



JOHN DeSTEFANO, JR.
Mayor

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
CITY OF NEW HAVEN
165 CHURCH STREET
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06510
(203) 946-7833 - VOICE (203) 946-8582 - TTY/TDD
(203) 946-8587 - FAX



DAVID HICKS
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities Minutes
February 11, 2008

Present: Dana Canevari, Chris Getlein, David Hicks, Stan Kontogiannis, Elaine Quinn, Linda Reeder, Heiwa Salovitz, Delma Skinner, Robin Tousey-Ayers

Absent: Matthew Ranelli,

Staff: Michelle Duprey

The meeting was brought to order by David Hicks. A quorum was established. The minutes for November 2007 were reviewed. Stan Kontogiannis suggested a change to some of the wording. Heiwa Salovitz made a motion to accept the November minutes as amended. The motion was seconded. Chris Getlein abstained from voting and the motion was otherwise passed.

The December minutes were reviewed. Heiwa Salovitz motioned to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded. Elaine Quinn abstained from voting, and the motion was passed.

Chairman's Report

David Hicks reported on a meeting he had with State Senator Donald DeFronzo, Chairman of the Transportation Committee. There were two other people at the meeting who were simply introduced as Jim, from Research, and Sally, from Legal. He thought that Senator DeFronzo is taking the issue of the lifetime permits seriously. They talked about possible changes in enforcement, improvements to identifying information on the placard, and the possibility of changing the language on the forms that Physician's sign. David Hicks stated that he will see if a bill is introduced as a result of the meeting. There was discussion regarding this issue and some questions regarding accessible metered parking in New Haven.

Department Report

Michelle Duprey reported that the Connect-ability grant was submitted in December and we are waiting to hear if we were selected.

Although the Department was selected as a finalist again this year in the Accessible America Award, we were not chosen as the winner.

Michelle Duprey reported she has accepted a request to serve on the Governor's Task Force of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). She requested that if any of the Commissioners are aware of disability related problems with CHRO, to let her know. She stated that about one quarter of the complaints are disability related and she thought the investigators are not well trained in this area.

The Mayor's budget is coming out in the next couple of weeks. There will be public hearings and at least two Aldermanic meetings regarding the budget.

Old Business

Election of Officers:

Stan Kontogiannis moved to have the Secretary cast one ballot for a single slate. The nomination was David Hicks, Chairman, Dana Canevari, Vice-Chairman, and Linda Reeder, Secretary. Robin Tousey-Ayers seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously approved. Robin Tousey-Ayers said she thought that they all had done a great job.

Elderly Only Designation Public hearing at HANH:

Michelle Duprey attended a public hearing on proposed "elderly only" designation of six properties owned by the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven (HANH). Because these projects contained a significant portion of accessible units, she opposed the designation as it would take approximately 25% to 30% of these accessible units out of circulation for non-elderly disabled. Representatives from the Center for Disability Rights, and New Haven Legal Aid also opposed the designation. As a result, HANH changed their proposal to exclude the accessible units as being designated "elderly only".

Michelle Duprey suggested inviting Bill Heinrichs from HANH to a Commission meeting. She sits on HANH'S monitoring committee to the HUD voluntary compliance agreement, which Bill Heinrichs chairs. It was agreed that he would be invited to the April meeting.

Transportation Committee

Accessible Cabs:

The Committee met in January. Kristin Barber, David Hicks, Heiwa Salovitz, Dana Canevari, Timmy Lee from Yellow Cab, and Lee Grannis attended the meeting. Lee Grannis is from the Greater New Haven Clean Cities Coalition. Because the Committee is interested in getting accessible cabs to New Haven that would run on compressed natural gas, there is federal funding available to offset the initial costs of the vehicles through the federal government's Star Energy Program. Lee Grannis said he would draft something and proposed a half of a million dollars for the projects using SEP funding. It is uncertain how many of the cabs might be needed and Kristin Barber said she would research the market need and report back at the next meeting.

My Ride Update:

A questionnaire was developed and reviewed by members of the Transportation Committee and administration at Greater New Haven Transit. The questionnaire will be completed by three volunteer test passengers of "My Ride". The questionnaires have been mailed to the volunteers.

Miscellaneous:

David Hicks added a comment regarding designated parking. He was interested in knowing what would be required to get Traffic and Parking access to the DMV disability parking database used by police.

Elaine Quinn made an inquiry regarding "The Green Bus" that she has seen in the area of the train station. No one was familiar with this bus.

Stan Kontogiannis said he has had no success at getting back with Nancy Long, his contact person at the DMV.

ADA Celebration:

The Spokebenders (a men's wheelchair basketball team) has offered to put on a demonstration game in celebration of the Anniversary of the ADA. There was discussion about a venue. Linda Reeder suggested that everyone look into possibilities and get back to her at the next meeting. She will be contacting Yale University to see if they have a space and would like to co-sponsor the event.

Cancelling Meetings:

There was discussion regarding the process of cancelling Commission meetings. It was decided that in general the meeting needs to be cancelled ideally 24 hours before the time of the meeting in order for the messages to reach all Commissioners.

The Ronald McDonald House sent a Thank you card to the Commission for their efforts at donating a wreath to the "Trees of Hope". The card was shared with the Commission.

Michelle Duprey reported that the public library on Elm Street will be showing the documentary "Rolling" and wants the Department to co-sponsor the event. Because of the mostly negative feedback she has received from people with disabilities about the stereotypical representation in the movie, she will only participate if there is a discussion after the movie. Dana Canevari had seen the movie in the past and felt it was not a very well balanced documentary in portrayal of persons who use wheelchairs.

There was a motion to adjourn which was seconded and moved. The meeting adjourned.