



Commission on Disabilities  
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes  
***Wednesday, February 7, 2024***  
***City Hall Room 430***

**Commissioners:** *indicate present (P) or absent (A)*

Laurie Berner - P  
Ashlie Castaldo, Vice Chair - P  
Chris Johnson - P  
Amanda Crosby, Chair - P  
Allison Fochs - P  
Dianne Naus - P  
Samantha Smingler, Secretary – A  
Brooke Marinan - P

**Also present:**

Police Officer Mark Bauer, Parking  
Human Rights Officer Carl Crawford  
Michaela Mullin, Arc Housing Coordinator  
Amanda [Iname], Guest, New COD Applicant  
Andy [Iname], Guest

Chair Crosby called the **2/7/24** Commission on Disabilities meeting to order at 3:37pm, there was a quorum.

- 1. Approval of February 2024 agenda**  
Request to update the order of agenda discussions.  
Motion by Commissioner Berner, 2nd Commissioner Naus
- 2. Approval of the January 2023 minutes**  
Motion by Commissioner Castaldo, 2nd Commissioner Naus
- 3. Executive Board Elections**
  - Guests introduce themselves to group

- Bylaws state COD must have 3 executive board members. Human Rights Officer Crawford will seek guidance from City Attorney, as many Commissioner terms are ending, with not enough members to fill open executive role positions.
- Motion filed to fill the following executive roles:  
Commissioner Castaldo as interim Chair  
Commissioner Marinan as Vice Chair  
Commissioner Johnson as Secretary  
Positions may change as new commissioners are appointed to COD.  
Approved, Motion by Chair Crosby; 2nd Commissioner Berner

#### **9b. Recruiting New Commissioners**

- Applications are currently moving through the appointment queue. Will be reviewed by Mayor Reinert, then onto City Council for approval.
- Chair Crosby suggested sharing the COD tri-fold brochure to help recruit new commissioners. Human Rights Officer Crawford offered to review the brochure for any edits needed. Commissioner Berner offered to send brochure to local organizations.
- Human Rights Officer Crawford recommended holding a seat on the COD for a representative of the DTA. Chair Crosby will connect with DTA regarding this opportunity.

#### **4. Current Disability Issues and Announcements**

- CHUM interested in enhancing accessibility in their facility(ies). Commissioner Berner will connect John Cole with Center for Independent Living to assist.
- Commissioner Fochs shared concern over a friend's experience on the DTA. Discrepancy over whether the walker could be placed in an accessible seat and charged as a "second" occupied seat. Chair Crosby suggested the concerned passenger contact the DTA STRIDE advisory committee.
- Commissioner Berner updated COD on the Stepping On Up proposed housing project. The goal is to create transitional housing for those experiencing recent homelessness and help those individuals get re-established.

#### **6. Parks and Rec Report**

- No Parks & Rec meeting in January.

- Potential growth of Spirit Valley Community Center, possible funding opportunity under Mayor Reinert's initiatives.
- Mr. Crawford mentioned a nearby community received three all-terrain wheelchairs for accessible outdoor use.

## **5. Accessible Parking Update**

- Approved by Parking Commission:
  - 530 N. 5th Ave E. St. Mark's Church, installed two zones
  - 230 E. Superior Street
  - 219 S. 60th Ave W.
  - 223 E. 6th Street
  - 15 N. 23rd Ave W
- To review: 2717 W. 9th Street - need site visit for recommendation

## **7. Skywalk Access Walk**

Two groups met at Starbucks Superior St. and 4th Ave W. to experience Skywalk and look for accessibility opportunities.

- Braille signage needed throughout
- Good lighting, good temperature
- Good gradients except for wooden bridge by Radisson
- DECC & Pioneer Building gradient issue, not properly installed
- Amanda (Guest) agreed more opportunities for visually impaired. Braille is good but many individuals with visual impairments don't read Braille. Suggested QR codes, an app, audio beacons - a modern solution to identify direction.
- COD will organize skywalk notes to 1) identify acute needs and priority fixes; 2) overall improvements, ideas and opportunities

## **8. Old Business**

- "R" Word Update: Commissioner Castaldo meeting this week with ISD 709 coalition. Then, meeting planned with School Board Members Banks and Williams to discuss Hate and "R" word policies.
- Snow Removal Task Force: Chair Crosby invited commissioners to take MinneSNOWta Nice swag and pledge. Chair Crosby reached out to Mayor Reinert and new CAO to provide information about the campaign; concerns were expressed over language in the brochure. Chair Crosby affirmed to the COD that the current brochure was reviewed and approved under Mayor Larson, but that a new print was requested with revisions from the new City communications team.

- Chair Crosby also discussed the Snow Removal Task Force walk with City EAT (Equity Action Team). EAT participants given various impairments and walked neighborhood around 6th Avenue E. Was a great conversation and productive meeting.

**9b. New Business**

Library Event “Disability Visibility” to be held in April. COD will discuss public events and tabling opportunities at March meeting.

**10. Public Comment**

Mr. Crawford confirmed no public comment was received this month.

**11. Adjourn**

Motion by Commissioner Fochs, 2nd Commissioner Berner  
Meeting adjourned at 4:45pm.

**Next meeting:**

Wednesday, March 6, 2024  
City Hall Room 430