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DAVID HICKS
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities Minutes
City Hall 4th Floor Conference Room
March 11, 2013

Present: Jenifer Blemings, Cecile Brodsky, David Hicks, Christopher Hicks, Matthew Ranelli
Maria Rivera, Robin Tousey-Ayers, Jack Tsai

Staff: Michelle Duprey, Paula Pernal

Meeting was called to order at 5:24 p.m.

Minutes

David asked the commission members if they had a chance to review the January minutes. Jack had one change to the January minutes. Jack stated that the HUD BASH Program noted on page 2 is spelled with a "V" instead of a "B". David made a motion to accept the January minutes as amended. Matt seconded the motion. January minutes are approved unanimously.

Chairman's Report

David reports that Joe Carbone from The Workplace is attending the April meeting. David asks if there have been other responses from the letters mailed in connection with the Jobs Pipeline that was discussed at the December meeting. Michelle states that someone asked for David's home telephone number. Michelle suggests calling Tony Signori to inquire.

David mentioned that Matt informed him of several legislative bills that are being considered by the Transportation Committee in Hartford. David stated that he reviewed both the ct.gov and the opa websites for bills relating to persons with disabilities. David mentioned the following bills that the commission might want to take a position on:

1. PB 144-To make a voting accommodation for people with disabilities such that when you show up at a voting place, once proving you have a disability, you are able to go to the head of the line. It designed to help people with disabilities vote. Michelle does not like it as a matter of course or as a blanket policy. Michelle states that this bill is patronizing. Michelle states that it fosters a perception of helplessness. Michelle mentions that there are laws in place already to help people with disabilities vote. David states that there is a gray area in that the intent is to try to get more people to vote. Matt suggests implementing statutory advertising where a plaque or sign in a specific font is posted stating the law and the accommodation options at the poles. David likes Matt's suggestion. David states that the Commission should forward a letter with Matt's suggestions.
2. PB 105 & PB 5546- David states that there are two 920 bills directed at Police & Enforcement of Handicap Parking. David states that Bill 105 requires police to warn and ticket person without handicap permits while Bill 5546 requires the police to eliminate the warning and only deliver the citation. David mentions that this is an important issue. Matt states that Bill 105 is sponsored by

a police officer. David states that many times people without disabilities are using the handicap parking permits even though they do not have a disability. Jenifer states that this could be difficult to judge since a lot of disabilities are not necessarily seen such as pulmonary diseases, aches & pains, etc. David mentioned the report from Channel 8 that showed the misuse of handicap parking permits. Michelle states about 50% of people misuse handicap parking permits. Michelle mentions that she is working on a fact sheet about the use of handicap parking permits in New Haven that will be placed on the city website. There will be a \$250 fine for misuse and the DMV could confiscate your permit. David mentions that Traffic & Parking enforces the use of handicap parking permits in New Haven.

3. PB 5129-David mentions that the legislature is attempting to reinstate the old bill of Lifetime Permits. David states that the Commission should write a letter for testimony even if it dies at committee.
4. PB6395-David mentions that there was an interesting bill that is a pilot program that will receive small funding that is looking into small house nursing homes. The idea is to create a more friendly and homie nursing home environment. David states that this is probably a good thing. Jenifer asks David if these nursing homes would be like rest homes or quest homes. David was not sure. David states that the maximum number of units is 12.

David recommends that the members of the Commission review these Bills.

Department Report

Michelle states that she has a several legislative matters:

1. Michelle states that there is a Proposal as part of the Budget Amendment to consolidate Commissions with includes the Commission on the Aging. Michelle states that the Commission of the Aging is like the ring leader on transitioning from nursing home to community living and long term care planning. Michelle mentions that she filed written testimony in opposition to the elimination of the Commission on the Aging. Michelle states that there is no Commission for People with Disabilities and the whole movement is based on functional need not necessarily age. Michelle supports this Commission.
2. Michelle states she filed written testimony and testified in opposition to defunding of the Centers for Independent Living. Michelle mentions that they are required under Federal Law and there are five (5) Independent Living Centers in the State of Connecticut. Michelle states that our area for Independent Living is the Center for Disability Rights in West Haven which covers New Haven. Michelle states that the Center for Disability Rights covers all things disability.
3. Michelle mentions that there is other legislation, such as: the state buildings becoming accessible by the year 2021 even though the obligation has been in place since 1993. Michelle states another hot issue is the Assisted Suicide Bill in the disability community. Michelle mentions that there is compelling data out of Oregon about the burden of pain. Michelle states that there is a Public Hearing on Friday and the original committee is the Health Committee.
4. Michelle states that her department budget is available on the City website. Michelle mentions that there are three (3) versions depending on the receipt of State funding, but her department remains unchanged.
5. Michelle states that she received approval to attend the National ADA Symposium in San Antonio, Texas. Michelle states that she will bring back information from the conference for the June meeting.
6. Michelle mentions that she is going before the Police Commission tomorrow evening in hopes of adopting a General Order which deals with individuals who are deaf and hearing impaired. Michelle states that this general order will require the Police Department to provide sign language interpreters and give police officers written guidance as well as practical forms for the front desk of the Police Department.

Old Business

Robin distributes training module booklets containing CD's to the members of the Commission from the Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy entitled, "Youth Discussion Guide for The Disability Employment's "I Can" PSA. Robin states that these can assist the members of the Commission to think about Disability Awareness Month.

New Business

Michelle states that every two (2) years the State is required to update the State Independent Living Plan called SILC. Michelle states that this Plan helps decide what are the state priorities and the required funding. Michelle mentions that the Plan focuses on the specific needs. Michelle states that she plans to attend the Public Hearing at Long Wharf in a couple of weeks. Michelle states that BRS and the new Commission on Aging will be attending from the State. Michelle mentions that she would like to see people in the psychiatric outreach community attend the hearing.

Other Business

None

Public Comment/Announcements

None

David made a motion to adjourn meeting.

Cecile seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 6:25 p.m.