

## HCOD Meeting Minutes for 3-9-17

The Houston Commission on Disabilities met on Thursday, at the Houston March 9, 2017, at Metropolitan Multi Service Center (MMSC), 1475 West Gray, Houston, Texas 77019

Commissioner Petty, opened the meeting at 4:00pm, and did the Roll Call.

We will have a roll call, but before we do that, I'll just acknowledge what many of you in the room already know, and that is that the commission has experienced a great loss with the death of the very sudden death of commissioner Tony Jones. Disability community has had -- has lost a great leader and a great advocate and we've lost a dear friend.

**Commissioners Present:** Richard Petty, Michael McCulloch, Benigno Aceves, Lesa Jackson(Lazard), Eddie R. Jessie, Shelly Townsend, Karen Cunningham, Roland Bienvenu, Tina Williams, Emmanuel Eziashi, Frankie Sims, Elizabeth Delladera,

**Commissioners Absent:** Maria Palacios, Toby Cole, Asha Dhuka

MOPD Director: Maria Town

MOPD Present: Angel Ponce

Ex Officio: Matt Russell, ADA COORDINATOR, not present

Legal Present: Tiffany Evans

Commissioner Roland Bienvenu motion to approve Meeting Minutes for, February 9, 2017, Commissioner Shelly Townsend, 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion to approve from last Month.

## **Public Comments:**

Audience Member: Dawn Eubank, gave a statement on the loss of her partner, Commissioner Tony Jones. She been watching the emails from everyone, and this is what is keeping her going now. If there is anything she can do, and gave dates of the funeral service and all the information, open mic for Tony's family and friends to have a word of expression. Dawn also look forward to hearing some of the stories. Tony was such a good man, and he cared and he loved this organization and he loved helping the disabled people in Houston, and if there is anything that I can do forward to help continue his mission, I want to be a part of that.

Audience Member: Mrs. Danielle Barks, director of boards and commissions, gave a statement from Mayor Turner, he always sends his greetings, and sends his appreciation with his condolences to Dawn Eubanks. Mayor Turner asked Dawn to stay engaged, keep coming, we have so much that I think is exciting coming forward for this commission.

So, I must extend our appreciation to Lex Frieden and his connection to TIRR Memorial Hermann that agreed, yes, we can help you bring someone in from far and if you're going after someone amazing. And so, it's been months, and I mean months, of look through resumes and making phone calls and then flying someone in from the Obama administration and saying, you're not technically from Houston, but you're close. So, tell us what you could do for us.

Introduction of new MOPD Director, Maria Town, from Washington D.C. to Houston, Texas. Maria gave a 6-page resume and it was very impressive and lots of ideas. Lots of questions on how many people and how much money. The mayor was very excited about her coming. And they have given her several things to work on. She has also written a blog on disability.

Mayor Turner was very excited to start the new year waiting for this announcement to come out and for you all to have a new colleague to work with and collaborate with and so now what we need from you is to teach Maria about Houston and where we are and what we need and before she got here I've been

sending her E-mails. This is yours now, take it and go. And so I am thrilled to announce a woman that from far away was impressive to me and now that she's here she's even more impressive. All the boring stuff at Department of Labor, the Obama administration, but the interesting things like writing a blog about the intersectionality of technology and fashion and disability, every day I learn something new, so I'm thrilled to present to you your new director of the mayor's office of people with disabilities, Maria town.

Maria Town, MOPD Director: Thank you Danielle, for your assistance, lots of late night emails. Working with the government and meeting with mayor turners team. She seen everyone and wanted to worked with us and is very impress with the team. Leaping into Employment, and applaud to Benigno for all his effects, and his team. There was a great path to success. I never seen something like this before. Great workshops for the youth and parents. One of the biggest lessons she learns is to get yelled at it make it good to take care of the community. MOPD is now report directly to the mayor's office and with city hall. Looking forward to all the work we will do together.

I'm delighted to be working with all of you, because I know it will take all of us in this room and those who are not in this room to transform Houston. It can be the most inclusive city in the nation, because that is really my goal and I think it's all of your goals, too. So again, we -- one announcement for all of you is that MOPD used to be within the Department of Neighborhoods. And upon hiring me, the mayor explained that he wanted the MOPD to report directly to him. So now the mayor's office of people with disabilities is fully embedded within the mayor's office. We will have offices within West Gray, right here, and within City Hall. We are growing, and I'm looking forward to all of the work that we will do together to continue growing the disability movement in Houston and to continue growing opportunity force people with disabilities in Houston and becoming a model for other cities nationwide.

Commissioner Petty, thank you and we are looking forward to working with you. She has been holding the information about becoming the new director. He is happy about Maria becoming the director.

## **Presentation:**

Carrin Patman, Chair Metro Board, Mayor Appointee, she feels she is doing good every day. Mayor Turner ask her to be the chair, she come from a long line of elective officials. It came apparent that it was some great people involve that Mayor Turner was going to bring something on. She served for 4years. She knew it was a big job, and she wanted to do it. She felt the best job was for a woman. She feels the mayor is doing a great board together.

They are working on a new transit plan. Regional transit plan, that include the transit plans for the disable community. It also was asking that the community vote on it. They gave a package that has a map of everything. This was supposed to be done on 3/20/25. The downtown university line area. They have open three different rail lines, the thing that have been done is open more lines. There are strong feelings on both lines. With the help of Klent, and us we must work together. A map will be put to the consumer about the map, due to all the changes. By 2025 we will be bigger than New York, and looking to get the business community on board. We would have started with the west line. Out of the 85,0000, we do 82,000. They will go back to the votes in December, also the disable community also, or by the fall on the ballet, and help to design something accessible to the disable community.

Clint Harbert, Vice President of System & Capital Planning: The reason to update the long-range plan, new bus network that had been in operation and what metro intent to build. Regional building in a more collected way, when the original plan was made. Are the priorities still the same, the way people move around? And working with their partners, and projects that metro is doing, working on projects that will move people through the region. The board is looking at what their goals are for the next couple of years. Board workshop was held a couple of years ago, and they created a couple of bullets in their handouts....mobility, connectivity, good investments, and community. The board also making the information available. Metro have a set of goals for the board and for metro. In this package, it shows their goals, outlined. We have over thirty metro trips when we enhance connectivity. What is the cost to operate this for metro?

The next stage will be engaging in reaching out to partners of making sure they are reaching the community and the eliminates of the plan. And allow the board to talk about their plans, and let all the people they have worked with see the plan. They are looking to do a lot of outreach, media, directly into their website, in a effect to see what they can do better. The meetings that they have been doing have gave them more ideas.

Art Jackson, Senior Director Contracted Paratransit and Vanpool Services: Metro lift services for transit riders who can't use the bus line. Look at things they can do for the riders, no matter what transit you go to, look at what they can do to help with the service to the community and share data to the board. There are nine areas to look at time performs if first on the list, needs to be ninety percent less. This still meant they may run late ten percent of the time. These are areas of interest: Curb to curb assistance, was number two. No show policy, is third on the list, customers are being a little more responsible. Then they looked at eligible to the community, then go out the area that do not have a bus, Missouri city, bear creek, different transit center. They are making the areas smaller, that are not required by the ADA.

Commissioner Petty, lets structure our questions commissioners, any comments.

Commissioner Delladera, one that may be variable metro rail, this is how much it cost for each one, this is the expense, what are you going to do with that. Put it in a capital way, this will help if they break it down the cost.

Carrin Patman, they could ask why our transit is costing so much, it is highly subsidies. The highways are highly subsidies also. People will not think the gov. have much to do with it.

Commissioner Bienvenu, stalk holder meetings, when.

Clint, they have a data base of all the groups they have worked with before, and connect with management to help get the word out, on how to work with us and getting the word out. Lots of outreach going out. If you have a meeting you can have metro to come out and get your suggestions. [www.ride metro.org](http://www.ride.metro.org)

Commissioner Petty, a way to improving the passenger riding, sidewalks, safely of the people, wonderful opportunity.

Carrin Patman, Mr. Lambert has created a great layout of these matters.

Commissioner Townsend, her daughter is a rider of metro, appreciate the communication with Metro.

Commissioner Williams, she attended a meeting with the community leaders, so she will ask the questions again. Metro pick you up at the door, then they pick you up for the other location. She came here and three buses passed her by. The feeder program sent someone here at the MMSC to pick her up. They are working on a project for people in the wheel chairs. Another issue is curb cuts to go where you are going. She had to go across a major st. and making a list of the things. She basically discusses everything.

Art Jackson, they are working on customer sensitivity training, to address the disability community. Michael and Tina been activity involve. They are active involve with the community.

Commissioner Petty, look at the rail stops, and by the TIRR, couple of areas/intersection

Carrin Patman, they have asked that they look at the areas the

Tom Lambert is bringing in a safety consultant to look at everything.

Audience Member: Danielle Barts, pensions over a year Mayor Turner has put so much into, our city and firefighters, he has employee groups that have found approval, Dan Flynn 2/13. We do have a meeting for the city of Houston to Austin. We are asking our state legislators to approve. Another deficiency to look at. I am happy to play the role of utility player for Mayor Turner. Clearly, we have hundreds of boards, thousands of appointees and I get lots of phone calls and E-mails about what we are doing next and when something is going to be on the agenda for approval at city council, and for over a year now, I have been repeatedly telling the community that Mayor Turner has put so much time and energy into getting Houston's finances straight. We all know in 2016 he filled 160 million-dollar deficit. And then he immediately moved on to working with his

police, fire, and municipal worker's oncoming up with a solution to our pension crisis that is going to hit our 2017 fiscal budget even harder. I am going to give a high-level overview and then if you have specific questions, that's fine, but in my experience, those people outside of City Hall not talking about pensions every day, just want to understand some basics.

First thing to note is that our city municipal workers, our firefighters and our police officers have pension agreements from a long time ago -- decades ago, but they are controlled at the state level by the legislature. The fact that Mayor Turner and those employee groups and the business community in Houston have found a good compromise and agreed upon solution to paying off this debt that the city is in, we are now waiting for the state legislature meeting currently in Austin to approve what we have put together. And that's easier said than done.

The official word from our government relations team is that the final language of that pension bill will be complete soon. It is house bill 43. For those of that you pay attention at the state -- it's a lot to dig into, but if you care to specifically look it up, it is house bill 43, filed by state representative Dan Flynn. And it was referred to the pensions committee on February 13th. It will be heard in committee on March 20<sup>th</sup>, because what happens, if our state legislators choose not to approve our agreement, the bill falls back on us. Now, the mayor hasn't come out and said what this year's annual deficit is, but if you'll use your imaginations, last year's deficit was \$160 million.

I have many boards going to Austin to speak to representatives and lobby for and against legislation, I am imploring all of them to please speak to your representatives about our pensions because we just had our GLBT advisory board was just down there two nights ago dealing with the bathroom bill and our mayor's advisory board is organizing buses to go on the sanctuary cities bill, but I cannot emphasize enough that if we are that far in debt in one year, the government will absolutely cut services. We will cut more than services. We'll cut employees. We will cut public safety employees. We will lose money in our normally functioning departments and while we are all here thinking of improved services and how to make Houston more inclusive, we will be cutting back on what we are already able to do.

Another good point would be that opponents to our pension bill believe it is more final financially responsible to switch all those employee groups to a defined contribution plan where the city just promises to contribute so much, but, hey, whatever happens to the market, we can't guarantee what the benefit at the end of your tenure with the city and your retirement will be. And Mayor Turner sat with those groups and he heard them say, these government groups are trying to recruit people to be part of our public safety and part of our government services, and they don't always get compensated at the level of the private sector. Mayor Turner sat with them and agreed we are not talking about defined contribution. We understand you want your benefits. We understand that the city has neglected to pay its debt to these groups for many, many years. And he put a lot on the table. There are many pieces to this puzzle, and if you'd like me to go into them, I can, but I just want to emphasize why pensions is an everyone issue.

### **Committee Updates:**

**Legal** – Tiffany Evans, our role as Commissioners, code of ordination, policy direction, developing programs, employment programs, developing programs for housing, directing them to programs. All right, this is important news.

Commissioner Petty: Thank you for bringing it to us. There have been some discussions outside of meetings and to some extent within meetings also about the roles of commissioners. And I've asked Tiffany Evans to spend few minutes with us to cover what's in the ordinances about what our roles as commissioners are, and this is important discussion for us.

Tiffany Evans: You're welcome. Our chairperson said he's asked me to discuss the general role of the Commission and while everything is not completely cut and dry the Code of Ordinances is clear. It's even clear instruction on the intent of the commission.

And its role is primarily to help develop influence on a policy level by advising and making recommendations to the mayor, city council, and department directors as well as to MOPD on issues pertaining to -- on disability issues. And the ordinance itself lists out specific subject matter, but it's not an inclusive list

Some of the subject matter that are in the actual ordinance must do with developing programs related to employment opportunities for people with disabilities, developing programs to address accessibility issues, developing community-based programs to enhance the quality of life for Houstonians who have disabilities, a lot of these are already addressed. A some of them I haven't seen addressed too much in the commission, but developing programs to address the issues pertaining to alcoholism and drug abuse, developing programs to take full advantage of federal, state and local funding opportunities, housing and developing programs to ensure accessible communications for people with disabilities.

And you'll note that HCOD does not do much or was not intended to be too much on a one on one constituent problem solving or advocacy level. It's more of a policy level, like thing think macro. I think the one on one might fall more into MOPD for you or sometimes directing individuals to programs that would work on that level. When you think HCOD, think policy, programs, and that's really the intent of HCOD per the Code of Ordinances. While everything may mote be obvious like different circumstances may not be obvious where it falls, you can just ask and we'll work it out and figure out the best way to approach the issue or the question.

Commissioner Petty: Does anyone have questions about that now?

Tiffany Evans: I think you guys received binders with the ordinance.

Commissioner Jackson: Yes, Commissioner Jackson, I was going to say we do have the HCOD roles and responsibilities of commissioners. We do have that and we did receive the binders, but I guess my question is going to be, did the new commissioners receive the binders that had all the information in it because it was also like -- like the two tests that they had to take when you become a new commissioner. I wanted to know did they have the opportunity, to do that because we were still like during their completing different stuff.

Tiffany Evans: I don't know. I'm usually not hands on with what the new commissioners get, but my understanding is everybody receives the binder with all the information in it.

Commissioner Petty: I'm part of the new class and I trust that we did, but that I haven't compared it with what other commissioners had previously.

Commissioner Eziashi: I have not received the binder.

Angel Ponce: This is Angel Ponce. In the past, we've provided a binder. I kind of tried to do it electronically so we can save some trees, but I have some binders. I'll be happy to printout that for you. I think what I did is I sent out that information through E-mail. Emmanuel, I don't have an E-mail for you, so if you like I'll print out a copy for you and provide that to you. And any of you -- any of the other commission there's would like a paper copy, I will do that for you or I can send that electronically to you once again

Commissioner Petty: So here is what will be important is when we are approached by someone who has an issue, and I know that certainly been my interest to want to try to help wherever I can, the appropriate thing for to us do is to reach out to Maria, who will work with Angel and with Amanda to address individual constituent needs with our role confining our work to policy issues, work that we do and the recommendations that we make in our meetings and through the work of our committees. So that will be just important for all of us to keep in mind. And I know that Maria will be happy to work with us and work with the constituents to help us address those needs.

Commissioner Jackson: I have a question on that. I'm the chair with the housing and tenancy committee, so I do have several people who called me or E-mailed me. They may need a telephone number to the housing authority or maybe some bun that they can contact or I did help someone, he Meaded to write up a letter because he stayed on a second-floor level where his restroom was and he needed to write a letter do housing. I just helped him with the wording of it and then housing talked directly to him. I didn't get involved with his personal business or anything like that, but I do have a lot of people that call me about different issues and then I direct them on where to go and who to talk to.

Commissioner Petty: You know, I would suggest that -- I would suggest though reaching out to Maria and to Angel and asking for their help in that. I think giving out a phone number is appropriate and probably easier than sending someone somewhere else to give them a phone number that you have, but that might be the level of our involvement in something like that is what I would suggest.

Commissioner Jackson: Let me go further to say they may even ask for a number for shelter. This is what I would do even if I wasn't a commissioner, so is there a problem with that?

MS. EVANS: I don't think there is an issue with providing information like a phone No. to the correct resource or to MOPD. I would be wary of going as far as to help them write an actual letter though. Then you might be getting into a gray area. I would probably try to keep it to directing them to the proper resource.

Commissioner Jackson: Okay, thank you.

Maria Town: One note that I will add is that if you are engaged in (inaudible) folks, refer them to MOPD so we can better track the kinds of issues that community members are having. As you know, Amanda and Angel do a wonderful job tracking the kinds of phone calls and requests that we receive, and so the more data we can have on these the better and more informed we can be when having discussions with the housing authority or public works for exam. am. Thank you.

### **COH Policy Evaluation & Improvement – No Update**

**Marketing**, Frankie Sims – Chair, meet about Facebook posting, the important things for us is respectable, the form Frankie gave to me. T-shirts are they available, and business cards

**Emergency Preparedness**, Shelly Townsend – Chair, expo 2/27 discuss what we will be doing, we had a table, what will be the disability panel. Next meeting March 20, 2017

**HARP** – Eddie Jesse, Chair – No Update Richard it is time to look at new people, younger people.

**Employment** – Benigno Aceves, Chair, recap on the work shop, workshop for youth and their parents 44, 28 volunteers, 13 speakers, donations and nonprofit gave gift cards, and one leisure sail. Volunteers were there, planning, implementing, the first one done, make this a annual event, and partner with the city of Houston. Very excited about the workshop, thank you Maria Town, Angel, and the Commissioners. Good evening, everyone. So basically, I just want to recap again on the workshop that happened this past Saturday. I do have a couple of numbers, and so I just wanted to fill out a couple of things. Over all, again, it was the youth -- the workshop for youth with disabilities and their parents that took place this past Saturday. We had a total as far as youth and parents, 44. That came out. We had 28 volunteers that came out, Baylor College of Medicine represented Volunteers, serve, the Houston Commission on Disabilities and CAAG. Which is communication accessibility group. We had 13 speakers. The speakers represented HCC.

They represented workforce development specialists, from the City of Houston, they also represented the U.S. EEOC, the Workforce Solutions and southwest ADA center, again, communication accessibility group, as well as the HCC vast academy. So as far as donations, also we had companies -- and nonprofits, that showed their appreciation and support by donating gift cards to give away to the families as well as I want to give big shout out to the sailing angels foundation who donated one free leisure sail for one lucky family who won out of the coast of Kemah. We have that as well.

Memorial Hermann/TIRR, also donated which was very, very awesome especially to the volunteers who were there by 7:15 a.m. on a Saturday morning. I know we all were thankful for that.

**Disability-Related Issues in Public Education** - Karen Cunningham, Chair, April 8, 9 to 1 is the conference hosted by Alvin Pearland Santa Fe ISD at Manville high school. April 20th, friends, and families of Galveston with special needs will be a special education advocacy presentation at 6:30 at Dickinson high school. And then April 29th, 10 to noon, Down Syndrome association in spring and the wad loans, presentation and then for all commissioners, we have the Abilities Expo which is free. It is a very large mobility expo but it's now in all sorts of areas

where individuals from infants to seniors who have disabilities of any kind, it will be August 4th through the 6th and again I'll make sure we have a commissioner -- mayor's office of people with disabilities table which we will need to have all of you lovely people man and I don't know who will be in charge of that, but I know you're going to do a great job. That set up will be Thursday August 3rd.

Update on the U.S. Department of Education coming to visit us -- again, since Texas Education Agencies place in the Texas ten years ago, at the 8.5 percent that students with disabilities in public education we were capped at 8.5 percent. Nationally, that number is 13 percent of the population. The U.S. Department of Education after hearing us in December was doing audits and on-site visits at three districts in the Houston area, Aldine ISD, Fort Bend ISD and Houston ISD and unfortunately, Houston ISD is one of the great easiest offenders as their percentage is 7.25 percent of identifying students with special needs and giving them special education services.

**Parks & Accessibility Metro/Transportation/Parking-** Commissioner Williams, Chair, all right, for parks and accessibility, I attended a meeting and I got to see the Emancipation Park, beautiful, wonderful. It is so accessible. I only found one flaw.

The METRO transportation awe. I attended a meeting at METRO and I was basically the same presentation that we saw today. And I addressed all the issues that have come to me and pretty much -- it wasn't communities people there -- Angel was there and Cornelius Booker was there but we addressed it like one on one with the eligibility issues that people were having, but we addressed all the issues that we had and so basically it was a working lunch and it seems to be working out fine. And therefore, Michael McCullough and myself we went out to space center Houston. They took us on a tour because there were accessibility issues there. They took us on a tour on the tram and we got to view the facilities and all of that, and then they took us into the board room and we talked about the issues that were brought up and as far as the mobility issues, there are doors that are heavy. They are going to change to the doors where you can push a button or they're going to open, but they were very willing to hear, you know,

what the needs were and what the differences were for people with mobility issues.

They also want to become more active and come out to HCOD with some of the revisions and Michael can tell what the changes will be for the visually impaired.

**Housing & Tenancy Issues** – Commissioner Jackson (Lazard), Chair, we had our first meeting on February 20. Attendees was Angel/MOPD, Commissioner Jackson and Williams, 5 new members to the Committee(non-Commissioners). We introduce our Mission this year, selected membership duties/leadership roles, briefly spoke on Accessible Housing for the Disable Community, Fair Housing/Reasonable Accommodations. We also had one attendee, Catherine Akison who needed help with a couple of housing issues, which she received assistance from Angel. We will follow up with Catherine at the next meeting, which is schedule for 4/17/2017.

We also have a Presentation scheduled for April 13, 2017, with Daniel Bustamante, Executive Director, with the Greater Houston Fair Housing Center, that will be held at our HCOD meeting. He is doing a presentation on Fair and accessible housing for people with disabilities, he may also cover some important laws and reasonable accommodations.

**Police Response to Persons with Disability** - Emmanuel Arizona Eziashi, Chair, No Updates

**MDAYA** - No Updates

**Metropolitan MSC Update** - Chuck French, I have a written report that I'm going to hand out because I think they are fixing to break the wall down. I did want to say congratulations to Ms. Wheelchair Texas, 2017, she was here but she just left.

And I want to second everything Danielle said. I hope you listened and -- I got excited when she said something about trim the fat, but then I realized she was talking about the pension reform.

Any way I'm going to hand this out and if you have any other questions, please let me know.

**ADA Update** - Matt Russell, COH ADA Coordinator, No Updates

**MOPD Update** - Angel Ponce, a report from Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities.

Angel Ponce: Hi, everybody. Just for the sake of time, I'm going to try to be as quickly as possible. In the month of February, we assisted people with sidewalk repairs, nine people to be exact. I wanted to share with you some examples of what we done. I went out to a senior citizen in District K to address sidewalks at the front of her home. The citizen, she is elderly person and she has difficulty accessing the sidewalks due to the sidewalks being shifted or sunk down over a period. Now, I wanted to share with you all that in the past we did mention this made me feel a little bad that in our prior administration, she said she called a few years ago, and that she reported the same thing. However, nobody really addressed the issue. And she looked very disappointed, very sad and it made me feel really, bad.

I assured the citizen that the mayor's office of people with disabilities was going to do something about this. She looked at me and said, okay, yes, sure. I'll hear from you again, right? I made it important so that the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to address this issue. A few weeks later, Landon Taylor, assistant director with the Department of Neighborhoods went out to visit her. And a week after that, an engineer with the public works and engineering came out and looked at the sidewalks for her. And the sidewalk is on schedule to be repaired for her. We are happy about that.

A retired City of Houston employee requested for the city to come and address the issue of curb cuts in his neighborhood. He uses a motorized chair due to a disability he suffered after retirement and he states that he wants to go to the

convenience store, but he's forced on to the streets and there are no speed bumps in his neighborhood. So, him and his wife are very concerned about his safety. And so, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities has recommended for the City of Houston to come out and install curb cuts in his neighborhood so that he has access to the convenience store.

Our very own Tina Williams has been on my back for quite some time regarding a sidewalk located on Belfort and MLK between -- on Belfort between MLK and Sharondale 100 feet or less from a pharmacy, from a CVS if I'm correct. This location has been approved by MOPD and public works and engineering should be visiting that site soon. You happy now?

Home repairs, four people. Home modifications, six individuals. Apartment assistance, that could be anything from rent to locating an apartment for them, 11 Transportation, one person. The South Texas College of Law and the Houston volunteer lawyers on legal issues, ten individuals. Disabled parking enforcement, five, employment, six; child and adult chair, two people, social security information and information about benefits four people, questions about the Americans with Disabilities Act, four people, and in regards to tax assistance and ASL interpreting, I'm very happy to mention that Nightingale interpreting, which is in our audience at this moment, and the Baker Ripley, formerly neighborhood centers, have teamed up so that we can provide our citizens that are low income and that are deaf and hard of hearing with free ASL interpreters so that they are able to prepare their income tax returns this year. Thank you

Commissioner Petty: Thank you. Director town, anything to add for you? From you?

Maria Town: Yes. I just want to take a moment to acknowledge Angel and Amanda. They have really worked tirelessly to keep things moving in the absence of a director over the past really six or seven months. I know that all of you have enjoyed working with them and so again I just want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to them and for all their service to the disability community. Angel and Amanda, thank you so much for all you've done.

### **Commissioners Comments:**

Commissioner Jackson: Okay. We were planning to take up a donation for Commissioner Tony Jones, but all donations will go to the church. We can discuss it after the meeting. Thank you

Commissioner Petty: That's a donation for -- in memory of Commissioner Jones. They're going to be putting together his funeral and an opportunity also to contribute to a building fund. I know help would be appreciated.

Other comments from commissioners? Tony is not here to have the last word, guys.

We will miss him.

**Adjourn** at 6p.m. Commissioner Petty Motion to end the meeting, Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

Commissioner Lesa Jackson (Lazard), Secretary