



Commission on Disabilities  
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes  
December 1, 2021

This Commission on Disabilities meeting was held electronically via Webex due to the COVID-19 Emergency.

**Commissioners:**

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

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

President Cich called the December, 2021 Commission on Disabilities meeting to order, there was a quorum.

**Approval of current agenda:** MS/C – (Crosby, Berner) Approved change from “November” to “December” on the agenda.

**Approval of November minutes:** Approve at January’s meeting. This agenda item was missed.

**Public Comment/Information:** No public comment.

**DTA/Stride Accessibility Committee Update:**

President Cich provided an update on the DTA/STRIDE Accessibility Advisory Committee’s first meeting. The DTA is using technology to expand its services, for example, you can now purchase passes on line. President Cich stated the meeting went well. DTA ridership is up 60% and STRIDE ridership up 75% since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee still have 2 seats including District 3 and District 5. President Cich also noted that STRIDE is looking for drivers.

Mr. Crawford inquired about STRIDE hours, there have been access issues in the past for individuals who were unable to attend events due to the hours of the DTA. President Cich responded STRIDE hours mirror DTA hours, which run daily until 11PM.

**Accessible Parking Update:**

Officer Mark Bauer provided an update for the Commission. The following addresses were approved for accessible parking signage at the November 2021 Parking Commission Meeting:  
820 N 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave West  
502 N 77<sup>th</sup> Ave West

The Parking commission will be reviewing the following addresses at their December 2021 meeting. Both addresses will be recommended for approval:  
317 E 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
24 S 66<sup>th</sup> Ave West

Officer Bauer updated the signage improvements at Harrison Park and has confirmed that the accessibility signage and upgrades have been completed.

**Parks and Rec Report:**

There were no updates at this time.

**Old Business:**

Snow Removal Task Force-

The Snow Removal Task force is still seeking volunteers. Mr. Crawford is planning with the city for another social media and local media push to drum up interest in our communities.

Commissioner Berner suggested reaching out to local churches as they have youth groups and a focus on community service. We should also reach out to Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and 4-H groups. Commissioner Castaldo had some ideas too about connecting to chore services.

Commissioner Fochs inquired what the requirement is for clearing sidewalks under city ordinance and Mr. Crawford responded 2 or more inches of snow will need to be cleared within 24 hours of the snow event.

Mr. Crawford also noted that next year we will not be utilizing a 3<sup>rd</sup> party AmeriCorps volunteer to help with the program organization and would like to partner with a local agency moving forward.

Brochure-

We will be discussing the brochure in further detail at an upcoming meeting.

**New Business:**

Nominating Committee-

The following slate of officers have been nominated and will be voted on at the January 2022 commission meeting:

Commissioner Berner-President/Chair

Commissioner Crosby: Vice Chair

Commissioner Cich- Secretary

There were no other nominations from the floor.

**Current Disability Issues:****Snow Emergency Routes-**

Officer Bauer provided an update on the city of Duluth's Emergency Snow Route Ordinance. At this time there are 115 individuals who utilize accessible parking on snow emergency routes. Officer Bauer, along with city staff have been working with city's legal team to find options for individuals who may have difficulty or safety issues moving their vehicles during a snow emergency. Research in other cities, similar to Duluth, shows that individuals with accessible parking placards are not exempt from city ordinance and can be ticketed and towed. Duluth is taking a kinder approach and at this time the city is asking that everyone do the best they can to move their vehicles off of the emergency routes. If you are unable to move your vehicle safely or it will cause a hardship the city will not be ticketing or towing this year. However, it is important to point out is advantageous for everyone to move their vehicles off of emergency routes as it provides a safe, fully cleared route for emergency vehicles etc.

There was a discussion about utilizing parking lots throughout the city for vehicles but this can become difficult because the lots are gated pay lots and it would be hard to discern who was parking for a snow emergency. Also, the parking lots hold contracts and are filled. We would not want to take parking a way from a paid user.

President Cich provided each commissioner an opportunity to provide feedback:

Berner-We are on the right track and looks forward to revisiting after this season

Castaldo- Also notes we will not know the outcome of what this will look like until an actual snow emergency is declared.

Crosby-Use this year as a learning curve and re-visit next year. Stresses the importance of messaging.

Fochs-Hard to tell, we need a snow emergency to find out how it will look.

Furman- The city has done well thus far and has no other notes

Naus-Agrees that we will know more next year.

**Other Business/Announcements:**

Commissioner Crosby shared the new HCBS Access Grant each Center for Independent Livings in Minnesota received and we have hired 2 new IL Coordinators to assist in building resources for individuals who do not qualify for MN Medical Assistance (Medicaid). President Cich suggested they join us for the next meeting.

Commissioner Berner shared that she is still has positions open at Arc Northland and it has been difficult to find qualified candidates.

Mr. Crawford suggested that the COD reaches out to Visit Duluth to provide accessibility options for families visiting Duluth.

**Correspondence/Public Comment:**

None.

**Adjourn:** MS/C (Fochs/Castaldo)

Next meeting is Wednesday January 5, 2022 3:00 PM  
Location to be determined.