



TONI N. HARP
Mayor

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
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ROBIN TOUSEY-AYERS
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes

City Hall 2nd Meeting Room II

April 10, 2017

- Present:** Sally Esposito, Kurtis Kearney, Iva Long, Benjamin Nadolsky, Tricia Palluzzi and Billy Wong
- Staff:** Michelle Duprey
- Absent:** Jenifer Blemings, Matthew Ranelli and Robin Tousey-Ayers, Maria Rivera, Jack Tsai and Paula Pernal
- Guests:** Went Davis, Executive Director of Town Green District
Scott Lewis, Manager of CT Transit of New Haven Division
Kim Donovan, Executive Director of Greater New Haven Transit District
Laurence Grotheer, Director of Communications-City of New Haven
Jeff Pescosolido, Chief of Operations Dept. of Public Works
Michael Pinto, Deputy Director of Transportation, Traffic & Parking

Meeting called to order at 5:15 p.m.

Guests

Michelle explained the issue of snow removal and improving accessibility for people with disabilities trying to get around in wheelchairs or with walking aides to the group; particularly on or around sidewalks, ramps, bus stops, and curb cuts being the biggest problem areas. She stated that enforcement is not very good due to the lack of City staff. Michelle stated that the Commission is asking the group for suggestions on how to improve this problem.

Jeff Pescosolido, Chief of Operations for the Department of Public Works (“DPW”) discussed the triage process of plowing during a snow storm and snow removal during a parking ban shortly thereafter the storm. He stated that DPW has only one (1) inspector, but are open to working with other City agencies.

Kim Donovan, Executive Director of Greater New Haven Transit District mentioned that there are many day-laborers available to assist with clearing snow in the downtown area.

Michelle mentioned that another typical problem existed when curb cuts are not cleared after sidewalks have been shoveled by adjoining landowners. The curb cuts should be cleared with a 36" path for wheelchair users. Went Davis stated that they had to purchase three (3) snow blowers for emergencies, and used them this past season. He mentioned that this issue has always been a problem with the area business in the downtown area.

Sally asked the group if they know of any other communities that have best practices that the Commission may reach out to for suggestions and ideas. Went Davis stated that Burlington, VT is one community where the municipality clears the snow from the sidewalks.

The group discussed sending out notices or alerts to the community reminding citizens of their snow removal responsibilities. Kim Donovan asked the group if New Haven had any intention of moving toward a Business Improvement District for the downtown area where it would be able to increase the tax assessments. Went Davis stated that the Town Green District is the Business District and it has already divided different neighborhoods of New Haven into districts.

Scott Lewis stated that CT Transit also receives complaints concerning snow removal and they inform their transit operators to avoid curb cuts after snow storms. Kim Donovan stated that the buses of the Greater New Haven Transit District are usually smaller and therefore, present more challenges during snow removal.

Jeff Pescosolido invited Michelle to the July "Snow Meeting" to provide some insight on proactive measures. Michelle suggested coming together again in the Fall to follow-up this discussion.

Scott Lewis discussed the changes that are being made to the systems in place at the CT Transit of New Haven Division. He stated that CT Transit is working with the Greater New Haven Transit District on training operators on better use of mobility equipment.

Jeff Pescosolido and Scott Lewis discussed about customer service. Scott Lewis discussed the CT Transit GPS app as part of the CT DOT web site. He stated that this software makes sure that bus operators don't run early on their routes and it also acts as a tool to make sure that there is more consistent service. Kim Donovan stated that GNHTD is working to improve its services with the use of this app.

Tricia suggested that some Commission members attend City Management Groups or "Snow Brigades" in an attempt to isolate the repeat offenders in the residential areas, and add them to a list to be notified of the snow ordinance.

Laurence Grotheer suggested that the Commission provide a list of addresses, and with "See Click Fix", DPW & TTP could transmit a message for 100's of addresses at one time. Laurence also mentioned reaching out to the Alders for assistance. Jeff Pescosolido stated that this issue could be raised during one of the summer meetings.

Minutes

The Commission members reviewed the January Minutes. Sally moved to approve the January Minutes and Kurtis seconded. The January Minutes were approved unanimously.

Chairperson's Report

Michelle discussed the change to the Disability Rights Protection & Advocacy from the Disability Advocacy Department for the State of Connecticut. Michelle stated that the loss of resources is going to be substantial.

Department Report

Michelle stated that she participated in an Emergency Management Planners training for CT.

Old Business

Sally asked the other Commission members if the Elevator Ordinance addressed Buildings owned by Non-Profit Organizations.

New Business

Iva mentioned that her friend who works at Yale New Haven Hospital St. Raphael Campus fell while transporting a patient on a carpeted area. The Commission members discuss the use of carpet in various areas of the hospital.

Other Business

None.

Public Comment/Announcements

Next meeting shall take place on May 8, 2017.

Sally made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Kurtis seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 7:00 p.m.