

Houston Commission on Disabilities

November 9th, 2023 — 4:00 - 6:00 PM

Housekeeping items:

- We have ACL interpreters today and Captioning.
- If you are attending in person, please refrain from side conversations, as there are sensitive microphones throughout the room, and we will hear you speaking.
- There is public WiFi in the building (TS-Web, no password)

Kayla Melcho called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM with a quorum present and welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Kayla Melcho to proceed with the roll call.

Roll Call of the Commissioners:

Position 1: Michael Cottingham	Present
Position 2: Ricky Don Harris	Present
Position 3: Ann M. Bacon	Absent
Position 4: Daquan Minor	Absent
Position 5: Sashikala Nisankarao	Present
Position 6: Monique Mason	Present
Position 7: AJ Morton	Present
Position 8: Vacant	Unfilled
Position 9: Mary Sias	Present
Position 10: Meridith Silcox – Chair	Present
Position 11: Lydia Nunez Landry	Present
Position 12: Michaela Cueto	Present
Position 13: Osvaldo Capmany	Absent
Position 14: Alexis Smith	Present
Ex-Officio: Angel Ponce	Present
Ex-Officio: Marshall Watson	Present
Legal: Rebekah Wendt	Absent

MOPD Staff:

Angel Ponce, Kayla Melcho, Rey Herrera, John Serrano, Amanda Boyd

West Gray Multiservice Center Staff:

Nolan Griffin

Review and Approval of October Meeting Minutes

- Motion: Sashi Nisankarao
- Second: Vice Chair Harris

Public Comments

- Russel Klein: 101 mobility
 - o There will be a class at 101 mobility on the 16th - on home modification, project costs, funding resources, Russel can be reached at his email: rklein@101mobility.com
- George: Capstone project
 - o Working on a survey to see how accessible City of Houston is; has been working with MOPD and wants to collaborate with HCOD to send out survey for more responses.

Expert Speaker

- Stephanie Duke, Attorney at Disability Rights Texas
 - o Overview of Legal Landscape for inclusive planning in disasters and emergencies
 - o Programs that provide Disaster Assistance to survivors
 - o Response and recovery measures
 - o Programs that help us prepare
 - o Legal obligations, legal overview, and remedies
 - o VC Harris asked: *Many people assume deaf individuals have someone to back them up/interpreter, how can you remove that barrier to provide to the coordinator who can provide the services?* Response: Getting involved at the community level and making sure you are asking the right people the right questions.
What happened with the Supreme Court supporting a Deaf student in MI? Response: Unsure.
 - o Commissioner Mike Cottingham: *What other Cities are taking approach?* Response: Emergency Management is complicated; you must have support to make it happen. It's getting balance of local level to accommodate but also, we don't forget about things in time. Continue to collaborate and educate.

- Commissioner Mike Cottingham: *Why damages are not being asked for with planning?*
Answer: City must look at planning and monitoring process.
- Tom Munoz: Wants to thank Julian, Angel, and Stephanie for working together and wants to push forward with collaborating.
- VC Harris: *When you speak on mass shooting, I don't see material on how people with disabilities prepare for mass shootings. Texas HR code 121- did not make it on the PowerPoint list*
- Answer: I did not put everything on the slide. If Ricky wants a full list Stephanie will give to Ricky
- VC Harris: *What is the plan for mass shooting/ resources? Will that be in the policy for emergency preparedness?*
- Answer: Mass shootings are a little different, scenarios are different, individually we need to be more aware. You should have a talk with your employer if they have a plan. There's a lot more information coming out for responses to mass shootings.
- Julian Ochoa- new program manager for OEM, shares information on challenges, communication and team work to be prepared.
- Director Angel Ponce: *What has the response been since incident in San Antonio? How can the City of Houston help them become compliant?*
Answer: We are in litigation; lawyers have asked not to tell anything. In the meantime, we had to file to make change and continue to engage.

MOPD Report to the HCOD

- Angel Ponce (Director, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities)
 - Information and Referral Services – 69 cases last month
 - We've reached 345 people including outreach and events.
 - Pedestrian Accessibility Review – for inaccessible sidewalk request call 832-394-0814 or email mopdmail@houstontx.gov
 - July 26th MOPD recognized Mayor for Disability Inclusion
 - MOPD has created a plaque to recognize the individuals at City Hall -Houston Civic Award
 - MOPD newsletter will be coming out soon
 - MOPD was involved in Getting it Right Workshop
 - Chair Silcox and VC Harris joined to talk about HCOD in response to disasters.
 - Angel was keynote speaker for Texas occupational therapist association.

- Planning Dept. will host the world day of remembrance road traffic victims.
- 1st week of January, we will have new Mayor and Council Members
- We will not be meeting in December.

MMSC Report to the HCOD

- Nolan Griffin (Houston Parks and Recreation Department)
 - Finished up Metal and Muscle Expo
 - 450 athletes volunteered
 - MetroLift made sure people rode safely and got where they needed to go
 - UH Adaptive Athletics were great volunteers
 - 4,576 attendees came to George R. Brown this weekend.
 - Rugby tournament and Volleyball tournament happening
 - Return of dance class starts next week.
 - Every night there is a different sport going on.

Committee Updates

- Community Access, Transit, and Housing
 - Commission Landry mentioned Tx Doc survey that's open until Nov. 17th- urging people to take the survey for transportation needs.
 - Commissioner Mason mentioned Bread of life food delivery on the first and third Saturday of each month will deliver supplies and food.
 - HCIL offers housing assistance and resources for the community, they're interested in speaking at the commission.
 - Alexis would like to be a part of Community Access, Transit and Housing Committee
- Emergency Preparedness, Response, and First Responder Training
 - VC Harris – no report
- Employment and Transition to Employment
 - Commissioner Cottingham will continue to share information and resources through email for the advocacy through the TEA takeover.
- Education
- Immigration and Refugee Services

- Planning, Membership, and Community Engagement

ADA Update (Marshall Watson, Administrative Coordinator – ADA, City of Houston, Human Resources Department, Civil Service & EEO Division)

- 54 in-take to city departments (email/phone call)
- 90 requests for 2023 for accommodation requests

Upcoming Event Reminders

Meeting Schedule

-Next meeting will not be open to the Public, December 14th will be orientation for Commissioners- Chair Silcox will be sending out training next week.

Commissioners Comments

Chair Silcox motions to adjourn meeting. Commissioner Cottingham seconds it. **The meeting closes at 5:30 PM.**

Meeting Minutes recorded by Amanda Boyd, amanda.boyd@houstontx.gov

Please email any corrections.