

# **Commission on Disabilities - Meeting Minutes**

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**October 16, 2023 - 6:00 – 7:30 pm**

**Present:** Trisha Paluzzi, Sandra Roberts, Carmen Correa-Rios, Billy Huang, Sally Esposito, Grisel Aguilar-Cobos,

**Absent:** Linda, McDonough, Annie Harper, Benjamin Bond

**Guest:** Sarah Spear

**Staff:** Gretchen Knauff

- I. **Call to Order**– The meeting was called to order at 6:17 PM by Billy Huang, Chair.
- II. **Approval of Minutes for September 11, 2023** - Billy Huang made a motion to accept the September 11, 2023 minutes. Sally Esposito seconded the motion. During the discussion of the motion, Carmen Correa-Rios indicated that she was not in attendance at the meeting. The minutes were amended to reflect her absence. There were no other comments regarding the minutes. The motion was amended to accept the minutes as edited. The vote on the motion was unanimous approval with Carmen, Sandy, and Griselle abstaining because they were not in attendance at the meeting.
- III. **Guest: Sarah Spear and Empowered Together** - Sarah Spear introduced herself and told the Commissioners a little bit about her history. She then presented her Empowered Together concept to the Commission on Disabilities. The idea is to connect people with accessible businesses. Her PowerPoint presentation and summary sheet are attached to these minutes. Ms. Spear would like to pilot the program in New Haven and have users from the disability community in this area try the app and provide feedback.

Sandra Roberts commented that she liked the idea and thinks it could have potential. Sally Esposito asked how many advisors working on the project have a disability? There are three advisors working on the project, one has a disability and one is a parent.

## IV. **Old Business**

- A. **Elevator Proposal** -The proposed changes to the elevator ordinance were heard by the Alders Legislative Affairs Committee on October 3, 2023. Many of the members of the Commission attended the meeting. Sally Esposito and Billy Huang spoke and provided written testimony. Other members of the Commission were present to provide support. Gretchen Knauff also provided testimony that focused on the changes that the proposal would make to the current ordinance. The Legislative Affairs Committee unanimously approved the proposal and sent to the full Board of Alders.

The Commission members discussed next steps and their concerns about other groups that may oppose the ordinance changes. They decided that it would be beneficial to call

their own Alders to ask them to support the ordinance change and to let them know why the change is needed and why it's important. The Commissioners should also let them know how the ordinance addresses the problem and inform them about the number of city departments that approved the ordinance changes. Gretchen will create a one-page document that can be used by the Commissioners in their discussions with the Alders. It will be sent to the Alders right after Halloween.

Commission members present decided to contact as many Alders as possible to request that the Alders support the legislation. The members present divided up the list of Alders and took responsibility for contacting most of the list. It is hoped that the Commissioners who could not be at the meeting will assist with contacting the remaining Alders. The assignments can be seen in the chart below.

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Alder</b>	<b>Alder Phone</b>	<b>Commission Member</b>
1	Alex Guzhnay	475-209-0961	Sandy Roberts, Billy Huang
2	Frank Douglass	203-535-8979	
3	Ron Hurt	203-675-5467	
4	Evelyn Rodriguez	203-494-1462	Grisel Aquilar-Cobos
5	Krampton Singh	203-627-0861	
6	Carmen Rodriguez	203-675-0330	Grisel Aquilar-Cobos
7	Eli Sabin	203-980-0335	Billy Huang
8	Ellen Cupo	203-584-7071	Sally Esposito
9	Claudia Herrera	203-285-7757	Sally Esposito
10	Anna Festa	203-776-8602	
11	Not filled at this time		
12	Gerald Antunes	203-772-1988	Carmen Correa-Rios
13	Rosa Santana	203-469-5700	Carmen Correa-Rios
14	Sarah Miller	203-675-9516	Sally Esposito
15	Ernie Santiago	203-887-9410	Sally Esposito
16	Jose Crespo	203-668-4613	Sally Esposito
17	Sal Punzo	203-824-3363	Tricia Palluzzi

18	Sal DeCola	203-641-1857	Tricia Palluzzi
19	Kimberly Edwards	203-668-7895	
20	Devin Avshalom-Smith	203-778-0051	
21	Troy Streater	203-494-3642	
22	Jeanette Morrison	203-687-3120	
23	Tyisha Walker-Myers	203-901-3436	Billy Huang
24	Evette Hamilton	203-675-2418	
25	Adam Marchand	203-843-8102	Sandy Roberts
26	Amy Marx	203-676-9034	Billy Huang
27	Richard Furlow	203-507-5796	Tricia Palluzzi
28	Thomas Ficklin, Jr.	203-668-4511	
29	Brian Wingate	203-401-9457	
30	Honda Smith	203-802-0122	Grisel Aquilar-Cobos

**V. New Business –**

- A. **Approval of the Meeting Dates for 2024.** – Sally made a motion to except the proposed 2024 meeting schedule, and Billy seconded the motion. All Commission members present voted in favor of the schedule, which will be listed on the City website.

**VI. Public Comment – None**

**VII. Announcements - None**

- VIII. Adjourn** - Carmen Correa -Rios made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Sally Esposito seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 PM.