**Houston Commission on Disabilities**

**February 8, 2024 4:00 - 6:00 PM**

**Housekeeping items:**

* Provide instruction on ASL/Captioning and camera expectations for guests. Please make sure to introduce yourself before speaking for the ASL interpreters.
* If a commissioner is attending virtually, please keep your video and microphones off, but then turn your camera on for voting.
* 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. Reminders about turning on/off microphones.
* Individuals are encouraged to bring their computers to access the translating services.

Vice Chair Harris asked Stephanie Haechten 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 Absent

Position 8: Amie Jean Present (late)

Position 9: Mary Sias Present

Position 10: Meridith Silcox – Chair Absent

Position 11: Lydia Nunez Landry Present

Position 12: Michaela Cueto Present

Position 13: Osvaldo Capmany Present

Position 14: Alexis Smith Absent

Ex-Officio: Angel Ponce Present

Ex-Officio: Marshall Watson Present

Legal: Rebekah Wendt Absent

Vice Chair Harris called the meeting to order at 4:07 PM with a quorum present and welcomed attendees to the meeting.

**MOPD Staff:**

Angel Ponce, Stephanie Haechten, Kayla Cochrane, Rey Herrera, Hilary Pircher, Sissel Carlsen

**Metropolitan Multiservice Center Staff:**

Nolan Griffin

**Review and Approval of January Meeting Minutes**

* Motion: Commissioner Nisankarao
* Second: Commissioner Sias

**Public Comments**

* Ariel Ehrman: Public health and safety
	+ Shared concerns about the lack of mask mandates in the city and it’s negative impact on the disability community
* Julia Rodriguez: Marketing director at Belmont Community Players Theatre
	+ Invitation to an upcoming ASL inclusive performance
* Brian Dang: UT Health Student
	+ Needs assessments for disability preparedness
* Jacque Gonzolas: Main Street 2.0 Project

**Expert Speaker**

* Deputy Director Thom Munoz (Office of Emergency Management)
* Julian Ochoa (Emergency Preparedness)
	+ Office of Emergency Management serves as the primary agency responsible for planning and responding to the DAFN population during a disaster.
	+ Disability, Access, and functional needs (DAFN) – implements the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR)
		- Building a support system through STEAR registration
		- About 2900 Houstonians have registered through STEAR
	+ **Approach -** Communication, Maintaining Health, Independence, Transportation, and Safety
	+ Utilizing intersectionality to ensure that all aspects and considerations are considered when evacuating people.
	+ **Priorities:** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Social Vulnerability, Access and functional needs, climate change, integrated lines of effort, new FEMA Guidance
	+ **Outreach and engagement plan:** Preparedness, Response, Recovery, Mitigation, training and exercises, response operations, short and long-term recovery
	+ **Contact info:** 713-884-4470, email: OEM@houstontx.gov, julian.ochoa@houstontx.gov
	+ Motion for representation on the DAFN Workgroup by Commissioner Cottingham
		- Seconded by Commissioner Jean

**MOPD Report to the HCOD**

* Angel Ponce (Director, Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities)
	+ MOPD continuing same operations with new administration.
	+ International Day of Acceptance on January 20th – Partnered with TIRR for event.
	+ Attended event at United Spine Association in January
	+ Information and Referral Services – Month of January - 49 constituents were serviced.
		- Hosted 1 disability etiquette training.
	+ Pedestrian Accessibility Review – Received and reviewed 7 applications in January 224
	+ 2,011 ft of sidewalks and curbs were built in January.
	+ Reelabilites Festival:
		- UpAbilities Feb. 15th from 7-9pm
		- ReelFilm Nights- Feb. 18,19, 21
		- ReelEducation week of Feb. 12th
		- ReelMusic Feb. 22nd 7-9pm
		- ReelArt Crawl Feb. 25th 10:30am-1:30pm
		- ReelWorkplace Feb. 28th 11:30am-1:30pm
	+ National Disability Institute – Hosting DEIA at Metropolitan Multi-Service Center on February 22nd
	+ Tax Preparedness Clinic at MMSC – 3 more remaining, Feb. 20th, March 5th, March 19th

**MMSC Report to the HCOD**

* Nolan Griffin (Facilities Manager, MMSC)
* TABATA Tuesday is having a contest – if you attend all Tuesday classes in February, you will be entered into a drawing for a prize.
* Prep Lil Rockets have a tournament in Schulenburg and Division 1 has a tournament at UTA coming up.
* Powerlifting with Chuck has returned – Wednesday’s from 2:30 – 3:30 PM

**Committee Updates**

* Updates
* Education & Employment
	+ Working to schedule future meetings
* Community Access, Transition, & Housing
	+ Met last Thursday Feb. 1st, preparing presentation on accessible voting created by Commissioner Nunez-Landry, researching shelter accessibility.
* Emergency Preparedness and First Responder Training
	+ Unable to meet prior to the meeting.

**ADA Update**

* Marshall Watson, Administrative Coordinator – ADA, City of Houston, Human Resources Department, Civil Service & EEO Division
	+ Q4: 17 constituents reached out for support.
	+ Repair Complaints – multi-family housing issues
	+ 2 Accommodations
	+ Q4: 67 total calls and email contacts
		- 32 for ADA requests
		- 13 of the 32 were approved, 9 were denied, 5 are still in progress, 5 were withdrawn, brought total requests for COH to 122. In 2022, we had 110.

**Commission Orientation**

* March 14th orientation

**Meeting Schedule**

* April 11th, 2024
* May 9th, 2024
* June 13th, 2024

**Commissioners Comments**

* Commissioner Mason shared information about upcoming HAVIN event and event at Lighthouse Houston

Vice Chair Harris motions to adjourn meeting. Commissioner Jean second. Meeting closes at 5:49 PM.

Meeting Minutes recorded by Kayla Cochrane, kayla.cochrane@houstontx.gov.

Please email any corrections.