



JUSTIN ELICKER
Mayor

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
CITY OF NEW HAVEN
165 CHURCH STREET
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06510
(203) 946-7833 - VOICE (203) 946-8582 - TTY/TDD
(203) 946-8587 – FAX



BILLY HUANG
Chairperson

Monthly Commission Meeting Minutes **August 8, 2022**

Present: Billy Huang, Tricia Palluzzi, Arya Singh, Grisel Aguilar-Cobos,

Absent: Annie Harper, Sally Esposito, Nina Silva, Linda McDonough, Robin Tousey-Ayres

Guest: Alicia Leite - CTDOT

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 6:08 PM.
- II. **Approval of the Minutes – June 13, 2022** – This item was tabled until the next meeting due to the lack of a Quorum.
- III. **Guest – Alicia Leite, CTDOT Customer Experience Transportation Supervising Planner – Consumer Survey**

Alicia reported that the Connecticut DOT is doing a comprehensive statewide consumer survey looking at all aspects of transportation in Connecticut. They are going to use the information from focus groups, pop ups, surveys, and other events to assist in creating a comprehensive action plan. The goal is to create and promote a positive customer experience for individuals who use public transportation. The gathering of feedback is to connect with riders and customers to understand their needs and to use that information to define a vision that leads to creating a clear plan. The survey will continue until about September 15, 2022 but the DOT will continue to accept feedback for a few additional weeks after the formal end of the survey.

In addition to completing a survey or attending in-person events, individuals may provide feedback by sending snail mail, email, making a phone call to the CT DOT. Alicia will send a flyer in English and Spanish that the Commissioners can share with their networks.

IV. Old Business

A. Updates

1. **Effective Communication** – Annie was on vacation. Billy updated the Commissioners regarding the letter being written by outside groups addressing the need for the City of New Haven to provide effective communication,

specifically, American Sign Language, for people who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired. The Commissioners discussed the options for the letter. 1) The group sends the letter to the Mayor with a copy to the Commission and the Commission sends a support letter. This is the strongest option as the letter was written by residents and organizations outside the City. 2) The group sends the letter to the Commission who forwards it to the Mayor with a cover letter. 3) The Commission sends the letter to the Mayor under its letterhead. This is the weakest option. We will let Annie know the options and get the consensus from the group. (At this point, #2 seems to be favored option).

2. Elevator Ordinance – Gretchen updated the Commissioners on the progress of the Elevator Ordinance changes. The changes to the elevator ordinance get more complicated as the layers are researched. The Corporation Counsel's office took over the development of the ordinance and Gretchen worked for a short time with an intern who is now done for the summer. The intern researched elevator ordinances/requirements other cities in CT and looked at the levying of fines. Hartford has some language but nobody in the Hartford offices has been available to discuss them. The work will continue.
3. Ordinance Language – Gretchen updated the Commissioners on the progress of the proposal; to change the language in the New Haven Ordinances to be more respectful to people with disabilities. Gretchen, Commissioners (Tricia, Grisel and her son, Linda, Robin) and Michelle Duprey attended the Alders Legislative Committee on August 2, 2022. Gretchen and Robin spoke about the proposal and answered questions for the Alders. The proposal passed and was sent to the Alders for a full consideration and vote in September 2022!

- B. **Jaigantic Employment Group** – The people at Jaigantic asked for a break until at least July while they worked on hiring upper managers and building and renovating their studio spaces. Gretchen sent a note to Jaigantic and members of the employment group working with them to try to schedule a next meeting.
- C. **Voting Experience Memo – Meet with Registrars of Voters** – The complaint that Linda filed because of her election experience in November 2021 was resolved (not in her favor) and the Commission could invite the Registrars to a future meeting. The group discussed inviting the Registrars and decided that it was not necessary at this time.
- D. **Outreach to Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center** – Tricia reported that there was not much of an update. It is summertime and schools are on break. It is also time for vacations, etc. The Commissioners discussed getting training on the new IEP protocol. There has been training online by a few groups. If the Commission can find a good presenter, it could be opened to others – The Commission could sponsor a session.
- E. **Accessibility Update from Yale** – The Commissioners decided to table this while they work on other issues.

V. **New Business**

- A. **Notification System for individuals with Autism** – Tricia reported that there are other municipalities that have systems that allow people with disabilities and families to report the existence of the disability to the municipal dispatch facility and have the information available if there is an emergency call. Gretchen

reported that she had a discussion with the Fire Department and that they are considering adding this component to their new system. Gretchen said these systems are welcomed by some people with disabilities, but others feel that reporting to dispatch may make them more vulnerable.

- B. **Big Read 2023** – Gretchen reported on her interaction with staff from the International Festival apply each year to participate in the Big Read. Before they applied for the 2023 version, they asked the Department of Services for Persons with Disabilities to be a partner if the application was successful because the book chosen was written by and about a woman with a disability. I agreed.

A couple of weeks ago, Gretchen learned that they application was successful. She will be learning more as time passes and hopes that the Commission will also work to sponsor events during the 2023 year.

- VI. **Public Comment** – David Agosta let the Commissioners know that he sent report about the status of the ADA in New Haven. He also invited the Commission to comment on accessibility as it relates to the work of the COMPASS group. Gretchen invited him to come to the next meeting to discuss the accessibility.
- VII. **Announcements** – Since the next day was the primary, Gretchen asked the Commissioners to consider using the accessible machine in the polling place and letting her know about the experience.
- VIII. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 PM.

(Since the Secretary for the Commission on Disabilities, Annie Harper, was on vacation, Gretchen Knauff took the minutes).