



Commission on Disabilities
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 7, 2026
City Hall Room 430

Commissioners Present: Ashlie Castaldo, Chair; Vice Chair; Christina Johnson, Secretary; Jill Johnson; Michelle McDonald; Michaela Mullin; Amanda Paszak

Commissioners Absent: Marie Anderson; Allison Fochs, Brooke Marinan,

Guests Present: Andy Paszak; Mark Bauer, City of Duluth; Laura Laaksonen, City of Duluth; Fire Chief Shawn Krizaj and Deputy Chief Jon Otis, City of Duluth; George and Niko, Lighthouse Center for Vital Living; Roy Hamlin, Hamlin Music Academy; Alice Tibbets, Vibrant Streets Duluth

Chair Castaldo called the **1/7/25** Commission on Disabilities meeting to order at 3:08pm.

Approval of the Jan 2026 agenda (C.Johnson, J.Johnson)

- Updates: 2026 year; add guest speaker

Approval of Dec 2025 minutes (Castaldo, J.Johnson)

Guest Speakers: Alice Tibbets & Duluth Fire Department

- Q: What is the current situation on City enforcement of snow removal policy?
 - Former Mayor Larson was supportive of the snow removal task force at the time of our last update. City currently does not have staff to enforce. Year 2022/23 353 valid complaints - year of record snow. Complaints be sent a letter but City never issues a citation; City saw good compliance results from the letter notification.
 - As of this date in 25/26 winter: 54 valid complaints. Focus on high-traffic roads and commercial areas. Private property enforcement is still the letter notification.
 - Looking to partner with Park Maintenance for equipment, but they do not currently have the staff to maintain outside of City property.
 - MinneSNOWta Nice has community action plan, snow sponsors.
- Guest request:
 - Keep snow removal conversation within this commission.
 - Can we have a communications plan that shares that these half inch snow flurries add up and turn into ice; share messaging that those need to be shoveled.
 - Need COD to help advocate to effect change, policy, solutions for snow removal.
- Q: Is there County funding that can be used for snow removal? DFD not aware of that, but interested in learning more.
- Right to Repair ordinance impacts snow removal responsibility.
- DFD: Letters work. Door hangers work. DFD reports good compliance with these notifications. Unless it's a business, businesses are cited if no compliance.

- COD gave accolades to DFD for taking on this snow removal mission. Our community has made great progress, still work to do.

Current Disability Issues and Announcements

- Tabled till February meeting due to time

Accessible Parking Update

- Dec 5 approved and installed: 808 N 8th Ave E
- Jan 9 meeting recommended for approval: 1714 E 6th St
- Under review: 120 W 2nd St HDC avenue entrance request

Parks and Rec Report

- Tabled to February meeting

New Business

- Vote - Elections for Officer into 2026:
 - Amanda Paszac Chair (Castaldo, J.Johnson, 4, 2 approved)
 - Allison Fochs Vice Chair (Castaldo, Paszac: 6, 0 approved)
 - Michaela Mullin Secretary (Castaldo, McDonald: 6, 0 approved)
- Bylaws updates: COD will vote on updates at the February meeting

Old Business

- Tabled to February meeting

Public Comment

- Guest: Hamlin Music Academy - a vape store to move in next door. Letter provided to City Council. Requesting the COD to help advocate to the City for the removal of the vape store as a risk to the neighboring businesses, residents, and pedestrians. Also requesting the Tobacco Commission to deny the permit.
- Accessibility of drop-off zones, snow removal is the responsibility of abutting business. [Resident Problem Reporter](#) is how to submit a complaint of obstruction of sidewalks, snow removal

Adjourn 4:34 (Paszac, Mullen)

Next Meeting

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

NEW TIME: 3:00pm-4:30pm

City Hall room 430

The public is invited to submit written comment prior to the meeting by humanrights@duluthmn.gov or mailing comments to 411 W 1st St, City Hall, Duluth, MN 55802.

Please note that all public comments are considered public data.