

City of Duluth
Commission on Disabilities
Monthly Meeting Minutes
February 2, 2011

Melissa Booth	P	Francis McGee	E
Clara Borrell	A	Patti Nadeau	P
Debra Burmeister	A	Tony Rubin	P
Roberta Cich	P	Beverly Strongitharm	E
Erika Erickson	P	Karin Swor	E
Lindsey Harkreader	P	Glenn Tridgell	P
Sara Junge	E	Randall Vogt	A
Durbin Keeney	A	Galen White	P
Lars Kuehnow	E	Bob Grytdahl-Staff	P

1. January Minutes/February Agenda

January minutes approved as written; current agenda approved as written.

2. Bylaws – *The commission voted on and unanimously approved the proposed amendment to the Commission Bylaws published in the January minutes.*

3. Signage Request

3111 Vernon Street. Initial request denied by engineering because there is off-street parking at the address. Erika Erickson volunteered to visit the site and report back at the next meeting.

There was discussion about the guidelines the commission uses to assess signage requests. It was recommended that data sheets from the city be sent with the next meeting agenda so we can have an informed discussion about our role as a commission in assessing signage requests at the next meeting.

4. Action Reports

A. Parks and Recreation -- Patti Nadeau reported that they are continuing on working to get the Master Plan through. They are working on the gap that exists between which centers will be closed and which will remain open. Parks and Rec is working with the City Council so that community members will be able to voice their concerns and try to save centers that are slated to be closed.

The Trails Master Plan is forthcoming. The plan is to have community members involved in the process.

B. Snow Removal Task Force – People with disabilities are not involved in the strategic planning at this time. The question was raised if the commission could ask to be a part of the planning process with Duluth Digs again. *A motion was made by Erika*

Erickson to open discussion on whether the commission should ask to join forces with Duluth Digs. Glen seconded the motion. Discussion included whether or not the presence of the commission could impact the strategic planning of the snow removal task force. Also, the importance of the insights that the commission could bring on behalf of people with disabilities was mentioned. Erika made a motion to have Galen write a letter on behalf of the commission, asking for representation on the snow removal task force. The motion carried unanimously.

Bob Grytdahl attended the last meeting for the Duluth Digs group and discussed the importance of getting the word out in the community about our responsibilities for clearing sidewalks. He also discussed three categories for the Golden Shovel award: 1) Commercial 2) Residential 3) Fraternal. The group is also considering having a full-time AmeriCorps volunteer next year.

- C. Accessibility and Tourism Task Force – Randy Vogt and Fran McGee were not present to give a report.
- D. DECC/Denfeld Auditorium accessible seating -- Lindsey Harkreader and Galen White are meeting next week with Dan Russell from the DECC and Jeff Anderson from the Duluth City Council.

5. 2010 Year End Report

Roberta Cich volunteered to work with the Chair and Vice Chair to put the report together.

6. Public Comment

Jim Helig from the DTA visited the Commission today. He is hoping to attract new members for their transportation group. Jim talked about the STRIDE service the DTA offers. He cleared up the misconception that a person needs to reserve a ride at least seven days in advance. Jim said this is not the case. He said that wheelchair ridership continues to grow, and has been consistent year round.

Roberta Cich asked about the cart policy for the DTA. Jim explained the policy is that strollers must be able to be folded up on the bus and carts need to be out of the aisle. This is a fire safety issue that was pointed out by the fire department.

Jim would like to attend Commission meetings on a quarterly basis in order to give updates and share information with the Commission. *Erika Erickson made a motion to approve. Glen seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion carried unanimously.*

7. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

8. Announcements

- A. Patti Nadeau shared that the Damiano Center will have a fully operational elevator by next month.
- B. Galen White researched the transit investment plan. She urged us to advocate to save funding by writing to our representatives. There are also cuts coming for the PCA program, which will be detrimental to people who currently receive PCA services. Many are at risk of losing services.
- C. Bob shared some statistics to show how our state budget, which favors the Criminal Justice System over Health and Human Services, impacts people with mental illness and chemical dependency issues:
50% of inmates have mental health diagnoses
85% have mental health or chemical dependency issues at a jobs program in the cities for inmates
Judge Tarnowski is trying to get mental health courts here in Duluth
65% of inmates who are released, reoffend in 3 years
There is a high recidivism rate for criminal offenders, they more often reoffend. Incarceration does not reduce arrest rates
- D. Roberta reminded us of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP), which is a collaboration of local agencies that work with the police department to raise awareness and offer training on how to work with people with disabilities who are victims of domestic and other forms of abuse.

Galen adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Booth
Secretary

MB:jm