



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

**COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES**  
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**DAVID HICKS**  
*Chairperson*

**Commission on Disabilities Minutes**  
**March 10, 2008**

Present: Dana Canevari, David Hicks, Stan Kontogiannis, Matthew Ranelli, Linda Reeder, Heiwa Salovitz, Delma Skinner

Absent: Chris Getlein, Elaine Quinn, Robin Tousey-Ayers

Staff: Michelle Duprey

The Commission Chairman David Hicks opened the meeting. A quorum could not be established at this point. (The agenda proceeded with the Chairman's report and the Department report, after which a quorum was reached and the minutes reviewed).

**Chairman's report**

David Hicks reported that the Bill to reform Designated Parking had been raised and he distributed a copy of the Bill to the Commissioners. He spoke about the process by which it developed, with him working closely with State Senator Donald DeFronzo. Some of the original language has been amended to address the concerns that only a Driver's license would be accepted to include Non-Driver's picture ID. Michelle Duprey was at the public hearing as well and submitted written and oral testimony. There was further discussion on the proceedings.

David Hicks said he was interviewed by a New Haven *Register* reporter regarding the Bill and expects there will be an article in the New Haven *Register* in the near future.

A list of Legislative contacts to call to express support for the Bill was distributed to the Commissioners.

**Department report**

Michelle Duprey said the budget for the Department had been submitted. It was a zero growth budget. She was asked if she thought there would ever be funds to reinstate an outreach worker, for which she replied she didn't know if or when that will happen.

The Department was approved to negotiate a contract for "Connect-ability" as a result of replying to a "Request for Qualifications". The project is suppose to begin April 1<sup>st</sup>, however it is not anticipated that the contract will be sent out until April.

Michelle has made arrangements for Mr. William Heinrichs from the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven to be a guest speaker at the next meeting in April. He is a "Community Advocate" for the Housing Authority.

### **Minutes**

A quorum was reached at this point and the minutes for February 2008 were reviewed. David Hicks made an amendment to the minutes. Stan Kontogiannis made a motion for the minutes to be accepted as amended. Dana Canevari seconded the motion. Matthew Ranelli abstained from voting. The minutes were approved as amended.

### **Department report, continued**

Michelle Duprey informed the Commission that because there was a lawsuit against the City of New Haven and the US Department of Justice had taken a position on that case against the City, the Department was uninvited to co-host a workshop with the Department of Justice on access to Health Care. Michelle Duprey will still be allowed to speak, but her department will no longer be listed as a co-host.

### **Transportation Committee- no report**

There is a meeting planned for March 19, 2008.

**ADA Anniversary**-The Connecticut Spokebenders (wheelchair basketball exhibition game) Linda Reeder reported that because there is a Summer Camp on the Green the same week as the ADA Anniversary, there is a small portable basketball court on the Green the entire week which might be available for use. She is going to contact Bill Dixon from Parks, Recreation and Trees in order to get approval to use the court the Tuesday evening which would be July 22, 2008 for the exhibition game.

After some discussion, the group decided not to also show a movie, but rather to get a good size crowd for the Spokebenders Exhibition game. There was additional discussion about how to publicize the event as well as a possible rain location.

### **New Business**

Heiwa Salovitz reported on a law conference he attended at Yale University. He said it was not well attended owing to the early hour on Saturday and inclement weather.

### **Other business**

Michelle Duprey reported on her follow-up to the documentary video "Rolling" that the Elm City Library asked the Department to co-sponsor. She viewed the video and concluded with others who had seen it that it showed people with disabilities in a negative light and she maintained the way the individuals were perceived should be balanced with a panel discussion following the showing. The Library rejected this idea, so Michelle has declined to support the event. She suggested showing "The Music Within" instead as it is a mainstream movie and has received positive reviews from the disability community.

### **Announcements**

Matt Ranelli is a member of the state Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired. He reported on some new legislation which would call for a stricter requirement for use of Sign Language Interpreters before persons are arrested or act as a witness. He said he would keep the Commission updated on this bill. There was some discussion regarding this issue.

David Hicks reported he received a letter from Steven Groninger, which appears approximately the same as the one he received in the past from Mr. Groninger's alderman. David Hicks will send Mr. Groninger a copy of his previous response to the alderman on this same matter.

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