



Commission on Disabilities
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November, 2023

Commissioners: *indicate present (P) or absent (A)*

Laurie Berner - P
Ashlie Castaldo - P
Chris Johnson -P
Amanda Crosby - P
Allison Fochs - P
Dianne Naus - P
Samantha Smingler – P
Brooke Marinan - A

Also present:

Police Officer Mark Bauer, Parking
Laura Lexion
Emma Chehock, Intern with Human Rights Office for City of Duluth

Chair Crosby called the **11/1/23** Commission on Disabilities meeting to order at 3:36pm, there was a quorum.

Approval of November agenda: 1st motion, Commissioner Berner, 2nd Commissioner Johnson

Approval of the October 2023 minutes: 1st motion, Commissioner Johnson , 2nd motion, Commissioner Castaldo

Public Comment/Information:

- N/A

Accessible Parking Update:

4 requests went to the Parking Commission

1. 1714 East 7th St - Approved
2. 206 East House St (Gary) - Approved
3. 222 East Superior St. (Arc Northland) - Approved in put in already.

2 New Ones:

3061 Chestnut - no grade to the house from the garage, and garage is not very usable- but in reviewing the request, they will also have a need for a Stride Bus. Will go to the next meeting for approval.

4332 West 8th St. - grade and distance to the house is tough, and will also be recommended for approval.

Parks and Rec Report:

- Action track chair is now at Hartley. Check outs go through Hartley's website.
- Lincoln Park grand opening on Oct 17th - it's just beautiful and accessible. HR Officer Crawford and Chair Crosby attended with many from the city. Encourage folks to check it out.
 - Who is the correct person/place to send feedback to the Parks Department?
- Mayor Larson announced a task force around sport plexes around the community. Looking at how tourism taxes can be put into athletic spaces to bring more folks into town. Improve infrastructure. Ex. Wade, Arlington, hockey association, golf.
 - Check that someone from the disability community is involved. Chair - Northland Adaptive Sports is usually contacted, but I'll confirm.
 - Concerns around parking and using mobility aids expressed by Commissioners.

Old Business:

Annual Commission on Disability Goals

We met in Aug as a group to create three objectives.

1. **Assess the needs of people with disabilities regarding matters such as employment, housing, transportation, accessibility, and equal rights; advise the mayor and city council for such assessments.**
2. **Coordinate public education and outreach activities to promote awareness of the Commission on Disabilities, laws, regulations, and barriers related to accessibility**

3. Encourage representation and communication between various City Commissions

*Could add an agenda item to report on goals each month.

1st Motion to approve objectives - Commissioner Berner, 2nd motion by Commissioner Castaldo

Vote: All in favor, motion carries.

- Do we have new applicants for commissioners?
 - Laura - we have 1 who just went through
 - Chair Crosby has one more in mind to apply from Arc in Feb

Snow Removal Task Force - Sidewalk Update

Chair reached out to Jim Benning, Director of Public works, in looking at how the commission can be involved with closing sidewalks. We are waiting to hear back from the internal meeting they were having to address concerns from the COD.

Snow removal task force will continue. City leadership has been involved, and now it's time to engage the community. Subcommittee formed to build a 3 year campaign on being "MinneSNOWda Nice" Commissioner Castaldo will be helping with the website. Hoping to work with Essentia and Downtown council for future funding for.

\$5,000 accessibility grant that will go to this outreach! Arc Northland will be the fiscal agent, since the city can't take the grant money.

What are the goals with this funding?

Bring more awareness to the community - the city is playing a part, business has a part. Let's take care of each other. Why some folks aren't able to clear their snow. Build on the "we are all in this together" sense of community. And take care of neighbors who need support.

Chair Crosby - still pushing that we need to do something to make sure folks who can't shovel get help, and that sidewalks are walkable.

Commissioner Berner - can we still work with the media, WDIO?

Yes! Next Subcommittee meeting Nov 21st.

New Business/Current Disability Issues:

- Executive Board Election Nominations, need to identify three positions. Between now and Jan. Nominations can be sent via email to Chair Crosby. Then in Jan, will ask 3 times for any last minute nominations. Traditionally, the Secretary becomes Chair Elect, and Chair Elect as the Chair. Current Chair will do outreach to see who else could fill the Secretary role. Final vote in Jan meeting. Roles would start in Feb.

Ask - Does our commission get impacted by the election results?
Commission has been around a long time -it won't change, written into city code.

R Word Update:

Still waiting for the election to finish. Climate and culture task force has been roped in for upcoming meetings. Working with the ISD709 Superintendent to put out more of a statement and specified steps for the zero tolerance policy. Chair Crosby would like to connect about a person from Arc's Person First group who would like to be involved.

Commissioner Fochs - saw a East HighSchool student on the bus and walking into school with a shirt with the "R" word on it. This work still needs to be done.

Commissioner Berner - is sensitivity training a part of this? So there is a better reason why this is important. Commissioner Castaldo - that is the hope in some way. When I did a lot of the disability awareness training was focused on 2nd, 3rd, 4th graders. Learning it from an earlier age is important.

Announcements:

DTA accessibility upgrades - Stride hours match the bus hours, so later hours are available. Now a mobile payment option. Stride can operate anywhere in city limits, upgrade from just where the DTA went. The Aquarium drop off zone is working well with no issues.

Adjourn: 1st Motion, Commissioner Smingler , 2nd Motion, Commissioner Fosch. Adjourned at 4:34pm. Note - due to construction in City Hall, no meeting in December.

Next meeting *Wednesday, January 3rd, 3:30 PM -City Hall Room 430*