



Commission on Disabilities
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
November 3, 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 - A
Heath Maki - P
Dianne Naus - P
Samantha Smingler – A
Allison Fochs - P

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

President Cich called the November 3, 2021 Commission on Disabilities meeting to order, there was a quorum.

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

Approval of May minutes: MS/C – (Allison, Heath)

Public Comment/Information: No public comment.

DTA/Stride Accessibility Committee Update:

The DTA/STRIDE Accessibility Advisory Committee will have their first meeting Thursday 11/4/2021. President Cich is a part of this committee and will be bringing up concerns brought forward.

Commissioner Berner inquired if it was too late to join the committee. President Cich will find out this information and report back.

Commissioner Fochs noted that she has the opportunity to join the Arrowhead Transit accessibility committee.

Accessible Parking Update:

Officer Mark Bauer provided an update for the Commission. The following addresses were approved for accessible parking signage at the October 2021 Parking Commission Meeting:
524 E 11th Street
2854 Exeter Street
122 E 3rd Street

The Parking commission will be reviewing the following addresses at their November 2021 meeting. Both addresses will be recommended for approval:

820 N 42nd Ave West
502 N 77th Ave West

Officer Bauer discussed the signage improvements at Harrison Park. He has been working close with the city's Streets and Engineering Division to ensure that there is ample, safe parking at Harrison Park along with access aisle improvements. The accessibility upgrades are currently in progress.

A building manager from a Duluth health care facility reached out to the city on ADA parking standards. Officer Bauer noted he has been working with this facility but also thought it was important to report to the COD that individuals in our community are starting to think about accessibility and know how and who to reach out to.

Commissioner Fochs had a general question regarding accessible street parking and Officer Bauer confirmed that accessible parking spots, even if outside of your home, are open to anyone with the proper credentials. In fact, it is city policy that a person moves their vehicle every 24 hours.

Officer Bauer and Carl Crawford updated the COD that individuals who are using accessible parking spots along the snow emergency routes will in fact need to move their vehicles. The COD sees this as a potential issue and will be keeping track of any concerns this winter season.

Commissioner Berner inquired if the most recent City Hall in the City on snow removal has been recorded and Mr. Crawford confirmed it was recorded and can be found on the city of Duluth's Facebook page.

Parks and Rec Report:

Commissioner Crosby reported back to the COD that the request to review accessible parking opportunities at Harbor Plaza has been shared with the Parks and Recreation Commission and Staff.

Duluth's Parks and Recreation Department is looking for participation to the Master Planning survey that is out now and will be open through Friday 11/5/2021. Commissioner Crosby will send out the link to all commissioners.

An update was provided on the new accessible paved trail at Merritt Park leading from the playground to lower sport court.

Old Business:

The Snow Removal Task Force is launched and ready to go. Mr. Crawford participated in a press conference to promote the program and it is listed on the City of Duluth website under Duluth Winter Watch. You are able to volunteer to remove snow or apply for help. The city of Duluth is continuing the program and after two years it is out of "pilot" stage and will be continued on through the city of Duluth and an AmeriCorps worker from Equilibrium 3. Commissioner Berner noted that she has put a team together from Arc to volunteer. Commissioner Fochs verified that the program is free for those who apply.

The Commission members reviewed the COD brochure that Laura Laakson helped put together. A committee including Commissioners Fochs, Castaldo and Crosby will work together with President Cich and come back to the COD with a draft.

Commissioner Castaldo provided a brief update on the Racial Bias Study. The group is continuing to meet and is making great progress. There is nothing new to report at this time.

New Business:

The COD needs a nominating committee to identify officers for the next year. Commissioners Maki, Crosby, Berner and Cich will join this committee. If anyone is interested in joining the Executive Board please send an email to President Cich. A commissioner is able to nominate themselves. President Cich will be sending out the bylaws of the COD for review.

Current Disability Issues:

The Duluth Winter Village is moving from Glensheen Mansion to the Harbor Drive area behind the DECC. The COD has worked with the Winter Village in the past providing information on how to better make the event accessible. The event is taking place December 4-5 and it would be helpful if a COD member could attend and report back on the accessibility in this new location.

Commissioner Fochs asked if the Skywalk downtown to the DECC will be open over the winter? Mr. Crawford will follow up as some of the skywalk is privately owned. Commissioner Fochs brought up the point that accessibility from downtown to the DECC is hard and the skywalk provides a safe accessible route.

Other Business/Announcements:

President Cich updated the commission on the new warming center now open 8 pm – 8 am. at the Rainbow Center.

Commissioner Berner announced that Arc Northland has Full Time positions available and posted.

Correspondence/Public Comment:

None.

Adjourn: MS/C (Fochs/Castaldo)

Next meeting is Wednesday December 1st, 2021 3:00 PM
Location to be determined.