



JUSTIN ELICKER
Mayor

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
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BILLY HUANG
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities - Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

October 17, 2022, 6:00 – 7:30 pm

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

Absent: Linda McDonough, Nina Silva, Sally Esposito, and Annie Harper

Guests: Sandra Roberts

Call to Order: the meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM

INTRODUCTIONS: Since Sandra Roberts is visiting as a guest and potential member of the Commission, the members present introduced themselves.

Sandra Roberts: Sandy provides information and referral at the Center for Disability Rights which is the independent living center serving the New Haven area. Later in the meeting Sandy let everybody know she has lived in New Haven for 30 years and that the Center for Disability Rights is a nonprofit organization that does advocacy for people of all ages and disabilities to help them achieve their independent living goals.

Billy Huang: Billy is the chair of the Commission on Disabilities. After he described the composition of the Commission, he Introduced himself. Billy runs a startup business and is a Strategies Fellow at the Connecticut Office of Workforce Strategies.

Trisha Palluzzi: Trisha reported that she has been on the Commission for “quite a while.” She is an architect, has a disability and has a son with a disability.

Gretchen Knauff: Gretchen is the Director of the Department of Services for Persons with Disabilities at the City of New Haven

Robin Tousey-Ayres: Robin is a New Haven resident who works for the State Department of Public Health in the Office of Injury and Violence Prevention. She has been on the Commission since 1990 but is on a brief one-year break as required by the New Haven Ordinances.

Arya Singh: Arya has been on the Commission for three years. She is a second-year student at the School of Public Health.

Grisel Aguilar-Cobos: Grisel has a son with a disability. She works assisting families who have children with disabilities. She is a Family Services Worker in West Haven

MINUTES - The minutes from the September 12, 2022, meeting were tabled because a quorum was not present at this meeting.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR: Billy reported that he's working at the Office of Workforce Strategy looking at statewide policies and initiatives including pathways to adult learning. He interacts with the Lieutenant Governor's Council on Women and Girls looking at their barriers to access to the workplace. The Governors Workforce Council has also asked him for assistance in adding access to programming into work. Billy also reported that the state is launching a MYCT page to help people manage careers – it is not set up yet but is in progress. Another issue is access to transportation.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Effective Communication Letter to Mayor – Gretchen was asked to report on this issue. The mayor received the letter and Gretchen attended a meeting where it was discussed but nothing has been decided since that meeting. Robin said that it may be good to consult with other states about how their cities achieve affect effective communication. She thought Colorado municipalities may be able to help as they are a more progressive state.

Side Note: There was also a short discussion about whether children and their parents should be able to receive information and have meetings in their native language.

- B. Outreach to the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center - Tricia reported that she had reached out to Kiomary Sotillo for information about the new IEP to get training and information. Grisel let the group know that she was not enamored of the new IEP format and process.
- C. Notification of Police When a Person with Autism Lives in a Residence. - Tricia asked for assistance with making a connection to the Police Department or someone who could assist with letting us know if anything like this exists in New Haven. Gretchen suggested the Chief of Police might have some information or the Deputy Director in the 911 Call Center. Gretchen said she would contact Jeff Patton.
- D. Big Read 2023 – Gretchen gave an update. The planning committee for the Big Read will be meeting tomorrow, October 18th, 2022. Members of the disability community have been invited to be members of the planning committee. Sally is representing the Commission on Disabilities. The people at the Festival of Arts and Ideas are excited that the Commission on Disabilities and the Department of Services for Persons with Disabilities are participating. Also, Judith Heumann, premier disability rights activist, will be speaking during the event next year.

NOMINATIONS FOR COMMISSION OFFICES – since there is no quorum, the members present agreed that nominations will be done by email and a vote will be taken at the next meeting. Members may nominate themselves or others.

COMMISSION MEETING DATES FOR 2023 – The dates for the 2023 Commission on Disabilities meetings will be voted on at the next meeting. Everyone agreed that the second Monday of the month at 6 PM will remain the time.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Request from David Agosta – David Agosta sent an email to the Commission requesting they investigate alleged discrimination at several locations. The members of the Commission decided to deliberate on the request after everyone is given a copy of the email.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting ended at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gretchen Knauff