

Commission on Disability Issues
550 Main Street
Hartford, CT

Regular Meeting Minutes, October 7, 2009

PRESENT: Janet Wallens, Chair; Debra St. Germain, Vice-Chair; Cheryl Zeiner, Secretary; and Chris Kelly, Commissioner.;

EXCUSED: Candace Low, Kathy Marseglia, and Linda Schnitzer.

ABSENT: Kathy Pacelle.

Guests: Maria Cerniauskas-Upton and Capt. Anthony Taylor, Hartford Fire Dept.

STAFF: Gil Cortez, Office of Human relations.

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Office of Human relations, 550 Main Street, Hartford, CT.

Gil reported on several updates:

- A resolution was passed recognizing October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month and October 21st Disability Employment Awareness Day with The celebration at City Hall on that date starting at 5:30PM.
- He has contacted high school counselors and special Ed teachers in Hartford to invite Them to the celebration
- Hartford City Council members have been invited with strong support from Councilmen Wench and Cotto
- A news release is being developed
- Invitations have been sent to the state legislators
- Twelve students from Hartford and New Britain have been nominated to receive Citations
- The program is ready for printing

Cheryl volunteered to contact Stan Kosloski of the Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative, Amy Porter, acting Director of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and John Smith of the Bloomfield Commission on Disabilities, to invite them to the celebration. Janet offered to contact Sharon Denson of the West Hartford Commission on Disabilities.

Introductions of the Commissioners present were made. Linda Schnitzer continues to recuperate from her health issues. She told Janet to thank the Commission for the get-well card sent by Debra on behalf of the Commission. It was reported that Kathy Marseglia is recuperating from an automobile accident. Debra suggested that the Commission purchase a box of blank cards with the Commission identification on them so that the Commission could send personal messages to anyone recuperating from illness or any special recognition events. It was agreed that money from the budget should be taken for this. Gil will look into whether the City printing department would be able to provide this.

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The minutes of the meeting of September 2 were reviewed. Chris made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Debra seconded the motion. Motion was carried.

In the absence of Candace, Janet reminded the Commissioners of the Health and Wellness Fair at the Convention Center on 10/17-10/18/09. Candace will be contacted regarding how many people she would like to assist her at the fair.

Commission brochures were picked up by Candace's assistant Denise to be made available at Candace's presentation at the NEAT Marketplace in September and at the fair.

Maria generated a discussion regarding the difficulty in reaching out to the returning veterans who are Hartford residents and who have been disabled in combat. The discussion occurred as a result of the frustration by Commissioners at not being able to reach as many as we would like. She indicated that they are dealing with many issues, and that the Commission may not be perceived as offering information different from that available through veteran's organizations. She also indicated that many college campuses have a POC (Point of Contact) for veteran students.

Cheryl indicated that she has been in contact with Merva Jackson, Director of AFCAMP in an effort to recruit parents of children with disabilities for the Commission. To date we have been unsuccessful but will continue the effort.

At the suggestion of the other Commissioners, Cheryl did not contact Meg Geary-DeLoreto regarding the recruitment of students but will wait until after the celebration on the 21st.

The Commission budget is \$960.

BUILDING CODE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: No Report

TRANSPORTATION: No Report

EDUCATION: No Report

LEGISLATIVE: No Report

Updated brochures will be distributed at the celebration.

Discussion centered on the discrepancies in the language of the Bylaws and Ordinance regarding the existence of the Office of Disability Issues the by Laws indicate that Office exists but there is no mention of its existence in the Ordinance. Janet and Chris will meet on 10/9 to make changes so that the Bylaws are in compliance with the Ordinance. Kathy P and Kathy M will be contacted by email of the meeting so that they can participate as well.

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Captain Taylor reported on the CSI Program through the Fire Department. It is currently not up to complete capacity due to personnel limitations. He indicated that with his promotion to Captain and the appointment of two lieutenants, it should be running at full capacity soon.

Informational meetings with the Council regarding disability issues are on hold until other issues at City Hall are dealt with.

Invitations to other agencies to make presentations at Commission meetings will be discussed at the meeting next month.
Chris will contact David MacDonald to invite him to a Commission meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Cheryl Zeiner, Secretary