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Commission on Disability Issues, City of Hartford

Regular Meeting Minutes, November 4, 2009

PRESENT: Maria Cerniauskas-Upton, Debra St. Germain, Candace Low, Kathy Marseglia, Kathy Pacelle, Cindy Ruiz, sign-language interpreter, Janet Wallans and Cheryl Zeiner.

STAFF: Gil Cortez

ABSENT: Chris Kelly

EXCUSED: Linda Schnitzer

Guest: Capt. Anthony Taylor

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Office of Human Relations at City Hall, 550 Main Street, Hartford, CT.

Introductions were made. Maria's appointment as a Commissioner has been successfully completed. The council will meet on 11/9/09, at which point they will act upon Captain Taylor's appointment.

Janet reported that Linda Schnitzer is in intensive care at John Dempsey Hospital.

The minutes of last months meeting were reviewed. Maria rewrote the paragraph concerning her outreach to the veterans in the area (noted in the revisited minutes distributed). The revised paragraph was written into the minutes. Maria made a motion to accept the minutes with the revision. Debra seconded the motion and it was carried.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

The Veterans Day parade will take place in Hartford on Sunday, 11/8/09. Maria suggested that after the celebration in October, the Commission should show its support for veterans by attending the parade as a group. Further discussion ensued at which point it was decided that two members would hold the Commission banner in front of City Hall. As many Commissioners as possible will also attend.

Debra indicated that she would try to cover up the part of the banner that says: "Pathway to Independence" as she felt it did not appropriately represent the mission of the Commission.

Maria suggested inviting the students that were honored at the celebration in October. Gil indicated that he would get in touch with Frances Sanchez to obtain the names of the students. He will ask Frances to email the names and contact information to Maria.

Janet reported that there will be a seminar at the Hartford Public Library on 11/18/09 starting at 5:30P.M. regarding the various Commissions and Boards in the City of Hartford sponsored by Hartford 2000 and the library. She encouraged everyone to attend.

REPORTS ON PAST EVENTS:

A census kickoff for the 2010 census took place at City Hall in September. Cheryl attended, as did Gil. Those assisting with the census were introduced as well as state and federal representatives. Each group will have representatives from their own ethnic backgrounds to eliminate any suspicions and undercounting due to lack of understanding of the process.

Candace reported that the Health and Wellness Fair was a success as was the seminar at NEAT Marketplace on 9/17/09. Commission brochures were distributed. She indicated that the biggest concern for people was health care. She reported that 45 people attended the program at NEAT that included consumers and providers.

Candace also indicated that Independence Unlimited has been selected to develop a new program called Project Independence that will target individuals 60 and older.

Maria reported that the Disability Awareness Day celebration on 10/20/09 was very successful. She indicated that some of the students had expressed interest in becoming involved in Commission activities.

NEW BUSINESS:

Debra reported on the passing of Dr. Thomas Connors in October. Dr. Connors had been the chairperson of the Commission as well as Director/Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. She made a motion to send a donation to the Connecticut Youth Leadership Project in his name. Gil will explore what needs to be done to set this in motion and Commissioners will be contacted by email for the final vote.

Cheryl volunteered to write something in the guest book from the Commission. Janet will review it and the final entry will be posted in the guest book.

Janet reported that the taxi bill passed. There is one accessible taxi available in New Haven. It is a van similar to a Para-transit van that can be transferred to other uses.

Chris and Janet met to review the bylaws of the Commission. They are not in electronic form but when available, will be distributed electronically to the Commissioners.

Candace indicated that Gary Waterhouse from CACIL/VA might be another resource to reach out to the veterans. Cheryl indicated she had already been in contact with him. Candace also indicated that there is a movement to setup 5 Disability Resource Centers in the state. Independence Unlimited has already received the first ADRC grant.

RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS:

Cheryl reported that each time she goes to P&A for any reason, she talks with Merva regarding the recruitment of members to Commission from AFCAMP. Each time she meets with Merva, at least twice a month, Merva says she is working on it. Cheryl will keep trying, as this is an excellent resource.

There are other ways of reaching former special education students in Hartford so the agenda item in which Cheryl was to contact Meg Geary-Deloreto will be taken off the agenda.

COMMISSION BUDGET:

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the purchase of Commission note cards. One suggestion was to find a printing company owned by a veteran or Hartford resident who has a disability. The conclusion was to have them done in the basement of City Hall that is equipped to do the printing at less cost.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BUILDING CODE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Janet indicated that she had spoken with Matthew Poland, the interim director of the Hartford Public Library. He told her that the Arch Street entrance would stay open.

Candace reported that Barca's Restaurant would be making renovations in the spring.

TRANSPORTATION:

Cheryl reported that there will be a transportation meeting at P&A on 11/19.

EDUCATION:

Chris was going to invite the Chairperson of the Special Education task force to a Commission meeting but was unable to do so.

OLD BUSINESS:

Captain Anthony Taylor reported on the status of the CSI Program of the Hartford Fire Department. He indicated that it would be awhile before it was up to speed. The oral test will be given on 11/24. The number of candidates will go from 42 to 4 to 2. It was decided to keep this item on the agenda as a reminder to report on the progress.

NEW BUSINESS:

A publication from the Dept. of Justice regarding certification of State Building codes was reviewed. Janet will call the Department of Justice to find out what other states are doing or have done.

This decision was made after Candace indicated that the State is redoing the building codes next year. After a discussion, it was felt necessary to find out what other states have done and then take appropriate action.

Gil indicated that Renee Richards would be attending next months meeting to explain the appointment and reappointment of Commissioners.

Cathy M made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Debra seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Cheryl Zeiner, Secretary