

**Commission for Persons with Disabilities  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
February 6, 2020  
4:00 PM**

**Present:** Committee Chair Elanah Sherman, Amy Dudek, Kevin Harkins, Cynthia Litton (by phone), Julie Menders, Kevin Saythany

**Excused absence:** Mark Marcy

**Others Present:** Brigid Marks and Sgt. Nick Rankin

**Call to Order:** Elanah called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

**Determination of Quorum:** It was determined a quorum was present (6/7).

**Approval of Minutes:** On a motion seconded by Kevin S, the January, 2020 Meeting Minutes were approved as presented. (Note: The member who made the first motion not recorded in the original Minutes.)

**Citizen Comments:** Sgt, Rankin, our guest speaker, made introductory remarks about his work at the Police Department and members introduced themselves to him.

**Communications:** None.

**Old Business:**

**Westgate Shopping Center - Update:** Jim Troeger is retiring in about a week. The Commission will ask Mark to request an update from Deanna regarding who will be responsible for following up on this issue.

**Norwich Census Committee – Report:** Elanah has been attending meetings. She will be reaching out to disability-related organizations to encourage census reporting by their clients/members; she will also email these organizations relevant materials from the federal census site.

**Charging Stations Sub-Committee – Report:** Julie reported that Chris Riley from NPU has been gathering information on products and costs. Although Elanah said that, technically, the lack of such stations is probably not an ADA issue, the installation of one or more stations will enhance navigation through the City for people who use motorized mobility equipment. Commission members agreed that we are lucky to live in a City with a government so supportive of people with disabilities.

### **Disability Awareness Week 2020**

Kevin H will call the Mayor's Office to determine dates. He also presented ideas for publicizing, such as: bookmarks distributed by the library; billboard at Dodd Stadium; involving Three Rivers; Commission participation in the Memorial Day Parade; an article in Norwich Magazine; Lions Club involvement; scrolling ad on public access TV; inserts in NPU bills; and a booth at Taste of Italy. Cindy suggested a 'walking in the shoes of the blind' event; this would be similar to Lions events held in the past. Elanah said she would secure a date from Bob Mills for the Code/ADA event that she is organizing in collaboration with NCDC.

### **New Business**

**Bus Stop on Town Street:** Cyndi reported that a bus stop across the street from Stop and Shop is on a grassy area that is difficult to navigate. The Commission agreed to accept this issue at the research stage. Elanah will get Cyndi contact information for Teresa Hanlon of DPW to begin discussions.

### **Guest Speaker**

Sgt. Nick Rankin, Supervisor of the NPD Community Policing Unit, participated in a discussion with Commission members on crimes against people with disabilities. Elanah had invited him after newspaper reports of an alleged such attack in Norwich. Sgt. Rankin said that, as in this case, these attacks do not generally fall under the rubric of a hate crime because the victim is targeted based on vulnerability, not specifically on the basis of the victim's disability. He said crimes often occur after an individual moves in with a disabled person purportedly to provide assistance but often with a motivation to exploit. In response to a question from Kevin H, Sgt. Rankin said that only one or two actual hate crimes a year occur in Norwich, compared with numerous crimes of predation/exploitation, including sexual assault, against people with disabilities. In response to an idea presented by Elanah, Sgt. Rankin said he would be happy to participate in community education programs on crimes against people with disabilities. He suggested including a victim in programs. Elanah said she would try and find someone. Cyndi suggested including Bully Busters in presentations.

**Adjournment:** On a motion from Kevin H, seconded by Kevin S, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 PM. The next meeting will be at 4 PM on Thursday, March 5, 2020 at Norwich City Hall in Room 319.

Meeting Minutes written by Ivery Stakley; revised 2/12/2020 by Elanah.