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*Mayor*

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

**Approved**

**Commission on Disabilities Minutes**  
**October 20, 2008**

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

Absent: Delma Skinner

Staff: Michelle Duprey

Guests: Representatives from the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven (HANH)

David Hicks opened the meeting and a quorum was established.

Seven employees from HANH were present: Sheila Allen Bell, Jimmy Miller, Clyde Caldwell, Iris Santiago, Laura Woodie, Pam Rosenbloom, and Evelise Ribero. Karen DuBois-Walton, Executive Director was unable to attend as originally scheduled. The Commissioners introduced themselves after which all of the guests introduced themselves.

Pam Rosenbloom, Director of Planning for Capital Projects and Modernization, began the presentation by talking about the Quarterly Progress Report, which is a report which tracks new units under construction (see Quarterly Progress Report on Creation of Units, on file). Overall more than ten percent of the units under construction are to be UFAS compliant for accessibility).

Elaine Quinn made the comment that in the past HANH was going with a five percent requirement and she stated she was pleased to see it had gone to ten percent. Linda Reeder asked what the percentage of accessible units including existing and proposed units would be. There was some discussion among HANH representatives who concluded it would be more than ten percent.

Laura Woodie, ADA Coordinator for HANH, was the next to present. She discussed the forms and process that are used when an individual may require a reasonable accommodation or modification. Laura Woodie had forms and went through them with the group. (The forms are on file.) There were several questions. One facet of the reasonable accommodation process is called "mobility counseling." The Commission was told that mobility counseling is assistance to a person with a disability who holds a Section 8 voucher, by HANH, in finding an accessible unit.

Heiwa Salovitz had questions about the ADA Coordinator position, such as how many hours per week the position entails and job qualifications. Laura Woodie answered questions about supply and demand of accessible housing in the private housing market. There is a shortfall of units which cannot accommodate the requests. She also talked about the ability of HANH to go up to 150 percent of the Fair Market Rent as a reasonable accommodation within the Section 8 Voucher program. Matthew Rannelli asked about their effort to develop more accessible units in the private housing market. The problems with developing

accessible units in the existing housing stock in New Haven were discussed. These include the difficulty of building ramps for wheelchair access caused by small lots, large front porches, and high stairways.

David Hicks asked about the number of people with disabilities who are on HANH waiting lists. Waiting lists, as there are several of them, were discussed. Evelise Ribero said there were about 27 people on the list for needing project-based accessible housing. There are many more waiting on the overall list, i.e. not specific to a particular site. Evelise Ribero shared with the group how the waiting list is getting updated to include a full identification of the accessible features of the units. She did not know how many non-disabled people were currently in accessible units but said she would get Michele Duprey that information.

Matthew Rannelli asked about accessibility in general and whether HANH sees it as one of their priorities, to which Jimmy Miller stated that he thinks it has been a top priority. Mr. Miller explained that all of their staff have been getting training and certified in Fair Housing so that accessibility is more than just the units, but also training staff to be more observant and proactive about people's needs. Jimmy Miller also spoke about the Support Services division at HANH. He added that in addition to being larger, UFAS compliant units are more costly per square foot since the appliances that are used being more expensive in an accessible unit. Matthew Ranelli pointed out that in the private sector the difference in cost between standard and accessible units was not that great. Mr. Miller responded that the restrictions for HANH made such construction much more expensive.

Elaine Quinn asked about units in the Shartenburg Tower development to which Jimmy Miller responded that of the 495 units a total of 50 of those would be accessible and 50 are affordable. When the question arose if 50 of the affordable units are accessible, Michelle Duprey clarified there was a difference between UFAS compliant and FHA compliant and suggested Mr. Miller confirm with the developer that the units would be UFAS compliant. Mr. Miller assented. There was additional discussion about housing developing in downtown New Haven and Elaine Quinn requested that we think positively about influencing developers to create accessible units.

There was more discussion about the wait list and additional questions regarding Section 8, and working with private landlords to encourage them to develop a list. Elaine Quinn also commented positively about the luncheon she attended at HANH and encouraged them to expand the list to invite property managers in the future. There were some additional comments regarding Section 8.

Sheila Allen-Bell briefly talked about some of the Supportive Service they have in place provided by Continuum of Care and ALSO-Cornerstone. The presentation concluded and David Hicks thanked the guests for attending.

### **September Minutes**

The minutes were reviewed and a motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as written. Robin Tousey-Ayers and Matt Ranelli abstained from voting. All other members voted to approve.

### **Chairman's report**

David Hicks briefly discussed the progress he has made regarding getting the Spokebenders to play a game at Wilbur Cross School in January or February. He will need to work out some details regarding a referee to volunteer for the event. David Hicks will continue to work on this project, and he and Michelle Duprey will speak with Stan Kosloski about the logistics of such an event.

David Hicks gave an update on the Designated Parking Legislative initiative. It is on hold until after the November elections.

David Hicks brought an article to the attention of the Commission to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Westport, CT has public hearings about accessibility in and he wants to discuss this idea for New Haven.

**Announcements and Miscellaneous**

Heiwa Salovitz mentioned the WTNH-Channel 8 news piece on Paratransit in New Haven and future wheelchair accessible taxis. Michelle Duprey was featured in the interview. Robin Tousey Ayers mentioned that she has seen a news article in the New Haven Arts newsletter about the dance that took place on the New Haven Green in which Dana Canevari and Heiwa Salovitz participated.

There was a motion to adjourn by Dana Canevari, seconded by Heiwa Salovitz. The motion was moved. The meeting adjourned.