

## HCOD Meeting Minutes for 4-13-2017

The Houston Commission on Disabilities met on Thursday, April 13, 2017, at the Houston Metropolitan Multi Service Center (MMSC), 1475 West Gray, Houston, Texas 77019

Roll Call was done by Eddie R. Jessie, Vice Chair, at 4:00pm.

Commissioner Roland Bienvenu motion to approve Meeting Minutes for March 9, 2017, Commissioner Emmanuel Eziashi, 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion to approve from last Month.

**Commissioners Present:** Eddie R. Jessie, Roland Bienvenu, Lesa Jackson(Lazard), Shelly Townsend, Frankie Sims, Tina Williams, Michael McCulloch, Toby Cole, Emmanuel Eziashi, Asha Dhuka,

**Commissioners Absent:** Richard Petty, Benigno Aceves, Karen Cunningham, Elizabeth Delladera, Maria Palacios,

MOPD Director: Maria Town

MOPD Present: Angel Ponce

Ex Officio: Matt Russell, ADA COORDINATOR, absent

Legal Present: Tiffany Evans, present

### **Public Comments:**

Audience Member: Ricky Harris, deaf and he work with accessibility group. Large deaf community of American. Positive things were talk about, and a huge impact

on the community, and accessibility. Good job Houston. Not sure which committee deal with tourists and hospitality. Thank you

Commissioner Williams, I am the chair over Metro Lift/Parks and Transportation, you can address me about any questions or issues.

Audience Member: Mrs. Palmer, thank you for the organization(HCOD). If there is anything I can do to help, willing to assist. Mrs. Palmer has joined the Housing and Tenancy Issues Committee.

### **Presentation:**

Daniel Bustamante, with the Greater Houston Fair Housing & Discrimination. One of our strongest partners is the Houston Housing with Disabilities. Most people who suffer are family with children and disable people. Most of the organization is dealing with fair housing and they can see the outcome. 49 years ago, MLK was killed, it leads to a civil rights act. It was his work and leadership and passion that compel, President Johnson to move forward.

Request for reasonable accommodation, we will be here for questions after the presentation.

70 percent complies come from people with disabilities. Lots of testing and trying to get more investigation booming in the city of Houston. Encourage us to get involve with landlord and tenant issue. There is some difference between landlord and tenant.

Federal fair housing act protect against all areas of housing. About anything covered by the fair housing act. They have tried to get the bill passed, but was not passed. We have a lot of work to do in Harris county with fair housing acts. 7 cases in all, list passed out during the meeting. Protective cases passed in 1988, when Regan was in office. The move of housing is strong and more involve. There is a lot of barrels to people with disability. Some people don't exercise their rights.

Fair Housing is the right of all person have to right to live where they can afford it, and you have the right to that.

If it is privately property, landlords are only to allow the accommodations on a case by case basis. If the person does not respond in a reason time, by the housing apartment management. Under reasonable housing act, it should have a reasonable accommodation. (check attachment on line that was sent out to all the Commissioners).

Accommodations must be done in a reasonable time. It can be made in writing as a request by that individual as a disable citizen. The request must be done by a disable person. The landlords for told to listen to the request of the accommodation, and be careful about asking too many questions. Examples: serves animals, handicap parking/size, allow changes for paying rent...it comes on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>, it is ok to ask for reason accommodation.

Rejected request, if it would cause an unreasonable financial to the property, gab bars, structural changes that are not covered by 504. Resident will have to pay some things as far as some wear and tear on unit.

Fair Housing Acts: Removal of barrels, wheel chairs walk ways. Accessible walking area, laundry room, physical area for exercise, wheel chairs, motorized systems, reinforce bathrooms' pieces of materials, kitchens used by the disable community. Trying hard to work with many groups, HCIL, and others. Part of fair housing is testing, documenting, send someone out to see how the person is being treated, and can prove discrimination.

Commissioner Eziashi, thank you and I have already had some deaf barrels, and because of low income. This will not help with the deaf because of low income, and blind is not qualified, and deaf is very frustrated. One person wanted somewhere closer to his home. Emmanuel encourage to keep fighting for us.

Daniel Bustamante, lets people know what is going on in the community, that helps to change the source.

Commissioner Williams, if a family member get into a property, that person family member doesn't have disability, can they as for accessible property. Someone has a disable apartment is required for the person to move if they are not disable and don't need that unit. What will happen.

Daniel Bustamante, there may be a case to case basis, for modifications, also for vehicles. We would have to look at the unit to check case by cases.

Commissioner Dhuka, is there a limit for a landlord to change the request if someone is no longer disable.

Daniel Bustamante, everything is done in writing. The landlord would have to answer to a judge is not done at a reasonable time, within a year to file a lawsuit. Activist have help the great city of Houston.

Commissioner Williams, have had a stove that caught on fire, and she told the apartment complex. Someone said to call the fire department, but they were not going to change the stove. The Apartment Manager sent a stove that she could not use. She was charged for the stove.

Daniel Bustamante, you did the right thing by letting them know about a life threatening thing, and they retaliated on you about it. I would refer you to a government agency. If you exercise your rights.

**MOPD Updates:** Maria Townes, she hopes the new Jay room is working out. This is her report 1.4 MOPD has been reporting rental assistance, finding housing. public housing, legal assistances, employment resources. Since last meeting to address metro, public works have approved 8 areas to get those autophile signals. Maria, 64 ideas to assistance with metro. Certain key ideas. Metro has stress it is a safety issues, and metro look at it. Thanks to Michael McCulloch, for his assistance. We can work together with allowing, school board at the end of April and beginning of May. School board reached out at the mayor at the community event. Talking with students at Houston community college.

Commissioner Williams, would like to be on that list.

Audience Member: Sammy Roberts is it a new letter or Facebook.  
Maria, this will come out on a press release.

### **Committee Updates:**

**Strategic Planning**, Commissioner Cole – working on Committees to work on, looking at survey, focus groups. We want to work with other groups, issues with the deaf organizations, metro, emergency preparedness, employment.  
Commissioner Jackson(Lazard) would like to join the Committee research.

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

**Marketing**, Frankie Sims – Chair, No Update

**Emergency Preparedness**, Shelly Townsend – Chair, June 3, 2017, Saturday, Extreme Weather Ready Expo, check hours to work 2 hours. Updates on what we are going to be doing, location Exhibit Hall A.

**HARP – Eddie Jesse, Chair, excited to know position one will be filled, and accepting applications for the HCOD Commission.**

**Employment-No Update**

**Public Education- No Update**

**Parks & Accessibility Metro/Transportation/Parking** - Tina Williams, chair, one thing we are working on is making sure community centers in our area is accessible. Thanks Maria Townsend for updating contact list.

**Housing & Tenancy Issues- Lesa Jackson(Lazard), chair**, next meeting schedule for 4/17, 10;00am, at Metropolitan Multi Services Center, 1475 West Gray.

**Police Response to Persons with Disability**, id program how to make it stronger, and talking to Ricky Harris, and we could work together as a team with deaf and hearing. 5 different organizations, police issues, trying to be patience.

**MDAYA** - No Updates

**Metropolitan MSC Update: Chuck**, what we going to do at the MMSC meeting, we will post a board in Jay room of things that need to be done, open work orders and the status of the work orders. Also, fixing suggestion box. March and April big month for sport teams. 1<sup>st</sup> weekend teams won, 11 out of 16, very successful. Summer camp starts in June, and award Astro tickets for junior camps. Looking forward to attending. Wheel chair rugby raked number 5.

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

### **Commissioners Comments:**

Commissioner Townsend, April 22, picnic in the George bush park 1656 Westheimer park.

Maria Townes, update on bill, pension has passed on, was sent in email. Hp43 bill have not been schedule but will be schedule. Bill hb100 city regulations on Uber, remove regulations on t and c companies. All of the great work on accessibilities, ride share obligations, April 19, schedule for a bill.

There is a HRr26bill require anyone who have experience discriminating and the vendor would have 120 days, public facilities it removes disable people under title 3, to delay, privately owned business, if it is passed through the federal gov. just on the national level, business don't need any legislative updates. Emmanuel not surprise, and we been working on this since the 60thys and we need to work on this and they need to pass it.

Commissioner McCulloch, spoke on the need for assistance with the Disability Pride Community, next meeting will be on Wednesday, notice will be sent out. Event is scheduled for September 30, 2017.

Commissioner Williams, event at Greater St. Matthews, flyer invite. They are offering us a Booth for the HCOD, on April 29, 9:00am – 1:00pm.

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

Commissioner Lesa Jackson (Lazard), Secretary