd and include the display of the Lesbian Pride flag in medians along Santa Monica Boulevard and West Hollywood City Hall, the lanterns over Santa Monica Blvd being lit in pink, orange, white, and red to reflect the shades of the Lesbian Pride flag, and a press release. The Commission provided feedback on potential programming and events for this year's event and will work with staff in creating a list of community groups to share future Commission events with.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Alan Strasburg expressed concern with the funding allocated for the Lesbian & Queer Women's Visibility Week, Women's Freedom Festival, and other community groups, and emphasized the importance of community members and residents volunteering their time and service to the City.

11. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Kacy

Commissioner Kacy provided a brief attendance report of events they attended since the last Commission meeting including the Transgender Advisory Board (TAB) meeting, and suggested that the Commission be more involved in the Transgender Day of

Remembrance (TDOR). Commissioner Kacy thanked the public commenters who spoke during the meeting, the Commissioners, staff, and Vice Chair Whittington for inviting them to attend District Attorney Gascón's LGBTQ+ Advisory Board's event. Commissioner Kacy agreed with comments made about the need to audit how groups and organizations are spending Pride funds, and echoed the sentiments of Vice-Chair Whittington about bringing back item on racial and disability discrimination. Commissioner Kacy also suggested partnering with Lesbian Archives and Outwards Archives.

Commissioner Cortes

Commissioner Cortes emphasized the importance of social services for unhoused individuals in West Hollywood, especially during inclement weather, and provided a brief attendance report, including Poet Laureate event. Commissioner Cortes also shared information about the upcoming Winter Sounds events.

Commissioner Sotile

Commissioner Sotile shared information about Community Cat Day, provided a brief attendance report, including an event coordinated by the City's Women's Advisory Board, and Coffee with the Mayor. Commissioner Sotile also spoke about an interest in pursuing a project centered on preserving LGBTQ+ Pride history, and a grant for filmmakers. Commissioner Sotile asked if these items could be placed on the Commission's next agenda. Lastly, Commissioner Sotile spoke on the importance of paying people for their work and contributions to the City.

Vice-Chair Whittington

Vice-Chair Whittington thanked the public commenters for attending the meeting, the Commission for their work on the 2023 Rainbow Key Awards, and asked if the item on combatting racial and disability discrimination at the bars and nightclubs could be placed on a future agenda. Vice Chair Whittington also asked if the Commission could agendaize an item regarding appointing an additional member to the legislative subcommittee to a future meeting. Lastly, Vice Chair Whittington thanked Commissioner Kacy and Chair Egbuniwe for attending District Attorney Gascón's LGBTQ+ Advisory Board's event, and echoed Commissioner Sotile's sentiments about paying people for their work and contributions to the City.

Chair Egbuniwe

Chair Egbuniwe thanked the public commenters for attending the meeting, and echoed Vice-Chair Whittington and Commissioner Sotile's comments about paying people for their service and time to the City, even if they are volunteering. Chair Egbuniwe also asked if the purview of the Commission could be reviewed and what the process would be. Chair Egbuniwe thanked Vice Chair Whittington for inviting him to attend District Attorney Gascón's LGBTQ+ Advisory Board event, and echoed Commissioner Sotile's sentiments about digitizing and memorializing the history and experiences of West Hollywood's LGBTQ+ history and encouraged a devotion of funding to these projects. Lastly, Chair Egbuniwe asked the Commission to adjourn in memory of Jill Guevera, and asked staff to agendaize an item to re-appoint Commissioners as liaisons.

A. LIAISON REPORTS

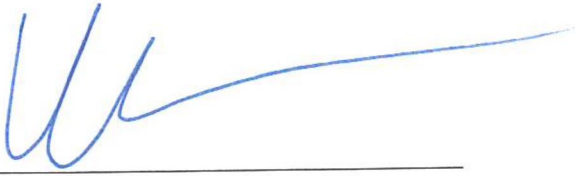
No liaison reports.

12. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Jennifer Del Toro, staff liaison informed the Commission of the Lesbian Speakers Series – Celebrating 35 Years of Black Lesbian Organizing in LA event on February 24, 2024, at the West Hollywood City Council Chambers at 2:00pm.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The LGBTQ+ Commission adjourned in memory of Jill Guevera at 9:11pm to its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, March 14, 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.



Chair Egbuniwe



Recording Secretary | Jasmine Duckworth