

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



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COMMISSION MINUTES **Thursday, August 24, 2023** **2:00 p.m.**

**Members of the public who wish to speak to the Commission during the meeting must submit a "Request to Speak" form to the Board Secretary prior to the commencement of the public comments for each agenda item of interest. Comments by the public on matters not identified on the agenda, but within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission will be heard during the item designated as "Public Comments Period." The length of public speaking time is two minutes, unless the presiding officer grants some other amount of time.*

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*The Meeting called to order at: 2:01 PM by President **Perez**. Commissioners present: **Chang, Garcia, Manriquez, Quon, Wirfs**. Also present: General Manager Arturo Chavez, Assistant General Manager Edgar Garcia, El Pueblo Staff Emily Wooten, and Deputy City Attorney Joshua Temple. Commissioners Chu and Thomas were absent.*

A quorum was established.

Commissioner Perez welcomed those in attendance.

Edward Flores, Lisanne Magdaleno Lee, and Jack Gerritsen provided General Public Comment.

Roberto Perez, City Council District 14 (CD14) Caseworker, introduced himself to the Commission and shared that he will be stepping in to the representative role previously held by Adriana Velazquez. He stated that those in attendance may now reach out to him directly.

Valerie Hanley of the Historic Cultural North Neighborhood Council (HCNNC) shared that there is no pending Community Impact Statements (CIS). Ms. Hanley clarified for Commissioner Perez that a CIS is a report from the HCNNC in relation to a Board Report usually before City Council that would affect the area.

Item 1: General Manager's Report

Mr. Chavez presented the General Manager's Report. Mr. Chavez stated that there are four (4) center puestos vacant, sharing that the second time the Department went out to Request for Proposals (RFP) only one (1) proposal was received. He noted that two (2) additional terminations were on the current agenda. Mr. Chavez hoped another RFP round would include these spaces. Mr. Chavez moved on to note that three (3) bids for a Master Plan came through the Bureau of Engineering. Management is currently in the process of interviewing the bidders.



The Department will bring the selection to the Commission for approval. Mr. Chavez shared that the Department meetings with Absolute International Security (AIS) every two weeks and have regularly implemented changes. The Department is once again able to quantify security incident data. Mr. Chavez continued to share that a meeting with Merchants occurred on Wednesday, August 23, 2023. This meeting allowed Merchants to discuss issues with GSD Custodial, AIS, and covered topics including illegal vending, homelessness, encroachment, rent repayment, and hours of operation. The LA County Department of Economic Development also attended to present a low-cost housing development in Lot 45 in Chinatown. Mr. Chavez continued to discuss recent events held at El Pueblo including the Friends of the Chinese American Museum Culture Shock dance program. He noted that the doors along Los Angeles street at the Chinese American Museum (CAM) are being repaired after being stuck by a car. Museums were closed on Sunday, August 20, 2023 due to the tropical storm. The storm also caused the cancellation of Molcajete Dominguero. No buildings sustained damage during the storm. He shared that a commercial production had taken place the week of the meeting transforming the Plaza Kiosko into a winter scene. For the previous week there were four-thousand one hundred and nine (4,109) visitors to the museums.

Commissioner Perez requested an update on the rat infestation. Mr. Chavez noted the Department has been addressing the issue for some time. He noted that while there has been a reduction, but it remains an issue. He shared that the Department is working with GSD to find alternative methods to address the situation. Commissioner Perez requested a written work report from GSD related to the actions taken on the rat issue.

Commissioner Wirfs requested an update on the rent roll, specifically the percentage of Merchants who are up-to-date and repayment compliance. Mr. Chavez noted the status remains the same as with previous updates. He stated that in the current repayment plan, approved by City Council, there is no incentive to pay or enforcement. Commissioner Wirfs inquired about the Merchant discussion of hours of operation. Mr. Chavez stated the Department will complete a survey with the Merchants and then implement hours of operation. Mr. Chavez confirmed that the Concession Agreements include hours of operation.

Commissioner Cardenas requested a comparison of museum visitors currently to pre-pandemic numbers. Additionally, she requested the exploration of ways to quantify the foot traffic on Olvera Street. Mr. Chavez noted that museum guides physically count guests that enter the museums, however this does not directly translate to purchasing power. He shared that he was open to suggestions for counting visitors, and noted that Merchants may need to count visitors to their shops.

Edward Flores, Valerie Hanley, and Lisanne Magdaleno Lee provided Public Comment on Item 1.

Item 3: Commission Committee Reports

Edward Flores provided Public Comment on Item 2.

Commissioner Wirfs noted that the 1871 Memorial Ad Hoc committee had not yet met, but would be sending an email to committee members to organize their first meeting.

Commissioner Manriquez confirmed that no meeting of the Mexican-American/Latino Historical Monument Ad Hoc Committee had been held, but that she too would be reaching to committee members for availability.

Item 4.1: Approval of the Minutes of 08-10-23

Commissioner Perez moved to create an addendum to reflect the comments made by each Commissioner during the election deliberation. Commissioner Quon requested clarification on the mention. Mr. Chavez noted that the minutes are limited by Robert's Rules. He clarified that minutes are meant to reflect the actions taken by the body, rather than discussion. He noted that recordings are available to the public. Commissioner Garcia requested clarification on what section would be recorded verbatim. Commissioner Perez clarified for Commissioner Wirfs that the minutes did not reflect the specific discussion made. Commissioner Chang clarified that the vote to approve the minutes would be taken at the subsequent meeting. Commissioner Quon inquired if this would be the course of action for future meetings. Commissioner Perez clarified that this would only be for the August 10, 2023 meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Perez moved to create an addendum including any deliberation during the election of officers verbatim. Seconded by Commissioner Chang.

Vote on Item 4.1: Cardenas, Y; Chang, Y; Garcia, Y; Manriquez, Y; Perez, Y; Quon, Y; Wirfs, N. The motion carried.

Item 4.2 Board Report 23-0009 Termination of 55-year lease W-4 Maria Cecilia Medina

Mr. Chavez shared with the Commission that Ms. Medina passed away in February 2023. There were no other Merchants on the lease with her, as a result the lease comes back to the Department for RFP. He noted that the lease would have terminated in 2053. The Department currently has eight (8) remaining fifty-five (55) Year leases.

Commissioner Wirfs noted that Mr. Avery agreed to have all items removed and he inquired about the accounting of the space. Mr. Chavez noted that Mr. Avery has cleared the space and the keys have been returned to the Department. Mr. Chavez also shared that there is no one remaining on the lease to cover the outstanding funds.

MOTION: Commissioner Quon moved to approve Board Report 23-0009. Seconded by Commissioner Cardenas.

Vote on Item 4.2: Cardenas, Y; Chang, Y; Garcia, Y; Manriquez, Y; Perez, Y; Quon, Y; Wirfs, Y. The motion carried.

Item 4.3: Board Report 23-0010 Termination of Lease P-01 Robert Rodriguez

Mr. Chavez shared that this space was for a popcorn cart in the North Plaza. Mr. Rodriguez experienced issues with the County Department of Health. He was unable to obtain a permit. Mr. Chavez stated that this space has never been opened. Mr. Rodriguez paid rent on the space for quite some time. Mr. Chavez shared that payments stopped during the pandemic. Commissioner Quon inquired if the space would only be available for food or drink. Mr. Chavez noted it could be any number of concessions as long as it is mobile. Commissioner Garcia inquired if Mr. Rodriguez has continued to try and activate the cart. Mr. Chavez noted that Mr. Rodriguez works full-time, understood the situation, and has not been able to pursue activating the space in some time. Commissioner Wirfs asked if the Department would be perusing Mr. Rodriguez for outstanding rent. Mr. Chavez stated the debt would likely be turned over to the Office of Finance. Commissioner Cardenas asked if there is any precedent for waiving the outstanding rent. Mr. Chavez shared that the Commission could make a recommendation for

repayment or waiver. Mr. Chavez noted that he was set to meet with Mr. Rodriguez to discuss options, but that Mr. Rodriguez never arrived nor did he follow up.

MOTION: Commissioner Garcia moved to approve Board Report 23-0010. Seconded by Commissioner Chang.

Vote: Cardenas, Y; Chang, Y; Garcia, Y; Manriquez, Y; Perez, Y; Quon, Y; Wirfs, Y. The motion carried.

MOTION: Commissioner Garcia moved to request the Department provide a report on collection options. Seconded by Commissioner Chang.

Vote: Cardenas, Y; Chang, Y; Chu, A; Garcia, Y; Manriquez, Y; Perez, Y; Quon, Y; Thomas, Y; Wirfs, Y. The motion carried.

Commissioner **Garcia** left the meeting at 3:00 PM.

[Taken Out of Order] Item 2: Closed Session

Valerie Hanley, Lisanne Magdaleno Lee, and Edward Flores provided Public Comment on Item 2.

Commissioner Perez requested that the letter previously sent to CD14 regarding the changing of El Pueblo Commission meeting frequency be included in the next meeting. She requested that Mr. Perez be present to discuss the request further.

The closed session began at 3:00 PM.

The closed session ended at 3:50 PM.

Commissioner **Cardenas** left the meeting at 3:52 PM.

Item 4: Commission Business

Commissioner Quon requested a presentation and update on the Gondola Project.

Commissioner Perez requested a detailed report of occupied and unoccupied spaces. She requested a list of tenants and their corresponding spaces. Commissioner Wirfs clarified his interest was in the rent roll. Commissioner Quon requested, in relation to Commissioner Perez's request, an occupancy map.

Commissioner Perez reiterated her request for a written report from GSD on how the rat issues are being addressed.

Commissioner Perez requested the letter previously sent to CD14 be addressed and moved forward. Commissioner Wirfs noted that the letter is already with Council as Council File 23-0219. Mr. Chavez noted that the item is still active, but pending before the Neighborhoods and Community Enrichment Committee. He noted that the Council Members have not wanted to move the item forward. Commissioner Perez requested that Mr. Perez return with a response from Council Member DeLeon's office indicating if CD14 will move the item forward or stating on record that they will not pursue the item.

Commissioner Perez requested a list of all non-profit organizations that help fund El Pueblo.

She hoped for a report outlining the funds generated through parking, filming, and rent. She also requested outgoing and incoming funds to better understand the organization's fiscal health.

President Perez adjourned the meeting at 3:59 PM.