

Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Regular Meeting Minutes

March 2nd, 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: None

Others Present: Kim Rogers and Rebecca Atkins

Call to Order: Chair Michael Menders called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

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

Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Kevin, seconded by Cynthia, the minutes from the January 5th, 2017 Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CPD) meeting were approved as presented.

Citizen Comments: None

Communications: None

Guest Speaker, Rebecca Atkins:

Becca Atkins from Artreach came to explain how Artreach serves adults with disabilities, provides art therapy, and builds community to bring people together. Their flyer states that Artreach “supports sustainable recovery for adults who have psychiatric disorders”. Artreach Is Funded by Connecticut department of mental health and addiction services. Cynthia asked if the program is open to everyone with disabilities even without documentation. Ms. Atkins said there may be a way Cynthia can get involved. Artreach has programs including music rehearsal/concerts, theater, Art projects, poetry readings, podcasts, and Standup comedy which helps reduce stigmas in the community. She then began to speak about the different events that Artreach is performing including the Performing Arts Intersect showcase at Norwich Free Academy on March 19th 2:30-4:30pm and the 25th Annual Conference on Serving Adults with Disabilities on April 27th. Kevin was grateful that Cynthia brought up that many of the disabled fall between the gaps and don’t fit into any category. Michael asked how the standup comedy began. Rebecca explained they had a sketch comedy group similar to Saturday Night Live, they were interviewed by the Day, newspaper, who said it would be even better if they used their own struggles with disabilities in their comedy which inspired the Standup comedy. Michael requested that all the commissioners attend the public event Artreach comedy and music at Otis Library on Monday May 8th at 6pm. Kim says that Janelle would like to get ark of new London involved. Cynthia, Jane, Rob, Lisa and Rebecca discussed the Moth podcast which inspired art reaches podcast. Rebecca spoke about transportation issues in the program so Michael referred her to Laurie Elwee, a mobility specialist, and the committee member gave her pamphlets from the Eastern Connecticut Transportation Consortium.

Ethics Training

Ethics training has been assigned to all committee members and it needs to be completed by March 31st. Michael collected all commissioner’s emails, so the City Manager’s Office can sign them up and then he will email the commissioners so they can complete the training.

Old Business:

Sidewalk condition observations to report to Department of Public Works (DPW): No changes.

Pedestrian Friendly City Discussion: Michael says there needs to be a subcommittee to work on making Norwich a pedestrian friendly city discussion. Lottie, George, Cynthia and Michael all volunteered to join the subcommittee. George then began presenting his plan on how to make Norwich a Pedestrian Friendly City. Cynthia said we should partner with a town with similar problems such as narrow roads and George agrees. They then discussed when the subcommittee should take place. The first meeting will take place March 15th at 430pm at the Otis Library.

New Business:

Discuss Disabled Persons Issues: Kevin shared how certain aspects of the calendar section of the City's web site was inaccessible for those who are vision impaired, so he requested assistance and received it from the Mayor's Office in February. The problem has been corrected.

Adjournment: On a motion from Cynthia, seconded by Janelle, the meeting adjourned at 7:33 PM. The next meeting will be at 6 PM on Thursday, April 6th, 2017 at Norwich City Hall in Room 319.

Meeting Minutes Written by Ivery Stakley on March 2, 2017.