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ROBIN TOUSEY-AYERS
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes

City Hall 4th Floor Conference Room

April 14, 2014

Present: Matthew Ranelli, Tricia Palluzzi, Jack Tsai and Robin Tousey-Ayers

Staff: Michelle Duprey and Paula Pernal

Absent: Jenifer Blemings and Maria Rivera

Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Robin introduces the Commission Members to new member Tricia Palluzzi.

Robin asks Michelle if she responded to a previous inquiry about beach mesh equipment by Alder Salvatore DeCola. Michelle stats that she has sent emails to the appropriate personnel, but that she has not heard back from anyone as of this date.

Minutes

Robin asked the Commission Members to review the February Minutes. Robin states that Paula was absent during this meeting and that the tape was not working properly during the February meeting. Robin makes a revision to the date of the March meeting as noted on page two of the February Minutes.

Matt made a motion to accept the February minutes as revised.

Jack seconded the motion.

Tricia abstained from voting.

February minutes are approved unanimously as revised.

Chairperson's Report

Robin discusses the handouts: By-Laws, Article that discusses the creation of the Commission on Disabilities, and list of Board of Alders. Robin states that she wanted to note which Commissioner is represented by an Alder: Jack has Jessica Holmes, Matt has Anna Festa, Robin has Brenda Foskey-Cyrus, and Tricia has Salvatore DeCola.

Robin states that she will email the Commissioners copies of the letters that are being sent to the Board of Alders concerning the Reception. Robin states that one letter is a thank you letter and the other letter and is a sorrow letter for not attending. Robin mentions that one of the Alders came up to her after the Reception and stated that his daughter would be a good candidate as a commissioner. But she has not heard from this candidate or Alder since the reception. Robin wants to stay on top of broadening membership for the Commission. She states that the Commission should continue to follow-up with the Board of Alders through Al Lucas from Legislative Service.

Robin asked the other Commissioners for ideas on how to get the Alders on board. Matt suggests volunteering to assist with answering questions from constituents. Robin mentions that she attended a District Meeting with her former and new Alders and she was invited to speak about the Commission. Matt states that his district also has monthly meetings and he will ask to be placed on the agenda. Jack states that he will inquire about the monthly meetings in his district. Tricia states that her district has monthly neighborhood meetings. Robin suggests to Tricia that she should ask to be placed on their agenda.

Robin asks Michelle if the current Mayor is conducting Mayor's Night Out. Michelle states that she attended a Mayor's Night Out. Michelle states that

the Mayor's calendar is on the city's website. Robin states that Mayor's Night Out is another good place to connect. Robin asks Michelle if the Mayor is conducting Mayor's Night In. Michelle states that she is not aware of this event.

Robin asks for feedback from the other Commissioners about the Board of Alders Reception. Jack states that it would have been interesting to have asked the Board of Alders beforehand if they had any knowledge of the Commission. Matt states that this event was a first good step. Matt mentions that the Commission should at least identify 2 or 3 Board of Alders to present an issue to them. Robin mentions that another avenue is speaking at the public comment session of the Board of Alders meetings or placing a matter on the Board's agenda for presentation. Robin mentions that Alder Michael Stratton has done a lot of work for the disability community. Michelle states that her budget presentation was three nights after the Reception and that she had no questions. Michelle mentions that Ald. Jorge Perez and others said that she answered all of their questions at the Reception. Michelle states that the Reception was very helpful.

Department Report

Michelle states that it is important if the Commission is going to address a particular issue that it aligns itself with the Mayor's agenda. Michelle suggests that the Commission interface with the Mayor on issues that affect the disability community by formally inviting her to a Commission meeting. Matt states that in addition to the invitation, Robin might wish to contact Patricia Lawlor.

Robin asks the other Commissioners about possible issues to discuss with the Mayor. Matt suggests discussing the issue of accommodations for New Haven school children during the new Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium ("SBAC") standard testing. Matt states that there is an oral component added to the testing, but that the schools do not have a live reader for those children who are deaf or hearing impaired. Michelle states that not providing alternative testing materials is a Title II violation issue. A

discussion develops about whether this issue concerns the Board of Education or the City. Matt states that this is a hearing test more than anything else for these children and suggests raising this access issue. Matt states that ultimately it is the responsibility of the State of Connecticut.

Michelle mentions that there is a proposal before the Human Services Commission of the Board of Alders to overturn the rate increase for the elderly using My Ride services in New Haven. Michelle states that the rate is now \$3.00 per ride and it is dictated by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Michelle mentions that the next Human Service Commission meeting shall take place before this Commission meets. Matt states that the issue should be: if an individual shall receive a reduction in the fare, it shall apply to all eligible individuals, not just the elderly. Michelle suggests that a Commission member attend this meeting.

Robin asked Michelle about the status of her training. Michelle states that she has not begun her training yet. Michelle mentions that she has met with the Mayor's staff last week to brief them of the training and the reason for the training.

Michelle states that she has had persistent problems with landlords not maintaining their elevators. Michelle states that she receives numerous telephone calls from residents of housing units in New Haven complaining that their elevators have not worked for weeks. Michelle states that depending when the building was built, the Building Official could enforce the building code, but there are limited resources available. Michelle states that there is no enforcement mechanism in place. Tricia states that elevators are considered forms of egress. Tricia states that it is cheaper to have a service contract for elevator service. Michelle suggests pursuing this type of matter for possible legislation through the Board of Alders, since it is a difficult problem for the disabled community. Michelle suggests that the Commission work on legislation to empower the Department of Livable City Initiative ("LCI") to impose fines on landlords that do not repair elevators or relocate tenants. Michelle states inviting LCI to the

Commission meeting when the Mayor attends. Matt shall contact Mark Stroud from LCI.

Robin asks Michelle if she attended the Inaugural Ball. Michelle states that she attended and she saw Matt at the Inaugural Ball. She had a nice time.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Matt states that he will obtain more information about the status of providing accommodations for New Haven school children during the new SBAC standard testing. Robin mentions that there is a general lack of technology in schools.

Robin states that she would like the Commission to have a profile. Robin states that she will draft the profile for the Commission to review.

Other Business

None.

Public Comment/Announcements

Robin states that the next meeting is May 12, 2014.

Robin & Michelle discuss resurrecting the Annual Report.

Matt made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Jack seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 6:30 p.m.