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DAVID HICKS
Chairperson

Approved

Commission on Disabilities Minutes
February 9, 2009

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

Absent: Elaine Quinn

Staff: Michelle Duprey

The meeting came to order and a quorum was established. It was announced that Delma Skinner will no longer be a member of the Commission effective January 2009.

The December 2008 Commission Minutes were reviewed. Dana Canevari moved to accept the minutes as written which was seconded by Stan Kontogiannis. Chris Getlein abstained from voting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman's Report

Handicapped Parking Bill

David Hicks talked about the Handicapped Parking Bill. Although he anticipated making some headway with the Transportation Committee, he thought the bill might meet with opposition because of the budget. At the minimum, expiration dates could be put on the permits. Matt Ranelli stated that he had seen the bill was drafted and later identified it as Senate Bill 444 sponsored by Senator DeFronzo.

Spokebenders

David Hicks was trying to set up double header basketball game with the Spokebenders to be held at Wilbur Cross High School. It won't be able to be scheduled because of use of the gym by Wilbur Cross basketball tournaments which creates incompatible dates of availability.

Disabilities Planning Committee

David Hicks said that he will be attending the March 5th Building Performance and Regulations Committee of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) meeting to discuss a possible joint presentation to the Chamber of Commerce members. The Committee has a presentation that is designed for an audience of business owners about accessibility and that it is good business to be accessible. David Hicks is scheduled to preview the presentation on that date.

Department Report

Michelle Duprey talked about the progress of the Connect-Ability grant. The Strategic Plan was approved by DSS, therefore the funds to implement the plan will be awarded. On March 1st, 2009 a consultant to work on the grant will be on board.

Michelle Duprey reported on her progress on working with City on the feasibility of the hiring an off duty policeman to assist with handicapped parking enforcement. She stated that if the City writes the ticket the money goes back into the general fund, however if it is a state ticket, then the Judicial office is supposed to send the money to the City. She is confirming that funds from the Judicial Branch are indeed coming to the City before going farther with this approach.

Old Business

Updating the Web site- no report

Spokebenders

As previously mentioned the games will not be feasible as Wilbur Cross was booked up and the Spokebenders' season ends in March. Michelle Duprey suggested picking a middle school instead of a high school. Robin Tousey-Ayers said Martinez School might be available. There was some further discussion about this idea.

The discussion then turned to planning for an ADA celebration event. There was discussion about the Spokebenders from last year and what they may want to do differently in terms of publicizing the event. There were various ideas including a change in location, i.e. Lighthouse Point Park, or to lunch time. Michelle Duprey suggested having an event on the New Haven Green with a theme of accessible transportation. There was no conclusion to the discussion which will be continued at the next Commission meeting.

New Business

Michelle Duprey talked about her recent experience with "My Ride" and proposed a workshop be developed to inform consumers of My Ride, regarding their rights under the ADA. There was discussion regarding this issue and people's experience with para-transit.

Michelle Duprey also talked about a recent issue with Metro North Trains. New cars are being designed with increased bicycle access, however the bike hooks (which allow the bikes to hang vertically) overlap with the designated wheelchair accessible spaces. If a person requests use of the space for a wheelchair where a bike is, a conflict will result and the bike would have to be removed, and presumably the bike user would have to detrain. There was discussion about the wheelchair accessible cabs legislation which has been introduced by a lobbyist hired by Bill Scalzi of Metro Taxi. (There was no conclusion to this discussion or motions presented)

Old Business

Heiwa Salovitz brought it to the attention of the Commission that they had asked HANH, during their presentation at a Commission meeting, about how many UFAS compliant units were currently being occupied by people who don't need them. Michelle Duprey has that information although it was given to her as part of a separate issue. This item will be placed on the next agenda, since time ran out at this meeting.

There was a motion to adjourn, which was made by Heiwa Salovitz and Chris Getlein seconded. The meeting adjourned.