



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**  
**November 19, 2007**

Present: David Hicks, Stan Kontogiannis, Elaine Quinn, Matthew Ranelli, Linda Reeder, Robin Tousey Ayers, Heiwa Salovitz

Absent: Dana Canevari, Chris Getlein, Delma Skinner

Staff: Michelle Duprey

Guests: Brian McGrath, Traffic and Parking  
Laoise King, Legislative Liaison, Corporation Counsel

**Guest Speaker Presentation**

David Hicks, Chairman, opened the meeting by introducing the guests and explaining the Commission's interest in reforming the laws governing disability parking. Last year, the Commission worked on proposing state legislation to cut down on fraudulent use of these permits. Since this work is ongoing, the Commission invited the guests to find out from them the kinds of measures that could be taken to foster better enforcement of the law.

Brian McGrath from the department of Transportation, Traffic and Parking (hereafter, Traffic and Parking) shared with the group some of his observations. He stated there is a lot of abuse by younger folks who get the placards from their elder family members and use them for parking in designated parking, many times in a work setting. When approached to verify it belongs to them, officers get yelled at and no officer wants this type of confrontation. He concurred that the best solution would be a photo ID on the placards, but there is a small contingency that feels this violates their privacy.

It was Brian McGrath's understanding that the \$500 fine for fraud, which is levied by the state, all goes directly to the state, vs. a \$150 fine for parking without a placard which goes to the City. David Hicks stated his understanding that the law passed last year provided that the fine for fraud would go to the municipalities (see Footnote <sup>1</sup> below). Brian McGrath reiterated that the fine is not levied by the city. Officers will only write a ticket for parking without a placard which is \$150 and usually they end up taking back the ticket because people state they left it on the floor of vehicle or other such excuses. His thoughts were that lifetime

---

<sup>1</sup> HB-6370, File No. 599 CORRECTION To Fiscal Note on

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE ILLEGAL USE OF HANDICAPPED PARKING SPACES.**

The fiscal note on the bill indicated an annual revenue gain of less than \$50,000 to the state. Instead, it should have indicated a municipal revenue gain of that amount since the **revenues collected by the state would be remitted to municipalities** in accordance with CGS 51-56a(b).

permits did not deter fraudulent use and statistically there are more placards in use than the estimated number of people who need them.

Brian McGrath also thought that another problematic policy is allowing parking all day at designated metered parking without time limits. He thought legislation should provide time limited use of the designated parking spaces, since unlimited use prevents others from using the spaces as needed, and forces them to use non-designated spaces, where they do not have to pay the meters.

He stated that in the neighborhoods they do get some abuse with unmetered designated parking, however, he thought that the ability to get time limits at key metered spots would go a long way to preventing abuse. He said the New Haven Police do not provide on the street parking enforcement. Traffic and Parking does the vast majority of it. NHPD will ticket at night sometimes if it's slow, but 92 percent of the parking tickets are given by Traffic and Parking and he stated "It's a money loser for the City".

Brian McGrath went on to say he thought the most serious violation is cars parking on the sidewalk which blocks access and that most of the time they get a ticket. Traffic and Parking has authorized entities, such as a previous Commissioner of Disabilities, to send in photos via e-mail, showing the license plate, no placard, date and time, and they will issue a ticket via first class mail. A City Ordinance says that if you have been trained then Traffic and Parking can authorize and supply you tickets. Usually these entities are associated with a governmental agency. CT Transit supervisors, airport employees, Parking Authority, SCSU and Yale on and off campus security and CMHC write tickets for vehicles parked illegally on their property. Employees from LCI and Public Works also are authorized to write tickets.

There was further discussion as to what type of policies would be helpful. Linda Reeder suggested having a name and date of birth on the placard. Then there is the problem of accessing the data base of information that the police have available. Brian McGrath thought the problem was that former police functions have migrated to civilian agencies although they are still viewed as a police function. Violators have too many rights and police don't enforce parking because they all get appealed.

Discussion turned to the idea of an expiration date on the placard. Brian McGrath thought that 90 percent of the parkers have a valid permit but they don't hang it. There was some discussion regarding using technology, such as a camera system used to catch drivers going through red lights to catch designated parking violators. Brian McGrath thought that something like this could be used in the future. Brian McGrath concluded and left the meeting.

### Review of Minutes

The minutes of the October meeting were reviewed. Heiwa Salovitz moved to accept the minutes as written, which was seconded by Robin Tousey Ayers. Elaine Quinn abstained from voting. The motion was unanimously approved.

### Chairman's Report

Laoise King, Legislative Liaison, Corporation Counsel works with the Mayor's office and assists in establishing the state legislative agenda for the City of New Haven. She was introduced to the Commission.

At this time there was further discussion regarding the input generated by Brian McGrath's presentation, including permission from DMV to get a link to their information that could be used on a handheld that included the individual's name and date of birth. Elaine Quinn also suggested elimination of the lifetime.

David Hicks restated the issue of giving incentives to enforcement. Linda Reeder restated Brian McGrath's concern that handicapped blue meters not be for an unlimited amount of time.

Laoise King was at the meeting to observe, but at this time talked about her role. She could present this item as part of the City's State Legislative Agenda for 2008. David Hicks said the Commission would probably vote on this issue at the next meeting.

David Hicks talked about a conversation he had with Honorable Arlene DePino (R) 14. She tried to get the City to apply tax freezes for persons with disabilities along with the elderly, but had encountered resistance in the BOA. David Hicks said that Michelle Duprey had indicated that the problem was in the new state law, which excluded persons with disabilities and now only covers the elderly. David Hicks and others thought it should be looked into.

### Department Report

Michelle Duprey reported the Department has applied for the Accessible America Award for the third year. She said there was more focus on employment this year.

She also reported on the intent to apply for a Connect-Ability, State of Connecticut sponsored grant. The Department's proposal will focus on employment for youth and will be partnering with another City Department which administers the Youth@Work Initiative.

### Old Business

#### *Transportation Committee*

Stan Kontogiannis received a follow-up letter from Greater New Haven Transit program "My Ride." He distributed the letter that he got from them and spoke about some of the issues that had been improved as a result of the Transportation Committee meeting with them. The Commission could also be helpful by providing letters of support for funding for GPS technology that "My Ride" representatives thought would improve their ride availability.

### New Business

Stan Kontogiannis brought up an article that was in the New Haven Independent on-line newspaper regarding voting and Brian McGrath. In response to Linda Reeder's question about the way a certain individual in the article had been treated, Stan Kontogiannis stated that apart from the way Brian McGrath interacted with that individual, who has a cognitive disability, he also has concerns about the larger issue of voting rights for persons with cognitive disabilities and especially these individuals being manipulated. There was further discussion of the event and the article.

Michelle Duprey reported that the City will take appropriate action on how to serve people with disabilities. She stated that the commentary on the article included questions by a State Elections official about the competence of certain people with disabilities to vote. Michelle Duprey offered to contact and ask to have someone from the Office of Protection and Advocacy or State Elections come and talk to the Commission. The Commission agreed this would be helpful. She will make contacts and schedule a guest speaker for the December meeting.

David Hicks asked for further input from the commissioners about the handicapped parking issue which he intended to be addressing with legislators in the near future. He said he would be contacting Senator Andrew McDonald and Rosemarie Hice, legislative assistant to Representative Robert Megna. Matt Ranelli said that it might be good to get the Commission's bill regarding handicapped parking into the City's Legislative package.

Elaine Quinn also brought up the idea of Commissioners taking pictures of parking violators. There was further discussion about this idea and coming up with a strategy.

### Trees of Hope

Robin Tousey Ayers collected gift certificates for the Trees of Hope fundraiser and said that AC Moore would not donate a wreath without getting a go-ahead from their Corporate office. Robin stated that she had gotten a 20 percent discount at Vinnie's for a wreath, but was unable to get one donated this year.

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