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LILLIAN I. RUIZ
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Commission on Disability Issues
Hartford City Hall
550 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

PRESENT: Janet Wallans, chair; Debra St. Germain, Vice-chair; Cheryl Zeiner, Recording Secretary; Commissioners Chris Kelly; Candace Low and Kathy Pacelle.

GUEST: Frances Sanchez, former councilwoman and now representing Parents Opening Doors

STAFF: Gil Cortez, Office of Human Relations.

EXCUSED: Kathy Marseglia and Linda Schnitzer.

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m. In the Conference Room of the Office of Human Relations in Hartford City Hall.

Candace reminded those present of the Wellness Fair that will take place on 10/17-18/09 at the Convention Center. She will be there representing Independence Unlimited but indicated she would welcome any Commissioners to join her and offered to distribute Commission pamphlets. Cheryl expressed interest in joining her during some part of the 2-day event.

Candace also reported that funding for the independent living centers had been kept in the state budget but with reduced funding.

Frances Sanchez, former councilwoman now working for Parents Opening Doors (POD), part of the Office of Protection and Advocacy, brought a proclamation to proclaim October Disability Awareness Month. POD is an advocacy group that trains mostly Spanish parents of children with disabilities to advocate for their children. Written copies of the proclamation were distributed. She explained that POD has joined with DSS to provide training for parents to assist with transition planning for their children.

Ms. Sanchez's main reason for attending the Commission meeting was to obtain the support of the Commission for the proclamation and join together for a big celebration on 10/21/09 to proclaim it Disability Awareness Day.

The celebration will recognize special education students in Hartford who have used their disabilities to improve their quality of life as well as the lives of others with disabilities. The students' chosen will have achieved success in areas above and beyond what was required. Although Hartford students are specifically targeted, there are a couple from New Britain who are also being considered. Candace indicated that she knew of a couple of students she would like to propose for consideration. One of them is a New Britain resident.

Cheryl made a motion to participate with POD with the celebration on 10/21 and accept the proclamation. Kathy P seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

Gil will be approaching some council members for a resolution to announce Disability Awareness month. Chris reviewed the progress of the Walgreens Project. It was slated to give ample opportunities for persons with

disabilities to find employment. He reported that for several reasons it has not been as successful as it was supposed to be and it has not been as welcoming for persons with disabilities as it was reported to be.

Gil reported on the status of Anthony Taylor's application to become a Commissioner. Initially it was felt that his being a city employee might be problematic but this turned out not to be the case. The bigger issue is the fact that he has not been attending meetings. Debra indicated that she would contact him to see if he is still interested in being on the Commission.

Janet reported that Linda Schnitzer underwent successful neurological surgery this week and is recuperating. Debra will get a get-well card to be sent by the Commission members.

The minutes to the 8/09 meeting were reviewed. Debra indicated that her name was misspelled. Correction was made. Chris made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Kathy P and was carried.

Janet will contact Maria Cerniauskas-Upton who attended last months meeting and determine if she is still interested in becoming a Commissioner. Cheryl offered to contact Meg Geary DeLoreto to determine if she was aware of any students who might be interested in becoming a Commissioner. Debra suggested we wait until after the celebration on 10/21 to do any further recruitment to see if we can recruit at that event.

Discussion took place regarding the new bussing criteria for the Hartford School System. More students will be ineligible to take buses this year than last. The consensus was that in many respects it was a good thing, concerns centered on the younger students who may be more at risk as the daylight becomes less and less.

Janet indicated that she had received a request from the New Haven Commission on Disability Issues asking for the support of a law that requires regular renewal of handicapped parking permits. The request had been emailed to Commissioners as acknowledged. There is general support among Commissioners for the law that will hopefully stop the fraud now experienced by having the lifetime permits. Janet will let them know of our support. She will also be inviting them to the celebration on 10/21.

The revised Commission brochure was reviewed. There were two typographical errors on the first fold over. Debra also took issue with the paragraph at the bottom of the first foldout questioning its redundancy. She suggested removing the paragraph and increasing the font size for the entire pamphlet. Chris will meet with Janet tomorrow and make revisions. The revised pamphlet will be emailed to Commissioners for approval. If approved, the revised pamphlet will be given to Gil for printing.

There are no changes regarding the closing of the Arch Street entrance to the Hartford Public Library. It will be removed as an agenda item until such time as there are any changes.

Bus fares and ADA charges will increase but not the 40% originally suggested. Cheryl indicated that she will be joining the transportation task force through Connect ability and will report regular updates on the subject of transportation.

There have been no updates regarding the Commission bylaws. During the meeting tomorrow, Chris and Janet will review the present bylaws and report any suggested changes at next month's meeting.

The subject of inviting other agencies to the Commission meetings was tabled until next month.

The meeting was adjourned at 7PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Cheryl Zeiner, Secretary

