



**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**

April 10, 2023

**Present:** Ben Bond, Arya Singh, Carmen Correa-Rios, Tricia Palluzzi, Robin Tousey – Ayres (Member Emeritus), Billy Huang, Linda McDonough, Sally Esposito

**Absent:** Sandy Roberts, Annie, Harper, and Grisel Aguiler-Cobos

**Staff:** Gretchen Knauff

**I. Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 6:11 PM by Billy Huang, Chair

**II. Minutes** – the January 9, 2023 minutes were tabled and the March 13, 2023 minutes were unanimously excepted with one abstention.

**III. Thank You, Arya** – Congratulations! Arya will be graduating from Yale this May with her Masters Degree in public health. She will be moving back to New York, and, therefore, has resigned from the Commission on Disabilities effective tomorrow (April 11, 2023) Arya will be doing biotech consulting for rare diseases and helping the research organizations get funding. Arya said that her time on the Commission has been humbling and rewarding to learn from everyone, and that the different perspectives were invaluable.

The members of the Commission on Disabilities and the City of New Haven thank Arya for her participation on the Commission and wish her the best in her new adventures.

(During the graduation discussion with Arya, she was asked if the stage would be accessible for people with disabilities. She said that they had reached out to her to make any arrangements that she might need. On a sidenote, Sally and a group of people from the Big Read Planning Committee went to assess the Yale Humanities Quad as a possible location for showing the documentary Crip Camp. The venue was not accessible, and an email was sent to Yale with the impressions from the informal assessment of the group.

**IV Effective Communication** – Annie Harper, who has taken the lead in this effort, contacted various members of the group that sent the letter to the Commission regarding effective communication for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in New Haven. The majority of the individuals would like to meet in person for a pre-meeting to discuss a strategy for a meeting with the Mayor. Gretchen will contact Annie when she returns from her time away and get an update as well as arrange for interpreters for the meeting.

### **V. Old Business**

**A. Elevator Ordinance.** - Gretchen reported that the elevator proposal was tabled for the last month due to one of the work group members needing some personal time. A small group is working on the details of the proposal and is almost ready to have it considered by the larger

group working with the Alder's legislative committee. Tricia mention that a decreased penalty for landlords with Elevator Service Contracts might be a great incentive. The group also discussed using fact sheets or a condensed version as talking points.

One last issue to address in the proposed changes was brought to the group's attention in a local newspaper article. The issue is elevators that break often but are quickly repaired in a day or two, evading the requirements of the proposed ordinance. When an elevator is broken, it may disrupt an individual's ability to go to work, medical appointments, and generally out into the community. Elevators that break often even though for short periods can be quite disruptive if individuals work and can't get out of the building. It could jeopardize their job or relationship with a medical provider. The group is currently working on ideas to incorporate in the proposed ordinance changes that would address the issue.

**B. Jaigantic Employment Group** – Gretchen reported that there has been no movement with Jaigantic. They have not been responsive. Sally indicated that nobody is getting communication from them. Gretchen will contact Economic Development for any updates they might have at this point.

**C. Notification System for Individuals with Autism** – Tricia reported that she sent an email to Walk for Derek, an Autism safety alert system for first responders. Walk with Derek is used in 30 municipalities. There is a form that the families complete and send in with their child's picture. The information is loaded into a database and used when dispatching. Tricia said that she had been in contact with Jennifer Glynn at the New Haven Police Department. Gretchen will try to contact her to connect and find out about using the form at NHPD.

Gretchen mentioned that she is conducting a series of 1 hour in-service trainings for the police department.

**D. One City – One Read** – Gretchen and Sally have been working on the planning committee of the Big Read 2023. The Kickoff event will take place at the Stetson Library on April 19, 2023. The author and others will speak, books (Sitting Pretty by Rebekah Taussig) will be distributed for free and refreshments will be available. There is a series of events and Gretchen will send them to everyone in a chart. The Commission is a sponsor. All Commissioners were encouraged to attend as many events as possible.

**E. Sidewalk Update** – New Haven continues to work on addressing sidewalk accessibility issues. In April, city staff will be meeting with members of the Civil Rights Division of the US Attorneys Office to provide them with information our plans for sidewalk improvements.

The remaining items on the agenda were tabled. The meeting had already run overtime.

**Adjourn** – The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 PM.