



**JOHN DeSTEFANO, JR.**  
*Mayor*

**COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES**  
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**MARIA ELENA ALVAREZ**  
*Chairperson*

**Commission on Disabilities Minutes**  
**July 10, 2006**

Present: Dana Canevari, David Hicks, Stan Kontogiannis, Elaine Quinn, Linda Reeder, Robin Tousey-Ayers

Absent: Maria Elena Alvarez, Marjorie Eichler, Chris Getlein, Matthew Ranelli

Staff: Michelle Duprey

Public: Heiwa Salovitz

David Hicks opened the meeting. There was a guest speaker, Kelly Murphy, Economic Development Administrator from the City of New Haven.

Kelly Murphy began her presentation by saying that 30% of New Haven's housing stock is affordable housing. She stated that one of the goals of the Livable City Initiative is to maintain the current housing stock through code enforcement and licensing inspection. LCI are slated to inspect 20,000 units of rental housing this year, which is about one third of the available housing units. They also have a focus on housing rehabilitation and new construction. There are currently 268 units under construction. In addition, Livable City Initiative has various programs to work with developers as well as a partnership with the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven. She described some of those mixed income housing initiatives.

Kelly Murphy continued to describe some of the other programs they are working on such as gap financing for homeownership, down payment assistance, the Rehab Program, and Lead Based Paint Program.

There was a question about accessibility issues; however it was unclear whether the question was in regard to the Fair Housing Amendment or the Connecticut State Building Code. Linda Reeder clarified this issue. Kelly Murphy stated that within the private market sector, they would entertain proposals for affordable housing.

There was another question regarding proposed construction on George Street, across from the New Haven Coliseum. Kelly Murphy stated that the Coliseum is anticipated to be completely demolished by the autumn (though no specific date has been set). After demolition is completed they will consider private development and be conducting outreach. Discussion then turned to the move of Gateway Community College to the downtown area.

Michelle Duprey initiated a discussion regarding providing funds through the Rehabilitation Program to assist with costs associated with retrofitting homes for wheelchair accessibility. Dana Canevari shared her experiences with funding challenges to people in this situation. Kelly Murphy suggested the possibility of a matching program although she needs more information in order to consider the feasibility of such a program. There was further discussion on this matter.

Elaine Quinn asked about the projected construction on Route 34. Kelly Murphy explained this project is in the early phases and most likely there will be traffic and environmental studies before Requests for Proposals are issued. She said she did not foresee any industrial use for this area.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Murphy for her informative presentation, and she departed.

## **Minutes**

The minutes for the July meeting were discussed and there were some changes needed. The Commission members also decided the minutes of the meetings for the present year should be posted on the City of New Haven website.

## **Chairman's Report**

Dana Canevari, Vice Chairman, was now chairing the meeting, as she arrived after the meeting started. There was no report.

## **Department Report**

Michelle Duprey reported on a grant the Department is applying for from the Long Island Sound License Plate Program. The grant includes purchase of three beach wheelchairs, one manual, one powered, and one that can float in the water, to be used at the beach at Lighthouse Park. The grant will also provide funds for repairing the asphalt around the bathhouse as well as for new signage.

(At this point, another Commissioner joined the meeting, and quorum was established).

Linda Reeder moved to accept the minutes as corrected, Dana Canevari seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Michelle Duprey asked for volunteers to assist her with the partnering efforts with the Center for Disability Rights regarding Disability Awareness Day, planned for July 26<sup>th</sup>. David Hicks and Robin Tousey-Ayers volunteered to assist. The focus was going to be on Emergency Preparedness for individuals with disabilities.

## **Old Business**

### *Disability Parking Permits*

Stan Kontogiannis reported progress in obtaining information from the CT Department of Motor Vehicles regarding abuse of Disability Parking Permits. According to DMV, most of the abuse appears to be on college campuses. (Some commission members expressed doubt about DMV's assertion.) Stan obtained a letter from DMV which is to be sent to area colleges. He thought the Commission could place its own cover letter in with DMV's to strengthen the message. As well, he suggested speaking with Chief Ortiz of the New Haven Police to see how enforcement might be

increased throughout the city. Linda Reeder suggested sending the letter to area campus police in August. There was some further discussion on this topic.

#### *Rails to Trails*

Robin Tousey-Ayers said that she had spoken with one of the people working on this project and she thought of inviting her to the Commission meeting in September or October. It was decided to make arrangements for the invitation, which was to be extended for the September meeting.

#### *Commission web page*

David Hicks presented the latest changes to the website. After some input, a motion was made by Elaine Quinn to approve the web page after a final set of changes. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

### **New Business**

Michelle Duprey had previously sent an e-mail to Commissioners about a meeting she has arranged for a HUD representative to discuss accessibility issues. Several Commissioners said they would be in attendance.

Jimmy Miller, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven, has been invited to the August meeting. We are waiting for confirmation.

### **Other business**

Heiwa Salovitz was present at this meeting. He has submitted his application to be on the Commission. He brought up an issue about wheelchair access on the East Rock asphalt trails. Michelle Duprey said she would speak with a representative of Parks, Recreation, and Trees about this issue to see if it could be resolved.

Robin Tousey-Ayers mentioned availability of a grant from the Corporation for Independent Living regarding mentoring. She said she will forward the information.

Michelle Duprey explained how Disability Mentoring Day might be carried out this year.

David Hicks made a motion to adjourn, Linda Reeder seconded, and it was unanimously approved.