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BILLY HUANG
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities - Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

December 12, 2022, 6:00 – 7:30 pm

- Present:** Tricia Palluzzi, Annie Harper, Sally Esposito, Grisel Aguilar, Arya Singh, Linda McDonough
- Absent:** Nina Silva, Billy Huang
- Staff:** Gretchen Knauff
- Guests:** Sandra Roberts, Ben Bond, Doug Hausladen, Carmen R. Correa-Rios

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair T. Palluzzi at 6:13 PM.

II. Approval of November 14, 2022 Minutes.

The Commission Members reviewed and approved the minutes from November 14, 2022.

III. Introduction to guests

Planned guest speaker, Kiomary Sotillo from the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, was unable to make it today.

IV. Old Business

A. Updates/Discussion

Effective Communication

A. Harper – we have still not heard back re. letter re. ASL resources sent to mayor via the commission. S. Matteson sent draft response to G. Knauff, she sent back some concerns about it, and has not heard back yet. B. Huang emailed S. Matteson copying the author group and encouraging them to add their feedback. No response as yet to that email.

Elevator Ordinance

G. Knauff – Bella Vista had elevator problems – prevented people from getting to the parking lot in the basement. Bella Vista accommodated the residents who could not use the stairs by providing golf carts rides to the garage as an accommodation. LCI was aware of and handling the situation. A person living on Blake St. complained that the elevator in his building repeatedly breaks down, is repaired quickly enough that it would not be addressed under the proposed ordinance language, but then breaks down again quickly. He is frequently

prevented from going to work. Gretchen will have a discussion with Pat King (Corp Counsel) and Misty Maza (legislative affairs committee) to assess how to ensure that this type of situation is addressed in the proposed ordinance. Could be some type of penalty/response related to frequency of break-down (eg; don't get 48 hours after the third breakdown, have to repair immediately). G. Aguilar – asks about City owed buildings. G. Knauff – city buildings have to abide by ordinance but would not be fined.

Ordinance Language Changes

Getting good media attention. Several articles have been written and the changes were highlighted by the CT Age Well Collaborative at its last meeting.

Jaigantic Employment Group

G. Knauff – still no word from them. S. Esposito – the management team from the neighborhood where they proposed the development has also had no response from them, Gretchen will contact Mike Piscitelli and ask if knows the status.

B. Notification system for individuals with Autism

T. Palluzzi has researched the issue, found an example in London 2019 after a big uptick in police brutality against people with disabilities including people on the spectrum. Handed out cards so that people with autism could provide information about a contact person to contact. G. Knauff – people who are deaf have an envelope that people can hand to police if stopped, containing necessary documentation. S. Esposito – Police have been quite responsive to the community. L. McDonough – do we have data to support concerns about treatment of people with disabilities by police? A. Harper – many stories/anecdotes were collected during community engagement process planning for COMPASS team – report can be found here. Will ask the COMPASS team to present at a Disability Commission meeting. G. Aguilar – my son looks 'normal'. It might be helpful if he had some type of id to notify people that he has a disability. Discussion about pros and cons of that. C. Correa-Rios – we have info about problematic treatment by police at the Center for Disability Rights. S. Roberts – we occasionally get phone calls, but it is not common – can filter for New Haven. C. Correa-Rios – my son is diabetic, was once arrested under suspicion of being under influence of alcohol while driving, due to high sugar level. The DUI was not removed despite eventual decision that he was not drunk. G. Aguilar – NAMI is a good organization to provide training about how to work with people with mental illness, there is so much ignorance. L. McDonough – sees such ignorance all the time in the educational system. T. Palluzzi – some school systems deal with it better than New Haven. G. Aguilar – West Haven does it better than New Haven. T. Palluzzi – provides example of a well-designed class that brings typical kids together with kids with disabilities – has been very successful. S. Esposito – the city is looking for a new superintendent – this would be a good time to draw attention to this issue to make sure that the search committee includes experience in these issues as they look for a person. May be too late but could at least express our concern that the new superintendent must focus on these issues. G. Knauff – need to deal with this in other ways too. Perhaps commission members should start going to Board of Ed meetings. Maybe organize a special education conference. Also, she is doing a training on disability for the police cadets. G. Aguilar – 100 people (families/children with disabilities) visited festival of lights in Lighthouse Park – group from New Haven and West Haven. West Haven provided funding for all of this. L. McDonough – maybe we can partner with West Haven rather than creating something separate here. To sum up – i) contact police ii) invite COMPASS iii) contact Board of Ed (re. superintendent hiring) iv) go to Board of Ed

meetings. G. Knauff – set up subcommittee (S. Esposito, L. McDonough, G. Aguilar, T. Palluzzi). G. Knauff will find out about the superintendent search process. Will organize sub-committee in first week of Jan. S. Esposito – hope it doesn't get lost in the process like the interpreter issue....

C. Big Read 2023

G. Knauff – meeting tomorrow to further discuss plans. This group needs to consider how to focus on independent living for people with disabilities. Could have conference to overlap with this. S. Esposito - feeling frustrated by slow pace of the process. She suggested Arya's book.

V. New Business – Charter Revision Request?

Commissioners have to be New Haven residents. We have to include people with disabilities, people with family members – they should be from New Haven. But, for people who work for key organizations that provide services to people with disabilities including in New Haven (4 slots) should we allow them to be from outside New Haven? This would require a charter revision. S. Esposito – are there are charter changes we should consider?

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36pm.