

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: Meredith 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
 - o 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
 - o Invitation to an upcoming ASL inclusive performance
- Brian Dang: UT Health Student
 - o 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)
 - o Office of Emergency Management serves as the primary agency responsible for planning and responding to the DAFN population during a disaster.
 - o Disability, Access, and functional needs (DAFN) – implements the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR)
 - o Building a support system through STEAR registration
 - o About 2900 Houstonians have registered through STEAR
 - o **Approach** - Communication, Maintaining Health, Independence, Transportation, and Safety
 - o Utilizing intersectionality to ensure that all aspects and considerations are considered when evacuating people.
 - o **Priorities:** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Social Vulnerability, Access and functional needs, climate change, integrated lines of effort, new FEMA Guidance
 - o **Outreach and engagement plan:** Preparedness, Response, Recovery, Mitigation, training and exercises, response operations, short and long-term recovery
 - o **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
 - o Working to schedule future meetings
- Community Access, Transition, & Housing
 - o Met last Thursday Feb. 1st, preparing presentation on accessible voting created by Commissioner Nunez-Landry, researching shelter accessibility.
- Emergency Preparedness and First Responder Training
 - o Unable to meet prior to the meeting.

ADA Update

- Marshall Watson, Administrative Coordinator – ADA, City of Houston, Human Resources Department, Civil Service & EEO Division
 - o Q4: 17 constituents reached out for support.
 - o Repair Complaints – multi-family housing issues
 - o 2 Accommodations
 - o 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.