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DAVID HICKS
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities Minutes
June 11, 2007

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

Absent: Stan Kontogiannis, Elaine Quinn

Staff: Kristin Barber

David Hicks brought the meeting to order. The minutes for May were reviewed and some changes were suggested. David Hicks made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Dana Canevari seconded the motion. Chris Getlein abstained from voting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman's Report

Nothing new to Report

Department Report

Kristin Barber attended the meeting on behalf of the Department in Michelle Duprey's absence. She announced the tentative date for a press conference at Lighthouse Point Park which is June 28th or 29th.

Her activities this past month included responding to calls from constituents. She found that there are transitional workers for youth with disabilities at age eighteen to assist them in maneuvering the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) services. She has also been busy with carrying out matters of the Transportation Committee. Other projects include work on a Shared Ability Ballet in New Haven. Noble Barker, Artistic Director for the New Haven Ballet, reports that he has submitted the grant proposal for this project to the Greater New Haven Foundation. The Department will be submitting a letter of support for the grant.

Dana Canevari asked for some background information on the project, which was provided. Brad Roth, of Milford, specializes in "shared ability" dance, which is inclusive of children with physical, mental or behavioral disabilities. Mr. Roth is consulting with Noble Barker on the project. Dana Canevari expressed interest in contacting Mr. Roth and promoting this type of activity for young adults. Kristin Barber will follow up with her in order to provide contact information.

Old Business

Housing Committee

The Committee had nothing new to report.

Robin Tousey-Ayers talked about a Section 8 waiting list which will be opening. DSS is sponsoring these vouchers. David Hicks asked a question about waiting time for these lists which was responded to by both Dana Canevari and Heiwa Salovitz. The waiting period is very long, usually from 1-4 years.

Board of Education

Robin Tousey Ayers reviewed her interactions at Board of Education and Aldermanic meetings. Robin was asked by a *Register* reporter her opinion about “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) and offered comment to the reporter but she had not seen a copy of the *Register* for the outcome article. Robin commented on the possibility that, for students with disabilities, teachers were now “teaching to tests” in response to NCLB requirements. She thought that analysis of test scores might show this trend.

Robin then went on to seek comment from the group as to whether Dr. Mayo should be invited to attend a Commission meeting and address this topic. She stated that he has heard from parents and teaching assistants on the topic, but has not heard from any disability group and it might be good to keep the pressure on.

Kristin Barber mentioned the option of the Commission, as a third party, filing a complaint with the State Board of Special Education. David Hicks stated that he would write the complaint after getting information from Robin Tousey Ayers. A motion was made that David Hicks compose a complaint, and bring it to the Commission for review. It will then be sent to the State in regard to this matter. Heiwa Salovitz seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Transportation Committee

Heiwa Salovitz shared what had been discussed regarding “My Ride” and questions the Committee will have for the ADA Committee. A survey will also be developed to assess users’ experiences. There was further discussion about the process for how to address concerns with “My Ride”. There was discussion about Standard Cab and the Committee’s efforts to bring accessible cab service to New Haven. Kristin Barber discussed some work she had in process for moving forward on the cab project. She is trying to get someone from Economic Development and someone from the Mayor’s Clean Energy Task Force involved in this project.

ADA celebration

Stan Kontogiannis was not present at the meeting so his information on arrangements for the showing of “Murderball” was unavailable. David Hicks will call him and plan on booking the Library for the showing of the movie. David Hicks mentioned that he was going to try once more to contact the CT Spokebenders to see if they would be able to do an exhibition wheelchair basketball game. There was discussion of how best to contact the Spokebenders, and what it would take to arrange such a demonstration.

New Business

There was no new business.

Announcements

Elaine Kolb, a disability rights activist, will have a tent on the Green this weekend at the International Arts and Ideas. She will be singing and having spectators join in.

There is an exhibit at City Hall for two weeks on the history of the garment industry in New Haven in the 1930’s.

After asking if there were any more items, David Hicks made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Chris Getlein and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned.