



**PLANNING COMMISSION
SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES
Regular Meeting
February 6, 2025**

West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers
625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, California

THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD HAS ADOPTED BRIEF SUMMARY AND ACTION MEETING MINUTES, WHICH PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN AND POINTS OF DISCUSSION ONLY. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR INDIVIDUAL DISCUSSIONS REGARDING ANY ITEM SUMMARIZED IN THESE MINUTES MAY BE OBTAINED BY VIEWING THE ARCHIVED VIDEOS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS AT www.weho.org/weho-tv/other-city-meetings

Land Acknowledgment: “The West Hollywood Planning 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.”

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Lombardi called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Commissioner Solomon led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Commissioners Present: Carvalheiro, Hoopingarner, Jones, Matos, Solomon, Vice-Chair Gregoire, Chair Lombardi.

Commissioners Absent: None.

Staff Present: Roger Rath, Associate Planner, Jennifer Alkire, Assistant Director, Community Development Department, Isaac Rosen, Deputy Legal Counsel, and David Gillig, Commission Secretary.

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission agenda for Thursday, February 6, 2025, as presented. **Moved by Commissioner Matos, seconded by Vice Chair Gregoire unanimously passes.**

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

Commission Secretary Gillig stated for the record a supplemental memorandum was previously distributed and posted which noted some clerical and spelling errors to the verbatim minutes.

ITEM 5.A.

A. December 19, 2024

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission minutes for Thursday, December 19, 2024, as amended. **Moved by Commissioner Hoopingarner, seconded by Commissioner Matos and passes, noting Commissioner Jones and Commissioner Solomon abstaining.**

B. February 6, 2025

Commission Secretary Gillig stated for the record a supplemental memorandum was previously distributed and posted which noted some clerical and spelling errors to the action summary minutes.

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission minutes for Thursday, February 6, 2025, as amended. **Moved by Vice Chair Gregoire, seconded by Commissioner Matos and passes, noting Commissioner Jones abstained.**

6. PUBLIC COMMENT.

WENDY GOLDMAN, WEST HOLLYWOOD spoke and questioned the historical evaluation of a vacant property located at 927 N. Harrat Street. She stated this property was surveyed to be part of the potential Sherman Thematic Grouping. She requested a determination if this property is in fact historic.

JOSHUA MARIN-MORA, WEST HOLLYWOOD, West Hollywood Field Representative for Assemblymember Ric Chavez Zbur. He thanked the commission on behalf of Assemblymember Zbar for all the work the Planning Commission does for the city and the district. He expressed their availability, and to reach out for any help needed from the district.

7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Nicholas Maricich, Community Development Director, stated at the City Council meeting on Monday, February 3, 2025, the council: 1) approved an ordinance updating the accessory dwelling unit regulations as dictated by State code, 2) received and filed a report on the Zoning Improvement Program for Housing, 3) received a final implementation update on the Eastside Community Priorities Plan and directed staff to conclude ongoing tracking of this plan, 4) adopted the Metro K Line North First Last Mile Early Assessment Plan, and 5) approved the city's Bike Giveaway Plan.

The council also conducted a public hearing for a proposed static billboard located at 9200 Sunset Boulevard. They directed staff to work with the applicant to analyze and bring forward for consideration a digital billboard, rather than the proposed static billboard, and to renegotiate the development agreement and conduct the necessary CEQA analyses. They also requested the project to incorporate an evergreen tree. Once the revised project is designed, analyzed and negotiated, this item will be returned to the Planning Commission before returning to the City Council.

Related to the Sunset Arts and Advertising Program, Vice Mayor Heilman and Councilmember Hang brought forward an item which directed the City Manager to update and consolidate the staff support being provided to the city's billboard program within the Community Development Department. This will include three new positions to administer the program.

Jennifer Alkire, Assistant Director, Community Development Department, provided an update of the upcoming special Joint Study Session to be held with the City Council and Planning Commission on Monday, February 24, 2025, at 6:00 pm. She stated a conversational format will be focused on development agreements and the public benefit policy.

Commissioner Matos questioned if the proposed billboard will be returned to the Sunset Arts and Advertising Subcommittee.

Nicholas Maricich, Community Development Director, stated at this time no new proposal has been submitted and it will depend on how substantial the design has changed.

8. **CONSENT CALENDAR.** None.
9. **PUBLIC HEARINGS SECTION I:
PROJECTS SUBJECT TO THE HOUSING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT.** None.
10. **PUBLIC HEARINGS, SECTION II:
OTHER ITEMS THAT REQUIRE A PUBLIC HEARING UNDER THE LAW.**

A. 8869 – 8874 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD:

Roger Rath, Associate Planner, provided a verbal presentation and background information, as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, February 6, 2025.

He stated the proposal is a change of use from a restaurant to a nightclub with live entertainment, a full range of alcoholic beverages, a dance floor, and an outdoor patio.

He stated the façade improvements, the combination of the two former tenant spaces, and the second-floor addition were all approved under a zone clearance.

He detailed the proposed layout of the nightclub, clarifying the first floor includes the bar, dance floor, seating area, stage, restrooms for patrons, and a 700-square-foot outdoor patio. The second floor will be restricted to staff only, which features a DJ area, storage, and an office.

He stated the applicant is requesting operating hours from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. He clarified the Planning Commission's jurisdiction is limited to approving hours of operation up to 2:00 a.m. Any operation beyond this time would require separate approval by the Business License Commission.

Staff recommends that operations end at 2:00 a.m. To ensure an orderly closing, staff recommends that the sales and service of alcohol end 30 minutes earlier, giving patrons time to finish their drinks and leave the premises.

He spoke regarding possible noise and mitigation measures.

Staff recommends approval of the request, subject to the findings and conditions of approval in the draft resolution.

There were no official disclosures.

The commission questioned the protocol regarding soundproofing and testing, what standard procedures are for other businesses regarding sales and service of alcohol, and alcohol consumption hours.

Chair Lombardi opened public comments for Item 10.A.

BRETT ENGSTROM, PASADENA, applicant's representative, Sweetwater, Inc. provided the applicant's report. He detailed the proposed new nightclub space, bar area, seating, restrooms, dance floor, stage area and a 700 square-foot outdoor patio area along the front of the building. He confirmed staff will only be allowed on the second floor, which includes a mezzanine, storage space, office, DJ space, and a restroom.

He stated the business will operate as a bar during daytime hours and will convert to a nightclub during evening hours. Proposed hours of operation are 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m., noting the commission's jurisdiction until 2:00 a.m. The nightclub will operate with a Type 48 license with full alcohol.

BERNADETTE GAMBINO, WEST HOLLYWOOD, owner, continued the applicant's report. She provided personal background information and spoke regarding her dream of opening a bar in the city of West Hollywood that would cater to her community, which would be a lesbian bar. She spoke about safety, entertainment, noise, and business operations. She requested support of her business.

The commission questioned the schematics of the outdoor patio space and requested clarification regarding the flow and spacing of queuing.

ALEXIS AREIAS, SANTA MONICA, spoke in support of staff's recommendation of approval.

ACTION: Close public comment portion of the public hearing for Item 10.A.
Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.

The commission stated their full support of this proposed business. They had concerns regarding congestion queuing along the sidewalk and questioned the width of the space in front and asked for clarification regarding the required space for queuing. They inquired how other businesses apply their queueing.

They discussed the queuing concerns regarding a single-file line versus a double-patron line and spoke about a possible review period, which would also include noise concerns.

Commissioner Matos moved to: 1) approve staff's recommendation as proposed.

Seconded by Commissioner Solomon.

Commissioner Hoopingarner conveyed it is important for the single line queue to be clarified in Conditions 11.13 for consistency.

Commissioner Matos stated he would be amicable for a six-month review but stated it does not seem necessary and does not agree to amending the condition as suggested.

Commissioner Hoopingarner made a substitute motion: 1) approve staff's recommendation of approval, and 2) amend Condition 11.13 to read: "...that there are no more than two one abreast in a line located parallel to and against the outdoor patio, ..."

Seconded by Commissioner Carvalheiro.

Further discussion was held regarding common practices for queuing for other businesses and spoke about over regulation.

Isaac Rosen, Deputy Legal Counsel stated amended Condition 11.13 shall read as amended: "The operator of the nightclub shall organize and maintain the patron queue so that there ~~are no more than two abreast in a line~~ would be a single file line located parallel to and against the outdoor patio, and so that an adequate pedestrian passage on the sidewalk is maintained."

Commissioner Hoopingarner clarified this does not prevent two abreast beyond the patio, with queuing around the corner.

Jennifer Alkire, Assistant Director, Community Development Department, stated that condition will read, the entire line needs to be single file and that it goes in that direction along the barrier of the patio.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION FAILS.

AYES: Hoopingarner, Carvalheiro.

NOES: Jones, Matos, Solomon, Vice Chair Gregoire, Chair Lombardi.

ORIGINAL MOTION.

Commissioner Matos moved to: 1) approve staff's recommendation as proposed.

Seconded by Commissioner Solomon.

ACTION: 1) **Adopt Resolution No. PC 25-1594 as presented:** "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, ADOPTING A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION PURSUANT TO CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION §15301 (EXISTING FACILITIES) AND APPROVING A DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR THE CONVERSION OF A RESTAURANT INTO A NIGHTCLUB WITH OUTDOOR AREA, LOCATED AT 8869-8871 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA;" and 2) Close the Public Hearing for Item 10.A. **Moved by Commissioner Matos, seconded by Commissioner Solomon and unanimously passes.**

Commission Secretary Gillig read into the record: Resolution No. PC 25-1594 approved by the Planning Commission for the property located at **8869-8871 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood** memorializes the Commission's final action on this matter. This action is subject to appeal to the City Council. Appeals must be submitted within ten calendar days from this date to the City Clerk's office. Appeals must be in writing and accompanied by the required fees. The City Clerk's office can provide appeal forms and information about waiver of fees. Deadline to file an Appeal on this decision is **Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.**

11. NEW BUSINESS. None.

12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS. None.

13. EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR. None.

14. ITEMS FROM STAFF.

A. Planning Manager's Update.

Garen Yolles, Acting Planning Manager, Current and Historic Preservation Planning provided an update of tentative items scheduled for upcoming Planning Commission meetings.

Subcommittee Management.

Garen Yolles, Acting Planning Manager, Current and Historic Preservation Planning provided an update of tentative items scheduled for Design Review Subcommittee, Sunset Arts and Advertising Subcommittee and Long-Range Planning Projects Subcommittee meetings.

He stated construction will be taking place at the West Hollywood Library which will impact the regularly scheduled Design Review Subcommittee meetings through April 2025. He indicated to alleviate any problems of disturbances; staff may move the meetings to either 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.

15. PUBLIC COMMENT. None.

16. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.

Commissioner Jones apologized for her absence from the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, January 16, 2025, citing personal work-related issues.

ADJOURMENT. The Planning Commission adjourned at 7:45 p.m. to a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, February 20, 2025, beginning at 6:30 p.m. until completion at West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers, 625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, California. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Planning Commission of the City of West Hollywood at a regular meeting held on this 20th day of February 2025 by the following vote:

AYES: Commissioner:

NOES: Commissioner:

ABSENT: Commissioner:

ABSTAIN: Commissioner:

MICHAEL A. LOMBARDI, MIES LC LEED AP BD+C
CHAIRPERSON, PLANNING COMMISSION

ATTEST:

DAVID K. GILLIG, COMMISSION SECRETARY