**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
  + 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](mailto:rklein@101mobility.com)
* George: Capstone project
  + 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
  + Overview of Legal Landscape for inclusive planning in disasters and emergencies
  + Programs that provide Disaster Assistance to survivors
  + Response and recovery measures
  + Programs that help us prepare
  + Legal obligations, legal overview, and remedies
  + 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.

* + 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](mailto:amanda.boyd@houstontx.gov)

Please email any corrections.