



TONI N. HARP  
Mayor

**COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES**  
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ROBIN TOUSEY-AYERS  
Chairperson

## **Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes**

City Hall 4<sup>th</sup> Second Floor Meeting Room II

**February 12, 2018**

- Present: Sally Esposito, Billy Huang, Kurtis Kearney, Iva Long, Tricia Palluzzi, Benjamin Nadolsky and Robin Tousey-Ayers
- Staff: Michelle Duprey
- Absent: Jenifer Blemings, Matthew Ranelli, Maria Rivera, Paula Pernal and Jack Tsai
- Guest: Honda Smith, Public Space Enforcement Agent-Department of Public Works for City of New Haven

Meeting called to order at 5:27 p.m.

### **Guest**

Honda Smith introduced herself as a Public Space Enforcement Agent for the Public Works department for the City of New Haven. Honda stated that there are 231 streets in the City of New Haven. She stated that the primary goal of Public Works during snow removal is to take care of arterial routes first which consist of the main roads. Once cleared and passable, she said that Public Works moves to clearing the side streets. Honda stated that the main reason for clearing the main roads first is because they are the emergency access and school routes. She also mentioned that Public Works concentrates on hills. Honda stated that the material used on the streets is either a sand/salt mixture or a new mix which is mixed with molasses & salt.

Honda stated that there has been a lot of complaints about snow removal from City bus stops. She stated that some of the bus stops are located on private property. The crosswalks, better known as the sidewalk ramps, are the responsibility of the abutting property owner to maintain and keep free and clear of snow & ice. Honda mentioned that some of the roads in New Haven are owned by State of CT and, therefore, they are the responsibility of the State. Some of these roads include a portion of Whalley Avenue going toward the Boulevard up to Route 63 & 69, and Fountain Street from Central Avenue to the backside of Woodbridge.

Michelle mentioned that the biggest problem is enforcement. Honda stated that only has access to the See/Click/Fix system at this time. Michelle stated that all storm related complaints are sent to Honda Smith and Veoci, based on the City's Emergency Management Center system. Honda provided her email address of [hsmith@newhavenct.gov](mailto:hsmith@newhavenct.gov). Michelle stated that she will send the complaints through both Veoci and Honda's email because it is important for Leadership to understand that there is a problem with communication. Honda stated that she received emails or telephone calls from the Emergency Management Center.

Honda stated that she is the only Inspector at the Public Works department. She mentioned that she has developed relationships with residents, businesses and contractors over the years.

Sally & Benjamin asked Honda about coordinating with Yale University. Honda stated that once the snow stops, property owners and businesses have 24 hours to clear the snow from their property, including sidewalks, and put some type of abrasion down. Honda stated if they do not comply, they get fined. Honda stated that the City does not clean-up on private property. Honda stated that the City will continue to fine the abutting property owners until the sidewalk is clear.

Honda asked for volunteers to assist with clearing bus stops & curb cuts. Honda suggested having CT Transit clear the bus stops, since they own and clear the bus shelters. Michelle stated that years ago CT Transit contracted with the City of Bridgeport for snow removal at bus stops.

Tricia mentioned that the Board of Education is clearing snow in their lots and plowing it into accessible spaces. Michelle stated that she will contact Will Clark at the Board of Education. Honda stated that the Department of Public Works does not plow the City schools. She stated that the Board of Education hires private contractors for plowing City schools.

Robin and other Commission members discussed the growing problem of absenteeism among students with disabilities within the State of CT and in New Haven. Robin discussed some statistics and data from the State of CT. Sally suggested inviting Tiffany Jackson from Special Education of the New Haven Board of Education to a future Commission meeting to discuss this issue.

### **Minutes**

The Commission members reviewed the January Minutes. The spelling of Doug Hausladen's name was incorrect. Sally moved to approve the January Minutes with the correct spelling of Doug Hausladen's name. Benjamin seconded the motion, and the January Minutes were approved as amended.

### **Chairpersons Report**

None.

## **Department Report**

Michelle stated that she sent out her budget and supporting documentation a couple of weeks ago.

## **Old Business**

Billy updated the Commission members on the status of the project that Jack, Kurtis & himself are working on concerning the high number of evictions at Bella Vista. Billy stated that they met with the Management Team at Bella Vista and determined that the residents would like more activities and a better quality of life. Billy stated that Jack, Kurtis & himself will probably design an intervention program that included some computer literacy training. Tricia suggested providing financial literacy training for the residents at Bella Vista. Billy stated that he is meeting with a financial literacy professional tomorrow.

Benjamin stated that Yale University has a new policy to ensure that all of their websites are accessible. He stated that Yale hired all new personnel at ITS. Benjamin discussed their new policies. He stated that his group is trying to get a fund created for accommodations. Benjamin stated that at this time, Yale University is not required to cover any costs for student organizations. Benjamin stated that his group is having a piece made for the Yale magazine.

## **New Business**

None.

## **Other Business**

None.

## **Public Comment/Announcements**

Next meeting March 12, 2018.

Sally made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Tricia seconded the motion.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting was approved unanimously at 7:06 p.m.