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DAVID HICKS
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities Minutes
August 13, 2007

Present: Dana Canevari, Chris Getlein, David Hicks, Stan Kontogiannis, Elaine Quinn, Matthew Ranelli, Linda Reeder, Heiwa Salovitz, Delma Skinner

Absent: Robin Tousey Ayers

Staff: Michelle Duprey

There was no quorum at the July meeting so there were no minutes. June Minutes were sent out in early July, but most Commissioners did not bring them to the meeting. Dana Canevari moved to review the June minutes at the next meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman's Report

David Hicks talked about the showing of the movie "Murderball" on July 24th at the Library in celebration of the ADA Anniversary. There was discussion about the event which had a sparse turnout.

The discussion then turned to planning for next year and covered use of the Criterion Cinema and how to get funds to book for the occasion. Dana Canevari suggested the movie "Ray." David Hicks talked about the Spokebenders and getting them to come next year as well. There was also a suggestion by Stan Kontogiannis to have a movie shown as part of the series on the New Haven Green. It was agreed that planning needed to take place much earlier next year. Stan Kontogiannis offered to call Barbara Lamb and discuss the movie on the Green idea with her.

David Hicks got a call from the Governor's office and accepted an invitation to attend a ceremonial signing of the bill regarding increasing the fine for designated parking, which he advocated for in this past year. David Hicks said he got to speak with others who were involved in the bill and they all seemed to agree that the system was broken. The Commission discussed how to approach this bill in the next legislative session and it was agreed that someone should work with the DMV and OPA to address concerns they raised this year. There was discussion that a change in legislation would be difficult to get through because of the anticipated cost and that the program does not generate revenue for the state to offset the cost, as fines go to the Municipalities.

Matthew Ranelli suggested that perhaps through public safety one-time emergency response grant money, the data base generated for that purpose could also pay for this program. Michelle Duprey said she would take a look into that possibility.

David Hicks asked Michelle Duprey about an email she had sent to the New Haven Chief of Police and the response she had gotten. The email was based on a newspaper article about a mini sting operation by the Fresno, California, police department on people illegally using designated parking. Michelle Duprey stated that misuse of placards is not an easy process to check, in Connecticut, as there is no identification on the placards, and that in her experience police generally don't like to ticket for misuse of designated parking. There was further discussion on this topic, including the possibility of advocating for linking the identification number on hang tags to a photo database of placard-holders and drivers' licenses, in lieu of having the individual's photo directly on the placard, as had been advocated during the previous legislative session.

Department report

Michelle Duprey reported on several items.

The Department will be holding a Disability Mentoring Day event this October at SCSU, similar to the event held the last two years. Students with disabilities will get to spend a day with a student with disabilities at SCSU to see how college life could be for them in order to encourage higher education. The Department will be applying for the Accessible America Award again this year.

The proposed shared ability program at the New Haven Ballet has received grant funding from the Greater New Haven Foundation. There will be a press event in the near future.

October 14, there will be a "Road to Freedom Bus" event. The location is still to be announced. The national bus tour is to promote the ADA and ADA restoration Act. There will be a focus on young people. Plans include a performance artist, audio visual exhibit, photography display which catalogues the disability movement, a big bus, and Jim Ward head of ADA watch will be speaking. Other locations for the bus tour are at UCONN Law School and Torrington, CT.

Michelle Duprey reported on a recent article on municipalities who through city ordinances have been fining businesses who do not meet ADA regulations. She said she is now in the process of getting a copy of the ordinance for the Commission's consideration.

Michelle Duprey received a call from the Department of Justice. Their business leadership forum wants to meet in New Haven. After some discussion they decided to look at Title III entities focusing on health care and not business. They are now hoping to partner with Yale New Haven Health Center to encourage health care providers in the state to understand their obligations under the ADA. There was some discussion about this project.

Old Business

Housing Committee - Linda Reeder distributed copies of the Voluntary Compliance Agreement between HUD and HANH. She pointed out that the agreement refers to the 5% accessible standard per 504 Regulations, not the 10% CT State standard that is required. After some discussion, Linda Reeder moved that she will contact the New Haven Building Department for the City of New Haven and provide the correspondence and remind them to be alert to enforcing the State Building Code with construction at HANH. David Hicks seconded the motion which was unanimously passed.

Board of Education- no report

Transportation Committee- Heiwa Salovitz reported on the upcoming meeting of the Transportation Committee and the ADA Committee of My Ride to take place on Friday, August 24th at 2:00.

David Hicks reported on his contact with Economic Development on the accessible cab project, and was redirected to speak with Mike Piscitelli, which he will do.

Heiwa Salovitz brought up the successful and fun press conference at Lighthouse Point this past month, which highlighted the all-terrain wheelchairs now available at the park. David reported there was a new sign up in front of the guard house which tells people about the availability of the chairs.

New Business

Elaine Quinn talked about a Paul Hearn Leadership Award, which is calling for nomination of emerging leaders in his or her personal or professional life. She read some more of the qualifications and thought that David Hicks would be a great nominee for the award. David Hicks said he would think about this opportunity but said he is very busy with his work and traveling is difficult for him.

Other Business

No other business

Announcements

Michelle Duprey thanked everyone on the Commission for the get well card.

There was a motion by Heiwa Salovitz to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Chris Getlein and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned.