



Commission on Disabilities
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
July 7, 2021

This Commission on Disabilities meeting was held by electronic means due to the COVID-19 Emergency.

Commissioners:

Roberta Cich - P
Laurie Berner - P
Amanda Crosby - P
Ashlie Castaldo - P
Tom Furman - P
Heath Maki - P
Dianne Naus - P
Samantha Smingler – P
Allison Fochs - P

President Cich called the July 7, 2021 Commission on Disabilities to order. We do have a quorum.

Also present: Carl Crawford, Mark Bauer, Laura Laaksonen.

Approval of current agenda: MS/C – (Berner, Crosby)

Approval of May minutes: MS/C – (Berner/Furman)

Public Comment/Information: No public comment.

Accessible Parking Update:

Officer Bauer noted that the parking commission did not meet in June and plans to have their July meeting Friday 7/9. There are two upcoming addresses Officer Bauer will be bringing forward for approval:

3116 Vernon Street

2706 Jefferson Street

He does have one other address to review for August's meeting: 319 N 62nd Ave West.

Officer Bauer also made the commission aware of a complaint he received regarding accessible parking concerns at Harrison Park located at 3002 W 3rd Street. At this time the accessibility to

the park is limited based on parking and it was also discovered there is inadequate and outdated signage. This complaint prompted a full review of the park and the accessible parking as well as off street parking and access to the park will be reviewed by the Parking Commission. Commissioner Crosby questioned if this was something to bring forward to Parks and Recreation Commission's radar as they work together often. Officer Bauer noted he will be bringing Jess Peterson, Parks and Recreation Department to the table but it will now be under the Parking Commission's purview. Commissioner Smingler questioned if other public park parking lots would should also be reviewed. Officer Bauer noted that at this time we would not have the resources to have a full audit of all lots across the city but will be aware to take note of any updates/upgrades needed as discovered. Commissioner Crosby noted that when parks and trails are updated there is a public process and all aspects of the park or public outdoor space are reviewed at that time and accessibility upgrades are given priority.

Commissioner Fochs had a general question related to parking. If a person has a registered accessible permit, can that vehicle park in accessible parking even if the disabled individual is not present. There was some good discussion around this, the answer is "no" but it is hard to enforce. Officer Bauer and the local police department will look for abuse of the system and report to the State of Minnesota. As long as the person who owns and drives the car has a valid permit, they are able to park in the accessible spot.

Parks and Rec Report:

Commissioner Crosby had nothing new to report to the team at this time but will be looking in to the CARES Act funding that was set aside for Duluth's outdoor spaces and parks.

Commissioner Berner had a question about the timeline of Brighton Beach. At this time the park remains open contrary to former plans. Commissioner Crosby will look into this and report back.

Commissioner Maki noted the light was burned out in the Pavilion at Enger Park.

Commissioner Castaldo brought up the idea of having a roll out board walk available at Park Point for those who use mobility devices to access the water directly. Commissioner Crosby has also had this thought and will bring it up to the Parks and Recreation Department. A small discussion occurred around this idea and who may be able to assist, such as Courage Kenney. Commissioner Smingler noted Courage Kenney was active in advocating for accessible boat launches available around Duluth. Commissioner Crosby noted there are plans for an accessible boat launch to be built at Munger Landing along the St. Louis River Corridor.

Old Business:

At our previous meeting Commissioner Castaldo was voted to be the representative on the Duluth Racial Bias Audit project committee. Deputy Chief Marquardt has Commissioner Castaldo information. Commissioner Castaldo will update the commission as she learns more.

Carl Crawford and Commissioner Smingler completed the Skywalk audit earlier today and will update the commission at a later date.

The commission had a great discussion around a potential Accessibility Task Force and what our role might be to help businesses in the community have access to the ADA and MN Building code. The commission agreed that it would be a liability to have the commission members do accessibility walk throughs at businesses. In addition to the liability, an individual need to be properly trained to complete the audits. The commission decided that we could have an

advocacy role and be a resource for the community. Carl Crawford suggested a public meeting where we can bring awareness to the issue. Other ideas include a resource list of acceptable architectural firms or certified ADA specialists. President Cich put together a resource guide along with an accessibility checklist to the commission for review. We also determined we could hand out COD brochures to different businesses, including the Chamber. We will be reviewing this further at a future meeting.

New Business:

President Cich proposed a Planning Retreat meeting for the commission to focus on our current goals, future goals and how we meet our goals. Commissioner Naus will be sending out a Doodle Poll to determine availability. President Cich will update Ms. Laakson a week prior so this meeting can be posted for the public.

We also discussed meeting in person again at City Hall. Ms. Laakson was able to reserve council chambers for our August Commission Meeting. Council Chambers is set up in a way where individuals can remote in if needed. At this time commission members need to be present in person unless they have an accommodation in place. Ms. Laakson will be looking more in to accommodations to bring to the next commission meeting. The city of Duluth is following MN Dept of Health aligning with Governor Waltz's current guidelines.

Current Disability Issues:

Commissioner Smingler is looking for resources around training service and/or emotional support dogs. Commissioner Berner brought up Twin Ports Dog Training and Commissioner Crosby brought up Pawsitivity out of St. Paul. Commissioner Crosby and President Cich also noted that the dog does not need official training and that training can be done by the owner as they know their own needs best.

Other Business/Announcements:

Commissioner Smingler announced Xanadu is starting 7/15/21.

Correspondence/Public Comment:

None

Adjourn: MS/C (Berner/Maki)

Next meeting is August 4, 2021 3:00 PM Council Chambers, .411 W 1st Street