



TONI N. HARP
Mayor

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ROBIN TOUSEY-AYERS
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes

City Hall 2nd Meeting Room II

May 8, 2017

Present: Sally Esposito, Billy Huong, Kurtis Kearney, Iva Long, Benjamin Nadolsky, Tricia Palluzzi, Matthew Ranelli, and Robin Tousey-Ayers

Staff: Michelle Duprey

Absent: Jenifer Blemings, Maria Rivera, Jack Tsai and Paula Pernal

Guests: Jessy Hardy, Homes & Advisory Commissioner & Homeless Disability Outreach Advocate

Meeting called to order at 5:21 p.m.

The Commission Members and guest introduced themselves to one another.

Minutes

The Commission members reviewed the April Minutes. There was a correction to the April Minutes to add Commissioner Benjamin Nadolsky to the "Present" Section. _____ moved to approve the April Minutes and Sally seconded. The April Minutes as amended were approved. Robin Tousey-Ayers abstained from voting since she was not present at the April meeting.

Chairperson Robin Tousey-Ayers made a motion to amend the Agenda of the Meeting to include a Guest: Jessy Hardy. Benjamin Nadolsky seconded that motion. The motion to amend the Agenda of the Meeting to include a Guest: Jessy Hardy was approved unanimously.

Guest

Iva Long introduced Jessy Hardy to the Commission as someone who has made a huge contribution to the disability community through the Churches. Jessy discussed his experiences with helping homeless people; especially those that are disabled and living on the streets. He stated that he provides outreach services to them, such as assisting homeless people obtain social security benefits and connecting young people with disability organizations. Jessy stated that he is Commissioner on the homes & Advisory Commission

that set policy and he would like to join forces with the Commission on Disabilities to help the disabled that need assistance but are unaware of the resources.

Iva asked Jessy about the roadblocks that he has experienced in dealing with the resources/agencies on behalf of the disabled/homeless people. Jessy stated that some of the roadblocks are really red-tape. Jessy mentioned that he recently helped a veteran. He got in touch with the VA and they got in touch in VAS and they issued a housing coupon for this man to obtain an apartment. Jessy stated that he deals with a lot of people with mental disabilities.

Iva asked Jessy about the segregated homeless camps. Jessy stated that the homeless segregate themselves into different camps, such as those that are clean, drinkers, drug users, disabled, etc. He stated that everyone had an opportunity during the cold weather to go to a warmer place such as a shelter. Jessy stated that during the DiStefano administration, he slept on the steps of City Hall on a cardboard box and not one person came by and asked him if he needed assistance. He stated the Mayor Harp has assisted the homeless more than anyone else. Jessy described his Annual Barbecue for the homeless and disabled in the community. Jessy stated that he suffers from mental illness and depression himself. He stated that a couple of months ago he became homeless and some friends helped him out. Jessy stated that he now has a cart and sells Jessy's Barbecue. He provides food to the homeless, families in need, food pantries, and Churches. Iva asked Jessy if it would help for him to discuss/coordinate with one person from the food pantries. Jessy stated that it would be very helpful. He mentioned that the homeless are "flocking" into New Haven and we need to feed them. Jessy stated that it is not an impossible mission. Robin stated that the Commission will schedule time to attend Jessy's Homeless Commission meetings to continue this discussion and form a productive partnership.

Chairperson's Report

Robin does not have a report. Robin thanked Tricia for filling-in for her during last month. Michelle and Tricia discuss last month's meeting and suggest having a follow-up meeting, especially for those departments that did not attend. Robin asked Michelle about the invite that she received to the snow meeting in July. Kurtis mentioned that there are very few handicapped meters downtown. Michelle discussed the usage of these meters. Matt stated that the handicapped meters do not connect to the app. Michelle stated that the City has vouchers for parking at the Department of Transportation, Traffic & Parking.

Department Report

Michelle stated that she attended the Long-Term Care Advisory Council at the Capital. She stated that there were numerous comments from different agencies about DSS and great discussion about possible federal legislation about changes to Medicare/Medicaid. Michelle stated that she has a slide presentation if the Commission members are interested.

Michelle stated that another issue involves parking in New Haven. Michelle stated that basically you have to pay for the time that you park at a meter, including handicapped spaces.

Michelle mentioned that if any business requests a handicapped space, then, the Department of Transportation, Traffic & Parking places a sign outside their business.

Old Business

Michelle stated that she is waiting for a meeting date from Corporation Counsel to discuss the Elevator issue.

New Business

Benjamin stated that he and his friend's created a Disability Task Force on the Yale University campus to provide recommendations to the Yale University administration, such as an ALS course and a Cultural Center for Disabilities. He stated that the group works with other students from Harvard and other universities both domestically and internationally.

Other Business

Robin and Sally discussed neighborhood meetings, such as in the Fair Haven Library. Robin suggested have the neighborhood meeting on October 16 at Bella Vista.

Michelle suggested that one of the officers contact members Maria & Jenifer concerning their absences. Robin stated that she will contact these Commission members.

Robin stated that she will not be at the June 12 meeting. Tricia suggested that Robin send an email to all the other Commission members concerning their attendance at this meeting.

Public Comment/Announcements

Next meeting to be determined.

Tricia made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Benjamin seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 6:50 p.m.