

# **Commission on Disabilities - Meeting Minutes**

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**April 8, 2024**

**Present:** Tricia Palluzzi, Annie Harper, Billy Huang, Carmen Correa-Rios, Bobby Berriault.

**Absent:** Ben Bond, Lina Esposito

**Staff:** Gretchen Knauff

**Guests:**

## **I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair B. Huang at 6:25 PM.

It was noted that Sandra Roberts resigned as a Commissioner, effective immediately.

## **II. Welcome Bobby Berriault, New Commission Member.**

This was Bobby's first official meeting. – Welcome Bobby! Bobby previously served as a member of the Commission on Disabilities in New Britain. He agreed to talk about some of the ideas and activities in New Britain at a future meeting.

## **III. Approval of February 2024 and March 2024 Minutes**

March 2024 Minutes - C. Correa-Rios made a motion to accept the minutes from March 2024 and B. Huang seconded. The minutes passed unanimously. A. Harper and B. Berriault abstained.

February 2024 Minutes - T. Palluzzi made a motion to accept the minutes from February 2024 and C. Correa-Rios seconded. The minutes passed unanimously. B. Berriault abstained.

## **IV. Old Business**

### **A. Elevator Ordinance – Getting the Word Out.**

Downtown Wooster Square CMT asked for a member of the Commission to attend their next meeting to discuss the elevator ordinance, on Tuesday 4/16/24 on zoom. T. Palluzi and A. Harper will attend. G. Knauff shared the flyer about the ordinance to the Fair Rent Commission who will share it with tenants, and the Department of Elderly services who will send it to their constituents. Tricia asked Gretchen to send the elevator flyer again.

### **B. Notification System for Individuals with Autism**

G. Knauff – has been trying to get the City and the Police to issue a Walk with Derek press release, but it is being held up. The NHPD purchased Walk with Derek patches and they are distributing them to New Haven police officers.

### **C. Effective Communication**

G. Knauff has spoken with Asst. Chief Bhagtana regarding updating Police Department General Order 315, Communication with People who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing to

include information about how to use the Voyance Language app for emergency American Sign Language Services. She has also contacted Fire Chief Alston to let them know about the app so they can use it in emergencies.

Also, Julia Silvestri, who had been part of the Disability Commission's Effective Communication committee is conducting an ASL training for first responders and other organizations. G. Knauff sent the flyer to Asst. Chief Bhagtana and to Chief Alston. Both were very enthusiastic about it and would be sending it to their officers.

Relatedly, HB 5241 – an Act establishing Bureau Coordinating Services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind Person passed out of the State Legislature's Human Services Committee. But the fiscal note (nearly \$0.5 million) may not be realistic. In the past there was a similar office that used to coordinate all interpretation services, which worked very well. The whole system has now become much less organized and finding an interpreter is much more difficult. Also, since the pandemic and the normalization of zoom interpretation, it is much harder to find interpreters willing to provide in person interpreting. Not sure if this new Bureau will be able to solve this problem.

#### D. Submission by D. Agosta and East Rock Access

At the last meeting, the subcommittee reviewing the complaints submitted by David Agosta reported on their review. As indicated, B. Huang wrote a letter with the complaints and had G. Knauff send it to Giovanni Zinn at Engineering, Sandeep Ayasola at Transportation, Traffic and Parking and Mike Siciliano at Public Works. The complaints were attached.

East Rock - Discussion of what could be done to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities when the road is closed to vehicles. B. Berriault suggests having a remote-controlled gate whereby people with disabilities could call and get access. T. Palluzzi – the problem is mixing vehicular and pedestrian traffic. We need to keep thinking about this problem.

#### E. Other

Patch Repairs - T. Palluzzi suggests inviting a person from Public Works to our meeting. Asphalt has been used to fill holes in concrete on Chapel between College and Temple, it is a serious tripping hazard. She will post it on SeeClickfix.

### **V. New Business**

#### A. Accessory Dwelling Unit Legislation

G. Knauff attended the Alder's Legislation Committee Meeting and proposed changes to the ADU ordinance that would require a Type B level of accessibility for ground level ADUs. B. Huang, S. Esposito, T. Palluzzi and G. Knauff submitted testimony. Decisions about ADUs were pushed to a future meeting due to other concerns by the Committee members.

#### B. Summer Gathering

We will discuss it further at the next meeting.

### **VI. Adjournment**

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:24 PM.