



Commission on Disabilities
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 7, 2024
City Hall Room 430

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

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

Also present:

Police Officer Mark Bauer, Parking
Human Rights Officer Carl Crawford
Michaela Mullin, Arc Housing Coordinator
Amanda [Iname], Guest, New COD Applicant
Andy [Iname], Guest

Chair Crosby called the **2/7/24** Commission on Disabilities meeting to order at 3:37pm, there was a quorum.

- 1. Approval of February 2024 agenda**
Request to update the order of agenda discussions.
Motion by Commissioner Berner, 2nd Commissioner Naus
- 2. Approval of the January 2023 minutes**
Motion by Commissioner Castaldo, 2nd Commissioner Naus
- 3. Executive Board Elections**
 - Guests introduce themselves to group

- Bylaws state COD must have 3 executive board members. Human Rights Officer Crawford will seek guidance from City Attorney, as many Commissioner terms are ending, with not enough members to fill open executive role positions.
- Motion filed to fill the following executive roles:
Commissioner Castaldo as interim Chair
Commissioner Marinan as Vice Chair
Commissioner Johnson as Secretary
Positions may change as new commissioners are appointed to COD.
Approved, Motion by Chair Crosby; 2nd Commissioner Berner

9b. Recruiting New Commissioners

- Applications are currently moving through the appointment queue. Will be reviewed by Mayor Reinert, then onto City Council for approval.
- Chair Crosby suggested sharing the COD tri-fold brochure to help recruit new commissioners. Human Rights Officer Crawford offered to review the brochure for any edits needed. Commissioner Berner offered to send brochure to local organizations.
- Human Rights Officer Crawford recommended holding a seat on the COD for a representative of the DTA. Chair Crosby will connect with DTA regarding this opportunity.

4. Current Disability Issues and Announcements

- CHUM interested in enhancing accessibility in their facility(ies). Commissioner Berner will connect John Cole with Center for Independent Living to assist.
- Commissioner Fochs shared concern over a friend's experience on the DTA. Discrepancy over whether the walker could be placed in an accessible seat and charged as a "second" occupied seat. Chair Crosby suggested the concerned passenger contact the DTA STRIDE advisory committee.
- Commissioner Berner updated COD on the Stepping On Up proposed housing project. The goal is to create transitional housing for those experiencing recent homelessness and help those individuals get re-established.

6. Parks and Rec Report

- No Parks & Rec meeting in January.

- Potential growth of Spirit Valley Community Center, possible funding opportunity under Mayor Reinert's initiatives.
- Mr. Crawford mentioned a nearby community received three all-terrain wheelchairs for accessible outdoor use.

5. Accessible Parking Update

- Approved by Parking Commission:
 - 530 N. 5th Ave E. St. Mark's Church, installed two zones
 - 230 E. Superior Street
 - 219 S. 60th Ave W.
 - 223 E. 6th Street
 - 15 N. 23rd Ave W
- To review: 2717 W. 9th Street - need site visit for recommendation

7. Skywalk Access Walk

Two groups met at Starbucks Superior St. and 4th Ave W. to experience Skywalk and look for accessibility opportunities.

- Braille signage needed throughout
- Good lighting, good temperature
- Good gradients except for wooden bridge by Radisson
- DECC & Pioneer Building gradient issue, not properly installed
- Amanda (Guest) agreed more opportunities for visually impaired. Braille is good but many individuals with visual impairments don't read Braille. Suggested QR codes, an app, audio beacons - a modern solution to identify direction.
- COD will organize skywalk notes to 1) identify acute needs and priority fixes; 2) overall improvements, ideas and opportunities

8. Old Business

- "R" Word Update: Commissioner Castaldo meeting this week with ISD 709 coalition. Then, meeting planned with School Board Members Banks and Williams to discuss Hate and "R" word policies.
- Snow Removal Task Force: Chair Crosby invited commissioners to take MinneSNOWta Nice swag and pledge. Chair Crosby reached out to Mayor Reinert and new CAO to provide information about the campaign; concerns were expressed over language in the brochure. Chair Crosby affirmed to the COD that the current brochure was reviewed and approved under Mayor Larson, but that a new print was requested with revisions from the new City communications team.

- Chair Crosby also discussed the Snow Removal Task Force walk with City EAT (Equity Action Team). EAT participants given various impairments and walked neighborhood around 6th Avenue E. Was a great conversation and productive meeting.

9b. New Business

Library Event “Disability Visibility” to be held in April. COD will discuss public events and tabling opportunities at March meeting.

10. Public Comment

Mr. Crawford confirmed no public comment was received this month.

11. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Fochs, 2nd Commissioner Berner
Meeting adjourned at 4:45pm.

Next meeting:

Wednesday, March 6, 2024
City Hall Room 430