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DAVID HICKS
Chairperson

APPROVED

Commission on Disabilities Minutes
August 10, 2009

Present: Dana Canevari, David Hicks, Stan Kontogiannis, Linda Reeder, Heiwa Salovitz, Robin Tousey-Ayers

Absent: Chris Getlein, Matthew Ranelli, Elaine Quinn

Staff: Michelle Duprey

Guest: Jason Gomez

David Hicks brought the meeting to order. Minutes for July '09 were reviewed. Dana Canevari wanted a sentence reworded. Heiwa Salovitz made a motion to accept the minutes as amended, Dana Canevari seconded, and Stan Kontogiannis abstained. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman's Report

David Hicks reported that last month he wrote to legislators regarding the wheelchair accessible language within the DOT Regulations. The amendment was a subsection of a larger bill which had been vetoed by the Governor. The veto was overridden by the Legislature so the relevant section which will allow various types of wheelchair accessible vehicles to be used as taxi cabs will come into law in October '09.

David Hicks also reported on trying to get back in touch with Commissioner Ward of DMV regarding the handicapped parking placards and the related proposed Bill. Michelle Duprey will get the phone number for David Hicks as he could not locate the number.

Robin Tousey-Ayers made a suggestion about following up on the Bill for the DOT regulation. After some further clarification, it became clear that this is not a situation requiring that the Commission act as "watchdog" as was originally thought.

Department Report

Michelle Duprey reported on the progress of the accessible taxi initiative. The taxi procurement should be completed by the end of May 2010 so we are just waiting at this point.

Michelle Duprey talked about an evacuation drill for the Millstone nuclear power plant in New London. She went to the pre-drill and there were some access issues in the decontamination process. She

chose not to participate in the drill because it was not going to address issues of concern related to disability and access.

Michelle Duprey reported that she has been asked to serve on the Yale New Haven Hospital Patient and Family Advisory Council.

Through the Connect-Ability Grant, there will be two training sessions for employers which are scheduled for September and November. They are also working with the Chamber of Commerce on trying to secure a celebrity keynote speaker with a disability to talk to employers.

Heiwa Salovitz had a question about the decontamination drill. He wanted to know whether they would decon for the chair or just the person. Michelle Duprey offered some explanation but stated that part of the problem was that disabilities were not being evaluated. There was more discussion of this issue, including about who would be Michelle's backup in an actual emergency. Michelle Duprey said that Pat Wallace, the Director of Elderly Services, would have this responsibility.

Old Business

Designated Parking

Linda Reeder talked about a policy that was in place when Brian McGrath was Director of Traffic and Parking, whereby a parking ticket would be issued if Commission members provided a photo which clearly identified someone as parking in a handicapped parking space without a placard. Linda Reeder had taken a photo of a Fed-Ex truck that was illegally parked at a handicapped parking spot. Since Michael Piscitelli is the current Director of Traffic and Parking, the question was posed whether he should be invited to attend a Commission meeting to discuss this issue. It was agreed after some discussion that it would be best to invite him for a meeting in October or later. A motion to invite him to the October meeting was made by Heiwa Salovitz, which was seconded by Robin Tousey-Ayers and it was unanimously approved.

Web Changes

Stan Kontogiannis presented and explained proposed revisions to the website. For example he took off names of the people who were guests at Commission meetings and left their titles and organizations they represented. He changed the word 'activities' to 'initiatives'. He suggested that people look at the changes and make suggestions at the next meeting.

Process for New Commissioners

It was decided by the Ad Hoc Membership Committee that no changes would be necessary to the Commission By-Laws, but that procedural guidelines would be developed. As well, it was agreed that having a set of standard questions to ask potential Commission candidates would be advantageous and part of the procedures. (As yet no means for writing up the guidelines or questions has been devised.)

Film Series

There was a follow up discussion on having a film series as was discussed at the last meeting. Jason Gomez, a guest who had met with the Membership Committee regarding joining the Commission, asked questions about the project and Linda Reeder gave the background to the discussion. David Hicks talked about the films that they showed at the Elm Street Library in the past. After much discussion it was decided that Dana Canevari would resume as head of the Public Awareness Committee and would chair a meeting in September to organize this project. Jason Gomez and Heiwa Salovitz agreed to serve on the Committee with the idea that the film series would try to partner with Southern Connecticut State College, Disability Resource Center, for the film series. Michelle Duprey stated that she would help with this effort.

New Business

There was no new business

Other Business

There was no other business

Public Comments or Announcements

Jason Gomez stated "Thank you to the Commission and your hard work and he hopes to be part of it."

Dana Canevari made a motion to adjourn, Stan Kontogiannis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned.