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Promoting
 **Accessibility**
In New Haven

DAVID HICKS
Chairperson

DRAFT

Commission on Disabilities Minutes
April 13, 2009

Present: Dana Canevari, David Hicks, Matthew Ranelli, Linda Reeder, Heiwa Salovitz,
Robin Tousey-Ayers

Absent: Chris Getlein, Stan Kontogiannis, Elaine Quinn

Staff: Michelle Duprey

The meeting was brought to order. The March 9, 2009 minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Robin Tousey-Ayes to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Heiwa Salovitz and was unanimously approved.

Chairman's Report

Handicapped designated parking - Legislative Update

David Hicks reported that he and Michelle Duprey attended a public hearing of the Legislature's Transportation Committee at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. The Transportation Committee has been and remains supportive on the issue, and has raised Senate Bill 444 (which is the same bill as last year's). David Hicks testified at the hearing, targeting the likelihood of an inflated fiscal note, based on last year's experience. Problems have arisen on the issue because Commissioner Robert Ward of the DMV had approved a draft proposal for legislation that would change the Disability Parking program, along the lines recommended by the Commission, but he is on a long-term medical leave of absence. No one else from DMV has stepped in to work with the Transportation Committee, and thus S.B. 444 is likely to receive a fiscal note that will effectively kill it, especially given the current budget tightening. A little while after testifying, David Hicks and Michelle Duprey met with Rick Lopes, Senator DeFronzo's legislative aide, to discuss ways to amend S.B. 444 to keep the cost of implementation down. Since the hearing however, the Bill has not been revised.

Disabilities Planning Committee

David Hicks reported that he and Linda Reeder had drafted a letter to the Chamber of Commerce offering to co-present an educational session on accessibility with the American Institute of Architects. The letter had been revised some and approved and sent to the CoC. There has been no response yet from Chamber of Commerce. David Hicks will make a follow-up call if no response is received.

Department Report

Michelle Duprey reported on the progress of the wheelchair accessible taxis. Kristin Barber submitted a progress report to the Commissioners. The Proposals for the taxis and a Voucher program have been submitted to Southern Connecticut Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG) and the Connecticut Department of transportation (DOT). The next step is to meet with the entire LOCKSTP

group to discuss the proposals for a final approval and then they go to the State DOT. (The report she submitted is found at the end of the minutes).

The Department of Disability Services was a finalist for the fourth year in a row for the Accessible America Award, but was not selected as the winner.

Connect Ability Grant

Michelle Duprey reported that Therese Nadeau has been hired as a consultant to implement the Connect-Ability strategic plan. Her schedule is very busy in June, so she might not be able to attend a Commission meeting. Robin Tousey-Ayes had a few questions which were addressed by Michelle Duprey.

ADA Anniversary in July

Michelle Duprey reported she had not heard back from her meeting with Arts and Ideas as to whether they would permit adapted vehicles in their events on the Green. She will follow up with them.

Old Business

Commission on Disabilities web site update

Follow up discussion with "My Ride"

Both of these items were to be reported on by Stan Kontogiannis and he was absent.

Letters to HANH

There were two separate letters drafted to go to the Housing Authority of New Haven (HANH). Linda Reeder had drafted one about the waiting list for accessible units and Elaine Quinn had drafted the other requesting adequate notice regarding Roundtable meetings. Both letters were reviewed by the Commission. Commission members suggested modifications to the drafts. There was a motion to accept the letters as amended made by Dana Canevari, seconded by David Hicks and unanimously approved. , Linda Reeder made note of the amendments and forwarded them to Kristin Barber to correct and mail out.

New Business

Shared Ability Dance - Robin Tousey-Ayers reported that she attended one of the workshops sponsored by the New Haven Ballet. They scheduled their performance on June 6th at the Schubert Theatre during Discover Dance performance.

Other Business

None

Public Comment or Announcements

None

Matt Ranelli made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Dana Canevari. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

Transportation Update April 2009

The proposal for the Accessible Taxi's has been submitted to SCRCOG and CT DOT.

The proposal for the Taxi Voucher Program has finally received clarification from CT DOT on the allowable matching operating costs. Because the FTA will allow the match to be the amount of the voucher purchase fee from the consumer, we can increase the amount requested for the program from \$5,000 from the New Freedom Initiative to \$ 71,500. Below is the new budget request.

Type of Expense	Total Project Budget	NFI	Match	Source of Match
Operating Expense (vouchers)	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 65,000.00	Voucher purchase fee
Administrative	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,500.00	n/a	n/a
Total	\$ 136,500.00	\$ 71,500.00		

What this basically means in terms of vouchers is more availability. We have also decided because of the increase in voucher funding, not to limit the funds for employment purposes only. We don't want to have to set up verification that people are using for it for employment only, since there are additional funds, and the grant guidelines say it is for purposes for employment and the full inclusion into the community of persons with disabilities.

We expect to have the final proposal submitted sometime this week. Currently it is under review at Greater New Haven Transit District.