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COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
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ROBIN TOUSEY-AYERS
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes

City Hall 2nd Meeting Room II

January 11, 2016

Present: Sally Esposito, Sara Hungerford, Kurtis Kearney, Tricia Palluzzi, Iva Long, Matthew Ranelli, Lisa Spruill-Stevenson, and Robin Tousey-Ayers

Staff: Michelle Duprey

Absent: Jenifer Blemings, Maria Rivera, Jack Tsai and Paula Pernal (staff)

Guest: Rebecca Bombero-Striker and Gary Dickenson from Department of Parks & Recreation

Meeting called to order at 5:15 p.m.

Minutes

The Commission members reviewed the December Minutes. Robin stated that there are several corrections to the December Minutes as follows: "Kurtis absent and Sara present. Matthew made a motion to adjourn the meeting. _____ second the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m." Sally moved to approve the December Minutes and Kurtis seconded. The December Minutes were approved as amended. Kurtis abstained from voting.

Guest

Sally stated that the Rebecca & Gary from Parks & Recreation shall discuss Lighthouse Park and access to the water. Tricia mentioned that there was a request last summer about using the beach mats in place of the sand wheelchairs. However, there was an issue of keeping the mats clean. Rebecca stated that there is a next-generation product mat that Lighthouse Park is looking at now. This new product is lighter and does not have to be removed for the sand combers. Rebecca stated that they are skeptical about these claims. Rebecca mentioned that they are improving signage about the beach wheelchairs present, including adding signage at better heights. Gary stated that they are working with Dave Moser to place signs up for bathroom locations, first aid and emergency. Rebecca stated that the entrance is being reconfigured with signage of the location for beach wheelchairs. Sally asked if this information will be on the website. Michelle stated that there are three (3) beach wheelchairs with one (1) that goes into the water. Gary mentioned that he will check on the number of wheelchairs. Rebecca informed the Commission members of the Adaptive Recreation

Program at Lighthouse Park. It involves partnering with other groups and agencies to provide adaptive paddling and adaptive biking. Rebecca stated that an assessment is conducted on an individual to determine his/her needs and with adaptation may be made to the kayak. She also stated that they have five (5) tricycles and two (2) power-assisted cycles for people with additional needs. The cycles are brought out for specific programs and locations. Michelle stated that the Commission should do a better job of highlighting this information closer to the summer.

Tricia asked Rebecca and Gary about making an accessible entrance to the beach area at the Seawall. Rebecca stated that Giovanni Zinn in Engineering has reviewed that site and informed them that the grade and slope of that area is too great to change. Michelle discussed the south side entrance of the Seawall. The Commission members also discussed the crosswalks and curb cuts at the area. Rebecca mentioned that the City is working on some traffic-calming measures, so these problems may be taking care of during that time. Sally asked if students from the Sound School could design accessibility to the beach area at the Seawall. Michelle stated that she does not think that you have to provide access to the Seawall from Parker Place. She stated that you must provide access to the grass by installing a ramp.

Sally asked Rebecca and Gary how the Commission might assist them in resolving any issues with accessibility at Lighthouse Park. Gary mentioned that they are having issues with painting, signage, maintaining one-way roads, and, changing parking. Robin asked about other Parks in the City. Tricia stated that Edgewood needs to be re-lined. Gary stated that East Rock and Wilbur Cross also needs to be re-lined. He stated that access to Bowen Field will be up to code, including the bathrooms and parking lot. Rebecca stated that the City is in the process of re-designing the Fort Hale Pier. Matthew asked about the Boathouse. Rebecca stated that this is a State Project. Michelle stated that the plans that she has seen are accessible. Gary stated that the plans for the re-design of the New Haven Green include access to each sidewalk without having to go onto grass.

Michelle asked Rebecca & Gary if they needed assistance of the Commission during the Budget Meetings. Rebecca will get back to the Commission.

Chairperson's Report

Robin stated that she does not have anything of significant to report.

Department Report

Michelle stated that she is looking at the year and thinking about the ADA Celebration. Michelle may not do any celebration this year in part because of the lack of attendance last year. Robin suggested having a beach celebration this year. Matthew including the "No Child Left Inside" Program. Matthew stated that he will contact Parks & Recreation. He suggested that the Commission write to Parks & Recreation requesting that the beach mats be installed by a specific date. Michelle stated that at the next meeting they will draft a letter.

Old Business

Sally mentioned having a discussion about the website of YNHH with the other Commission members at a future date.

Robin read an email from Stuart Warner, Assistant General Counsel of Regulatory Risk Services at YNHH to Michelle Duprey. Stuart confirm that she will attend the February 8th meeting to discuss bed assignment. Michelle stated that the issue was how do people with disabilities receive rooms at YNHH in the medical specialty area that the need. Michelle stated that hospital was relying on Smilow to meet the 10% needed for accessible rooms. Michelle stated that this becomes a problem when YNHH moves all their orthopedics or geriatric floor to St. Raphael's campus and all of their accessible rooms are at Smilow. Michelle stated that the same level of care is compromised. She suggested that the Commission think about how people with disabilities are receiving services at YNHH in geriatric rooms. Robin asked Michelle if she knew the number and location of the accessible rooms at YNHH. Michelle stated that on the geriatric floor where the average age is 81, there is one (1) accessible room. Matthew mentioned that when the Commission was working on the Housing Authority issue, it asked YNHH for a breakdown by facility. Michelle suggested asking YNHH to bring a list of the number of accessible rooms by unit and specialty. The Commission members discuss the DOJ law governing accessible rooms for hospitals. Kurtis described several instances where he was hospitalized in non-accessible rooms.

Matthew stated that he spoke to Albert Lucas concerning the process of submitting the ordinance to the Board of Alders. Mr. Lucas stated that anyone can submit the Ordinance. A letter to the President of the Board of Alders must accompany the Ordinance. Sally stated that Alder Ernie Santiago will support the legislation. Tricia stated that Sal DeCola would be happy to submit the legislation. Michelle also spoke to Alder Barbara Constantinople about this legislation. Matthew described the process to the Commission members. Matthew stated that he will draft the letter. Sally made a motion to allow Matthew to draft a letter and submit the Elevator Ordinance to the Board of Alders. Matthew seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sally mentioned that she spoke to Fair Haven Librarian and was told that each library has different hours. Robin and Michelle discuss whether the Commission meet informally at 2-3 libraries or add the public speaking section to the end of each regular meeting. Michelle suggested that the Disability Commission organize a joint-meeting with the Aging Commission.

New Business

Sally and Robin discussed the "Every Student Succeeds Act" and other State of Connecticut Education programs for youth with disabilities.

Other Business

None.

Public Comment/Announcements

Next meeting shall take place on February 8, 2016.

Stuart Warner from YNHH shall attend this meeting to discuss bed management.

Sara made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Tricia seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 7:00 p.m.