



**JUSTIN ELICKER**  
*Mayor*

**COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES**  
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**BILLY HUANG**  
*Chairperson*

## **Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes**

**March 11, 2024**

**Present:** Billy Huang, Carmen Correa-Rios, Tricia Palluzzi, Ben Bond, Lena Esposito, and Bobby Berriault (Almost through the Alders' Confirmation Process)

**Absent:** Sandy Roberts, Annie Harper, Grisel Aguilar-Cobos, Linda McDonough, Sally Esposito.

**Guests:** David Agosta

**Staff:** Gretchen Knauff

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM. **(No Quorum)**
- II. **Approval of Minutes for February 8, 2024** – Since a quorum was not established, the minutes were tabled until the April 2024 meeting.
- III. **Update from Sarah Spear** – Sarah returned to the Commission on Disabilities to provide an update on her business, Empowered Together (ET). ET focuses on the accessibility of businesses in Connecticut including a pilot project in New Haven, launched on January 29, 2024. There have been 30 new users since the launch. Sarah has been working with the New Haven Economic Development Department to recruit businesses willing to be assessed for accessibility and listed on the app. At this point, Sarah reports that 100 businesses are listed on the marketplace. Twenty-five in New Haven have had an accessibility survey and have an accessibility overview in their online listing. People are invited to sign up, discover and recommend new businesses, and review accessible businesses.
- IV. **Introduction of Bobby Berriault** - Billy asked Bobby to take a few moments to introduce himself since he will officially be joining the Commission on Disabilities in April. Bobby reports that he has Autism and recently moved to New Haven. Gretchen added that he previously sat on the Commission on Disabilities in New Britain, and they spoke very highly of him.
- V. **Old Business**
  - A. Elevator Ordinance – The elevator flyer was translated into Spanish and both English and Spanish versions of the flyer were sent to everybody a couple weeks ago. It has been distributed to the Alders and the Community Management Teams (CMTs) through different mechanisms. The Commission received a request from the Downtown Worcester Square CMT to attend their meeting on March 19, 2024, via Zoom. Billy and

Tricia (possibly) agreed to attend the meeting. Gretchen will get more details from the contact at the CMT.

Gretchen will send the elevator flyers to the Fair Rent Commission and Elderly Services for distribution to their constituencies.

- B. Notification System for Individuals with Autism – Slow progress is being made. Assistant Chief Bhagtana shared the draft of a press release for the Walk with Derek program. Gretchen Knauff, Jennifer Harding, and Billy Huang reviewed it and sent comments. Changes need to be made to the City’s website to provide a more visible location for the Walk with Derek form. Gretchen is checking with the webmaster and will request it be moved to a few spots.

Assistant Chief Bhagtana sent a copy of an invoice for patches for officer uniforms asking if we knew of any resources to help pay for the patches. Nobody had any resources that they could think of at that moment and Commissioners suggested that Gretchen ask Jennifer Harding.

- C. Effective Communication – Billy reported on HB 5241, **An Act Establishing a Bureau Coordinating Services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind Persons**. The history of the Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired was discussed including it’s rapid and disruptive closure about 10 years ago. Nothing has happened regarding the effective communication complaint with the Commission.
- D. East Rock Policy Review/Submission of Documents – This Agenda item is related to the submission of multiple documents by David Agosta to the Commission. Billy, Tricia, and Gretchen reviewed all the appendices and met last Saturday to discuss the next steps. Billy is currently working on a response.

## VI. **New Business**

- A. Update on Composition of Commission – Gretchen reviewed the upcoming changes to the Commission.
- **Bobby Berriault will be joining the Commission in April**
  - **Linda McDonough and Grisel Aguilar-Cobos are now City employees and must withdraw from the Commission.**
  - **Sally Esposito is still on the Commission until a replacement is appointed.**

VII. **Public Comment** – David Agosta reviewed the larger issues in his complaint.

VIII. **Announcements** – Gretchen reminded everyone about the Introduction to Supported Decision Making webinar coming up on March 20, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

IX. **Adjourn** – **The meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM.**