



Commission on Disabilities  
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes  
August 3, 2022

**Commissioners:**

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

**Also present:** Carl Crawford, Mark Bauer

Chair Berner called the August, 2022 Commission on Disabilities meeting to order at 3:05 PM, there was a quorum.

**Approval of current agenda: MS/C – (Castaldo/Fochs)**

**Approval of May minutes: MS/C – (Castaldo/Fochs)**

There was no quorum for the June 2022 meeting and there was no meeting in July.

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

**Accessible Parking Update:**

Officer Bauer reported that there will be 2 new requests for ADA parking spots at the next Parking Commission meeting and both are recommended

for approval. The Parking Commission is struggling to reach a quorum over the past few months.

Officer Bauer noted that proper ADA signage and parking are now in place at Harrison Park.

Concerns have been brought forward regarding deliveries of Meals on Wheels. Delivery drivers have been parking in the street (driving lanes) and in ADA spots. There was discussion around how important this service is and how important it is to be safe and not park in ADA spots illegally. Suggestions brought forward by Commissioners include: car magnets or something to identify cars with Meals on Wheels, education for drivers and the possibility of providing carts to carry meals longer distances. Officer Bauer will bring suggestions back to the group.

### **Parks and Rec Report:**

Commissioner Crosby reported that the mini-master plan for the Hawk Ridge Nature Preserve was approved at the June 8th Parks and Rec meeting and will now go to the City Council for their approval. The plan can be viewed here- <https://duluthmn.gov/parks/parks-planning/progress-in-the-park/hawk-ridge/> . Commissioner Crosby will provide additional updates after the September Parks and Rec Commission meeting.

Commissioners brought up concerns about accessibility at Playfront and other City parks. Currently there is no information about accessible features at any of the parks. Commissioners feel this kind of information would be helpful to parents and families.

Commissioners questioned the delay in building the accessible playground in Lincoln Park. Unfortunately, the Commission learned that the actual playground equipment has not been purchased. Commissioner Crosby will follow up with Parks and Rec at their next meeting.

### **Old Business:**

#### **Snow Removal Task Force**

**Snow Removal Assistance Program** - Mr. Crawford reminded the Commission that there will no longer be an AmeriCorps volunteer this year. He stressed the importance of looking for community partners to take on

this program. Mr. Crawford reported that there is currently not the capacity to take the program on this coming winter.

There was much discussion around what it would take to continue this program. Several Commissioners stresses the importance of the program in helping people with disabilities keep their independence in the winter. Commissioner Cich expressed frustration that even though this program is much needed and has been successful for three winters, the City is not really providing the resources to continue it. It was noted that this is part of the ADA Transition Plan. Commissioners are in agreement that this program needs to be more of a priority. After much discussion, Commissioners came up with a plan to inform the Mayor and City Council of this issue and at the same time explore community partnerships.

- Commissioner Cich will draft a letter to the Mayor and City Councilors explaining the importance of the Snow Removal Assistance program, the high demand in the community and request an increase in support in from the City. The Task Force will provide input and review the letter.

- Commissioner Berner will connect with the Area Agency on Aging and Age Well.

- Commissioner Fochs will connect with CHUM

- Commissioner Smingler will connect with the Public Schools and Key Clubs.

- Commissioner Castaldo will connect with the Restorative Justice Program.

The Task Force will meet in September with partners to come up with a go forward plan.

**Bus Stop Snow Removal:** Mr. Crawford reported that we are waiting for DTA to finalize their routes before moving forward. One of the big challenges is equipment. There is also frustration related to cleaning bus stops (and sidewalks) only to have them covered again when the streets are plowed.

**New Business:** None

**Current Disability Issues:**

Last month, DTA reached out to the Executive Committee regarding some concerns with the STRIDE drop off area at Bayfront. Riders were having difficulty with the distance from the drop off point on Harbor Drive to Bayfront. Commissioner Cich reached out to the DTA Accessibility

Advisory Committee (ACC). The ACC met and agreed that the distance would be problematic for many STRIDE riders. There were closer areas for drop-off, but each area has its own challenges.

Commissioner Cich and Commissioner Crosby identified an area in the Aquarium parking lot that has an existing accessible sidewalk and room to drop off passengers. DTA has not responded yet as to why this won't work. Commissioner Cich will follow up.

**Other Business/Announcements:**

Open Meeting Law discussion: The Commission would like to see an option for some individuals to attend Commission meetings virtually. Partly because of the Pandemic and for various other reasons, some individuals are unable to participate when the meeting is in person. A small task force developed a letter asking for an opinion or guidance on Open Meeting Law. Commissioner Cich reached out to the Minnesota Attorney General's office and was told that they would not comment on this matter. She was told that a good option would be to file a complaint with the Human Rights Office. Commissioner Cich and Mr. Crawford will connect on this before the next meeting.

**Correspondence/Public Comment:** None

**Announcements:** Mr. Crawford suggested connecting with the Superior Commission on Disabilities to see where we can work together. Commissioners also suggested connecting with the Colleges.

**Adjourn:** 4:37 PM.

Next meeting is Wednesday September 7, 2022 3:00 PM  
City Hall Room 430