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DAVID HICKS
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities Minutes
April 9, 2007

Present: Chris Getlein, David Hicks, Stan Kontogiannis, Linda Reeder, Robin Tousey Ayers, Heiwa Salovitz

Absent: Dana Canevari, Marjorie Eichler, Elaine Quinn, Matthew Ranelli

Staff: Michelle Duprey

Public: Delma Skinner

Guest: Pierrette C. Silverman

David Hicks brought the meeting to order. Guest speaker Pierrette Silverman introduced herself and said she had come to talk about programs for youth. Members of the Commission introduced themselves.

Pierrette Silverman described the Mayor's Youth Initiatives launched in 2006. These programs include Mentor New Haven, Open Schools, and Youth at Work. The Mayor is creating a new office in the City of New Haven, bringing together all of the services for youth in one department.

Mentor New Haven is a campaign to get adults involved with youth in a mentoring relationship. City employees can take time away from their usual work to volunteer in the public schools once a week.

The Open Schools program provides a safe place for youth to recreate after school hours. Activities are provided by Parks and Recreation and have an athletic component. There are services contracted with an outside agency.

Youth at Work is a program for youth ages 14-19 years old that provides year-round and summer employment opportunities.

Pierrette Silverman passed out the Mayor's Summer Youth guide. She then talked about the development of a web site, which will give parents and administrators more information than currently available. After a brief presentation there was a Q&A period.

Minutes

The March minutes were reviewed. Robin Tousey Ayers moved the minutes be accepted as written which was seconded by Chris Getlein. Heiwa Salovitz abstained from voting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman's report

David Hicks talked about some follow up regarding the proposed disability parking bill. He received a phone call from George Coppola and they talked about the proposed bill. The bill is being reviewed by the Judiciary Committee as increased fines are being considered.

Iris Barnes from the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services will be the guest speaker at the next meeting. She would like to encourage Commissioners to bring questions to that meeting.

Department Report

Michelle Duprey shared that she had written a letter to the Hartford Courant regarding the Governor's tax plan, and had also stopped by the Governor's office and expressed her concern with the proposed vehicle tax change.

Beach Access for All is being implemented by the Department. An Employment Initiative through an Alliance with the U.S. Department of Labor is under consideration.

The Department's budget was presented to the Board of Alderman.

Old Business

ADA Anniversary

The Commission discussed several ideas for the July event. After much discussion it was decided to ask Dana Canevari to inquire of Criterion Cinema, if they would host the celebration with a showing of Murderball. Michelle Duprey will also approach the Spokebenders, to see if they would be available to do an exhibition in July.

Linda Reeder talked about addressing the press with not only a release but a media kit with information regarding appropriate person first language. Michelle got a media brochure and shared it with the group.

Housing Committee

David Hicks reported on conversation with Bill Howell from HUD in response to FOIA letter. David said he was told the FOIA request would be denied. Linda Reeder had some questions, and agreed to call Bill Howell directly as David suggested. HUD has made a finding about HANH and has produced a letter of finding, which states that HAHN is non-compliant.

Board of Education

Robin Tousey Ayers talked about filing a complaint with the Bureau of Special Education. There was a long discussion about this process and the problem. There were several suggestions as to what to do next. There were no motions made.

Transportation Committee

Heiwa Salovitz reviewed the notes from the Transportation Committee regarding My Ride and progress on Accessible Taxi Service. For "My Ride", testers will be sought to give feedback on using the service. As for the Accessible Taxi Cab, some representatives from Yellow Cab will be invited to attend the next Transportation meeting.

Announcements

There will be a rally regarding global warming called Step It Up 07, 1-3pm, on April 14 on the New Haven Green.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and moved. The meeting adjourned