

Commission on Disabilities - Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

June 10, 2024

Present: Tricia Palluzzi, Annie Harper, Billy Huang, Carmen Correa-Rios, Sally Esposito, Lena Esposito

Absent: Ben Bond

Staff: Gretchen Knauff

Guests: Rebecca Miller, Donna Golden, Julia Silvestri, Esther Rose-Wilen, David Agosta

Interpreters: Jac Terrio and Alyssa Shortt

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair B. Huang at 6:05 PM.

Everyone in the room introduced themselves.

II. Conversation with Esther Rose-Wilen, Asst. Director of Comprehensive Planning, City Planning Department.

E. Rose-Wilen presented Vision 2034, the 10 year comprehensive plan for the City of New Haven, the previous plan covered 2015-2025. A plan is required to receive state and federal funding. The new plan will cover 2025-2035. It is called Vision 2034 because of the significance of 2034 as 250th anniversary of the city's incorporation. E. Rose-Wilen is the only staff person dedicated to the plan; they are using consultants to support creating the plan, and have a steering committee – G. Knauff and C. Correa-Rios are members. They have a comprehensive community engagement strategy, different options to hear voices, eg; have a paid youth leadership team, community navigators. Will have a large community survey. Commitment to equity and resilience. Will create a draft document, get input from community/alders, and then finalize in fall 2025. Asks the group – how can they make the process accessible to people with disabilities? G. Knauff – E. Rose-Wilen has been very willing to date to ensure that process is accessible. S. Esposito – can we have a more rigorous mechanism to ensure that local organizations that apply for funding from the city have to accommodate disability access in their project proposals. Wants something more concrete than lofty ideas. D. Golden – are they providing language interpretation to enable non-English speakers to participate? E. Rose-Wilen – we have a newsletter people can sign up for, hope that our community partners are reaching out to their constituents. We do not have a current plan to do different language focus groups but we could consider supporting that process. G. Knauff – Disability is part of everything, has to be built in from the start, universal design principles. It's not enough to include people with disabilities – they have to *belong*. E. Rose-Wilen – we should have a person with the disability perspective on each of the co-creation teams, as well as having someone with that perspective review the draft plan. L. Esposito – does regular workshop on disability issues at Havenly (organization that works with refugees). A. Harper/B. Miller – suggest a meeting at CMHC to get input of people

with mental illness. G. Knauff – connect with students with disabilities through student services. J. Silvestri – webinar town-halls work well for the deaf community. Here is the link to Vision 2034: <https://newhavenvision2034.com/>

III. Conversation with Julia Silvestri, Coordinator Yale ASL program

Yale ASL program requires that Yale ASL students do service projects, can be on campus and in the community. They have hosted awareness raising workshops about how to find an interpreter etc for first responders, teachers, medical students, parents of deaf children. Was hard for us to find families – we would like help connecting with families with deaf children. Also offer calendar of disability events that are open to the community. We have an annual open house and would love community to be represented to meet students. This summer we started ASL 1 and 2. Students can help with minor interpreting but aren't fully qualified (certified). 2-300 students have to do some community service, so if any organization wants to host students let her know. The State has started a Bureau of Services for Persons Who Are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing which shall be within the Department of Aging and Disability Services – want to get people involved in that. G. Knauff – is it possible to have Yale students, including people with lived experience, come to speak with City department heads and other staff about the importance of accessibility/effective communication for the Deaf Community?

IV. Old Business

The meeting was already past 7:30 PM so G. Knauff gave a quick update on old business, including the elevator ordinance and East Rock, nothing significant to report/discuss. She and B. Huang will organize an in-person meeting (Summer Gathering). D. Agosta – continued frustration with lack of access to East Rock park. B. Huang suggests an in-person meeting between he and Giovanni Zinn (City Engineer).

V. Approval of February 2024 and May 2024 Minutes

April 2024 Minutes - B. Huang made a motion to accept the minutes from April 2024 and T. Palluzzi seconded. The minutes passed unanimously. S. Esposito abstained.

May 2024 Minutes - B. Huang made a motion to accept the minutes from May 2024 and T. Palluzzi seconded. The minutes passed unanimously. S. Esposito and A. Harper abstained.

VI. Adjournment

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:46 PM.