



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

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

**Commission on Disabilities Minutes**  
**September 11, 2006**

Present: Maria Elena Alvarez, Dana Canevari, Marjorie Eichler, Chris Getlein, David Hicks, Linda Reeder, Matthew Ranelli, Robin Tousey-Ayers

Absent: Elaine Quinn, Stan Kontogiannis

Staff: Michelle Duprey

The meeting was brought to order by Maria Elena Alvarez. There was a moment of silence in recognition of 9/11/01. The minutes for August were distributed and reviewed. There were two minor changes suggested, which were agreed on by the Commissioners. Discussion turned to the portion of the minutes concerning the presentation by Mr. Jimmy Miller and Ms. Maureen Novak of HANH. At issue were possible commitments, made by Mr. Miller, concerning accessible housing. It was concluded that Kristin Barber would recheck the tape-recording of the meeting, with respect to such commitments, and report at the next meeting. Until then the minutes would remain open.

**Chairman's Report**

Maria Elena Alvarez stated that she had read an article in the Hartford Courant that Medicare Part B premiums were increasing in 2007. She stated she didn't know how many people this will affect. She wanted to know if anyone had heard about these changes. None of the other commissioners had any further information to offer to the discussion.

**Department Report**

Michelle Duprey reported, in the first place, that there had been less activity over the last month, as she had been on vacation and Kristin Barber had needed to take sick leave. She reported that Kristin Barber would soon be sending out the letters regarding Disability Parking as prepared by the Commission. Recipients of the letters will be campus police in the greater New Haven area. On another issue, the Department has submitted a grant to the Department of Environmental Protection in order to obtain all-terrain beach wheelchairs for use at Lighthouse Point Park. Michelle Duprey said the Department would also be preparing an application for the Accessible America Award through the National Organization on Disability at the end of the month. There were some questions about the Accessible America award which Michelle Duprey answered.

**Old Business**

Robin Tousey-Ayers reported on her attempt to schedule an appearance by Robin Golden, Chief of Operations for the New Haven Board of Education, at a Commission meeting. The commissioners had expressed interest in learning more about accommodations for children with disabilities within the New Haven School system, subsequent to meeting with Carla O'Brian. Kristin Barber called Robin Golden at the request of Robin Tousey-Ayers to check on her availability, but learned that Robin Golden is not available on Mondays, when the Commission meets. Robin Tousey-Ayers discussed with the group alternatives to a meeting with the full Commission. One idea was to convene a smaller group to meet with Robin Golden. Robin Tousey-Ayers will get back to the commissioners after speaking with Robin Golden about this possibility.

Robin Tousey-Ayers discussed the conversation she had with Ms. Lisa Fernandez regarding Rails to Trails. Ms. Fernandez was originally tentatively scheduled to attend the November Commission meeting. Ms. Fernandez had hoped that the commissioners could meet her at some point of the Rails to Trails in New Haven in order to make recommendations about where an accessible entrance to the Trail might originate. After discussion it was concluded that the Commission could give feedback as to usability but they could not comment about compliance with the ADA, which was better left up to a civil engineer or a landscape architect. Linda Reeder suggested it might be more efficient if Robin Tousey-Ayers sent the commissioners a link to the Rails to Trails website. Then individuals could look at the trail area in question and go there on their own time, rather than trying to coordinate a field trip. Robin Tousey-Ayers agreed to send the information to the commissioners.

### **New Business**

Marge Eichler reported that she has had cause to call the New Haven Police Department with a psychiatric emergency through 911 and she thought their interaction was much improved and she was pleased with their intervention.

### **Other Business**

**No other business**

### **Public Comments**

Michelle Duprey announced a Disability Convention scheduled for the following Saturday, September 16, and invited the commissioners to come and participate.

Marge Eichler asked if anyone knew about resources for older adolescents with psychiatric disabilities. There were several suggestions offered to her.

Robin Tousey-Ayers talked about the funeral service for Frederica Riggins which was held on August 26, 2006. Frederica Riggins was a commissioner for several years and will be sadly missed by those who knew her. After some discussion it was decided that the commissioners would like to remember her by donating in the "Trees of Hope" fundraiser for the Ronald McDonald House this coming December.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned.