

Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 5, 2017
6:00 PM

Present: Chair Michael Menders, George Chaput, Lottie Scott, Cynthia Litton, Kevin Harkins, Janelle Daly, Jane O’Friel, and Lisa Harrison

Absent: All Commissioners Present

Others Present: Kim Rogers, Mayor Deb Hinchey, Marixsa Romanella, and Brigid Marks

Call to Order: Chair Michael Menders called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Determination of Quorum: It was determined a quorum was present (8/8).

Approval of Minutes: On a motion by George, seconded by Janelle, the minutes from the December 1st 2016 Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CPD) meeting were approved as presented.

Citizen Comments: None

Communications: None

Guest, Mayor Deb Hinchey:

Mayor Deb Hinchey says that she received the committees email requesting an Effective Communications Plan and Manual for communicating with persons with sensory disabilities. She had her assistant Marixsa get samples from different organizations of their Effective Communications Plans. She wants to know from us specific details we want included in the Effective Communications Plan. Michael responded that it is a requirement of the ADA for the City to have this Effective Communications Plan. The committee requested an Effective Communications Plan on ‘how different departments would interact with someone with sensory disabilities’. Jane says that this Effective Communications Plan should be reviewed by all city employees and Kevin agreed. Michael says that the Effective Communications Plan is vital to protect the city from any liabilities. He then passed out the ADA requirements on Effective Communications which states “The ADA requires that title II entities (State and local governments) and title III entities (businesses and nonprofit organizations that serve the public) communicate effectively with people who have communication disabilities”. Mayor Hinchey says that she understands now that the committee wants to know “how does the staff learn to communicate” and the committee is “looking to educate the staff”. Michael agreed and stated that the committee wants to review and discuss the manual that is created. Lisa says this Effective Communications Plan is important from a liability standpoint but for all citizens with disabilities to be treated and communicated to properly. Brigid Marks says that she called the CCM to request other city’s Effective Communications Plans and none were available, Norwich will be ahead of other city’s by creating this guide.

Mayor Hinchey then asked about the community’s response to new benches in City Hall and Michael responded that the response has been very positive. Kevin asked if there was a safe crosswalk for those who are seeing impaired and she says that there is a beep now.

Mayor Hinchey requested committee members come to the City Council meetings between 7-7:30pm which is open topic time. She and Michael discussed how the committee can request attention be given to sidewalk safety. Kevin stated that anyone is open to come to our committee meetings and we would appreciate if the mayor mentioned our committee. She replied that she can bring us up at city council meetings if the committee writes a paragraph about their

group. Michael says that he will send the committees programs to her so that she can give them out and put them on the city website and Facebook page.

Old Business:

Sidewalk condition observations to report to Department of Public Works (DPW): Michael asked if there were any more sidewalk observations to add to the spreadsheet that will be sent to Public Works. Cynthia said she sent her final observations to Michael and he replied that he had received them.

Pedestrian Friendly City Discussion: George spoke about his research on walk friendly communities. He found out that a city can become certified as a walk friendly community. Most of the committee's ideas involve educating the community but he says it is important to talk about sidewalk safety from kindergarten and so on. He wants to contact existing organizations before presenting our findings to the city. George says it is the kids who need to know first because adults are set in their ways and kids are open to learn.

Plans for March Guest Speaker: Michael says that the committee requested Becca from Art Reach would be the guest speaker in March. Cynthia says that she will contact her and learn more about the program. Lisa explained more about the program. Michael says to see about her availability for March 2nd and if she is unavailable we will look for a different speaker.

New Business:

Discuss Disabled Persons Issues: There was a brief discussion on where the committee could meet for special occasions when there would too many people to fit into the room. No other issues were discussed.

Adjournment: On a motion from Cynthia, seconded by Lottie, the meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM. The next meeting will be at 6 PM on Thursday, February 2nd 2017 at Norwich City Hall in Room 319.

Meeting Minutes Written by Ivery Stakley on January 5th 2017.