

**Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Regular Meeting Minutes**

July 7, 2016
6:00 PM

Present: Michael Menders, George Chaput, Raymond DeBlasio, Kevin Harkins, Cynthia Litton, Jane O’Friel and Lottie Scott

Absent: Lisa Harrison

Others Present: Brigid Marks, City of Norwich Human Resources Representative

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.

Approval of Minutes: On a motion made by Kevin Harkins, seconded by George Chaput, the minutes from May 5, 2016 were approved as presented.

Citizen Comments: None.

Communications: Kevin Harkins presented a copy of an email he sent to the Commission earlier in the day. The Governor’s budget includes the dissolution of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities. Elanah Sherman, who presented to the Commission recently, works within this agency. The funding for the agency will end as of July 2017. The public comment period ends later this month. He asked Commissioners to read the email and consider making comment.

Old Business:

Sidewalk condition observations to report to Department of Public Works (DPW):

Michael asked Commissioners to note the address of the sidewalk issues. This will assist him in tracking the issues on the spreadsheet. He is still waiting for the Department of Public Works (DPW) to update the Commissioners on their plan to address the sidewalk issues. Brigid noted that the Director of Public Works has been on leave due to military deployment. Michael will contact Teresa Hanlon, City Engineer.

Kevin mentioned the tree which is actually in the center of the sidewalk near the Otis Library, which creates a challenge for those using a cane. Also, sign posts, fire hydrants and utility poles in sidewalks create similar issues. Michael discussed the difference between egress and infrastructure, and what the Commission can address.

City Transition Plan and Effective Communications Plans: Brigid reported it is still on the office agenda. Michael noted the Communications Plan is the most important.

Program Opportunity for Public Awareness at Otis Library Results: On Saturday June 25, 2016 the CPD hosted a Community Informational Program at Otis Library. Two members of the public attended. Peter Nystrom contacted Michael with his apologies for being unable to attend.

The idea of having a table at the Taste of Italy was discussed. Also the development of a pamphlet was discussed. Michael asked for a volunteer to prepare a pamphlet. Jane asked

Commissioners to send her content and she will work on a layout. The Commission will then send the concept to the Mayor for further input. The Commission would like to clarify with the Mayor who is the contact point for the Commission, to be printed on the pamphlet.

Effective Communication Policy and Manual: Addressed under City Transition and Effective Communications Plan agenda item.

New Business:

Discuss Disabled Persons Access Problems: Cindy raised an issue regarding Uncas Leap. There doesn't seem to be fencing between the parking lot and the lower falls. Kevin noted there will be a walk hosted by the Norwich Historical Society at 10:30 am Saturday. He will attend the walk and report back to the Commission on the safety conditions.

Michael discussed the rules around having a quorum present at meetings and canceling meetings.

Cindy brought up the entrance of the Otis Library which is difficult to navigate.

Lottie brought up motorized scooters traveling through intersections while not adhering to traffic lights, pedestrians jaywalking, and autos running red lights.

On a motion by Cindy, seconded by George, the Commission unanimously voted to authorize Michael to summarize the comments and present them to a representative of the Norwich Police Department. Michael will take these safety issues to the Norwich Police Department on behalf of the Commission.

Lottie suggested asking the Mayor to create a public relations committee who could address issues of creating a welcoming, walkable city.

George spoke about the complications of reverse mortgages. Jane offered to check with the Disabilities Network of Eastern CT and Senior Resources for information.

Kevin suggested having guests present on disability issues at CPD meetings. Cindy offered to contact several agencies regarding the idea. On a motion by Kevin, seconded by Raymond, the Commission unanimously voted to have no less than four educational programs during its regular meetings during the year for edification of the commission and the public, and that the Chair will appoint a program liaison.

The Chair appointed Cindy to the position of Program Liaison. He thanked her for volunteering. The Commission agreed to contact Senior Resources as the potential first guest for the September 1, 2016 meeting at 6:15 pm. It was decided the guests would be given twenty minutes to educate on the purpose of their agency and how the Commission can best interface with them.

Adjournment: On a motion from Cindy, seconded by Kevin, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM. The next meeting will be at 6 PM on Thursday, August 4, 2016 at Norwich City Hall, Room 319.