

**CLERKS RECORD OF THE MEETING
CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS
CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2023
8:30 A.M.**

**COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM
CITY HALL
8300 SANTA MONICA BLVD.
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA 90069**

1. **A. CALL TO ORDER:** Councilmember Byers called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Councilmember Byers, Councilmember Heilman

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Director of Human Services & Rent Stabilization Christof Schroeder, Strategic Initiatives Manager Corri Planck, Facilities and Field Services Division Manager Helen Collins, Property Development Manager Brian League, and Recording Secretary Alyssa T. Poblador.

- C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Motion by Councilmember Heilman, seconded by Councilmember Byers, to approve the June 22, 2023 agenda.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

3. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

3.A. FOLLOW UP ON EXPLORATION OF ALTERNATIVE AND ADDITIONAL PUBLIC RESTROOMS [H. COLLINS]:

SUBJECT: The City Council Subcommittee on Homelessness will receive an overview on the City Council's directive for staff to explore increased access to public restrooms through additional and alternative facilities.

Facilities and Field Services Division Manager Helen Collins provided background information as outlined in the staff report dated June 22, 2023.

Division Manager Collins showed a slide presentation and noted that urinating and defecating in public is not only a homelessness problem. When the County would not allow the opening of public facilities due to COVID-19, it was noted that bus drivers, delivery drivers, and postal service workers were utilizing public restrooms as well.

The City Council's direction was to explore alternative restrooms and to research what other cities are doing. In California, there are 13 public restrooms per 1,000 residents. San Francisco has the largest

homelessness program and spends \$12.7 million/year for 26 public restrooms, including cleaning and security. Washington DC incentivizes businesses for allowing the public to use their restrooms. Seattle uses a portable concept, Portland developed a stand-alone restroom with an open top with a hand-washing station outside the toilet, called "Portland Loo" and it cost \$250,000 for installation, and \$150-200,000 for maintenance.

Cities are moving away from self-cleaning restrooms because they need a huge water line, and this model does not get rid of toilet paper therefore most cities are moving towards the Portland Loo model.

Ms. Collins inquired of the subcommittee on next steps, ongoing need post-COVID-19 after learning about implementation.

Councilmember Heilman commented that post-COVID things have changed and that the need is more for bar patrons than unhoused members of the community.

Division Manager Collins noted that due to the requests for clean up in the commercial and business areas, pressure-washing has been increased to two (2) times per week.

Councilmember Byers queried if the City could create a map with all public restrooms for the public. Division Manager Collins agreed this could be helpful. Councilmember Byers added if there is a possibility to make our public restroom facilities available 24/7, even if at least one. Ms. Collins commented that the biggest issue is security, and the cost could be brought to Council.

Councilmember Heilman mentioned that privacy and safety concerns are the biggest hindrances to the usage of public restrooms, and to ensure people with disabilities and trans people feel the design is inclusive and welcoming.

Ms. Collins further commented that comfort is a big issue in her research, as well as availability to menstrual stations being a large need for unhoused community members.

Strategic Initiatives Manager Corri Planck added that another component of the comfort station and access center is hygiene as well as access to showers.

VICTOR OMELCZENKO, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke about his experience as a bicyclist and his use of public restrooms and shared a flyer for Refresh Spot at 544 Town Ave. in Skid Row/DTLA for free restrooms, free showers, laundry, phone charging, and referrals to services available 24/7.

Ms. Planck shared that shower and laundry programs are available at the LA LGBT Center. The connectivity to services, charging stations, storage (which is the biggest need) are happening with contracted agencies and at Holloway.

Councilmember Heilman thanked Mr. Omelczenko for the comment and would find it helpful to see the timeframe for the comprehensive drop-in service center. He encouraged staff to place flyers about information of LA LGBT Center and Saban at our parks.

Councilmember Byers suggested dots on the map of West Hollywood indicating how far away one is from a public restroom, hours of availability, and pointed out that she hasn't seen any above Fountain. Ms. Collins replied that there are two public restrooms at Hart Park that close at 10:00 p.m.

4. NEW BUSINESS: None.

5. ITEMS FROM SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Councilmember Heilman requested to agendaize a discussion of current outreach programs. He recently walked along Santa Monica from La Cienega to Robertson and encountered 10-12 unhoused individuals and saw no outreach workers and stated he has never seen an outreach worker. He would like to know the outreach workers' schedule, as visibility hasn't translated especially for the residents and business community. When he has called for service, the individual has left. He knows we have spent funds and has not seen results in that regard.

Councilmember Byers shared she has seen a member of the Healthcare in Action team, one who was at the presentation at our last subcommittee meeting. The need for more visibility should be the goal. She suggested that Healthcare in Action could come and present at a City Council meeting.

6. ITEMS FROM STAFF

• **Holloway Interim Housing Program Update**

Ms. Collins shared we have an architect on board to quickly capture grant funding. The obstacles are Edison and the availability of switch gears. She learned that we are located in a fault zone so the foundation must be fortified.

Ms. Planck commented that Ascencia teams have participated in conversations with the architect, and we have access to a pro-bono trauma-informed architecture team. A brochure of what will be available at the Holloway site is ready to share for National Night Out. She has attended Design District board meetings and Soho House has met with Ascencia and is supportive of the program.

Councilmember Heilman asked about the funding deadline and if funders are aware of the issues encountered in the event an extension is needed. Ms. Planck

has made them aware, and we have received a partial extension. We have \$584,000 from the County we are holding for operations. There are five to seven (5to 7) years of funding already in place. Heilman offered if there is any outreach that he and Councilmember Byers can do with state elected officials.

Councilmember Byers asked about the food provider. Ms. Planck responded that a current provider expressed interest. Councilmember Byers additionally shared that the banners were effective, and the site is well maintained. Ms. Collins commented that people have tried to access the site by kicking the doors in, and padlocks and boarded up windows have mitigated that issue.


VICTOR OMELCZENKO, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke about transitional housing and that neighbors feel it is valuable for the community. The West Hollywood Preservation Alliance urged the City to designate it as a historic building since it's the last motel on Route 66.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

VICTOR OMELCZENKO, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke that the pandemic has ended, the moratoriums lifted, with 11 Ellis Act applications. 50 units have been taken off the rent stabilized list. Notices like this are alarming as it moves people into homelessness. He urged for 1:1 replacements of affordable housing.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

The City Council Subcommittee on Homelessness adjourned at 9:20 a.m. to its next meeting which will be held on Thursday, August 24, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. in the Community Conference Room, City Hall, 8300 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood CA 90069.



Alyssa T. Poblador, Recording Secretary

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