

## HCOD Meeting Minutes for 11/9/17

The Houston Commission on Disabilities met on Thursday, October 12, at the Houston Metropolitan Multi Service Center (MMSC), 1475 West Gray, Houston, Texas 77019.

Commissioner chair Richard Petty, opening remarks- Welcome of New Commissioners and Thank you to Commissioner Eddie Jessie and all the Commissioners who term will be ending.

Names of New Commissioners:

Commissioners Leaving: Eddie R. Jessie, Karen Cunningham,

Roll Call: Commissioner Eddie R. Jessie,

Public Comments done by Eddie R. Jessie, Vice chair.

Commissioner Roland Bienvenu motion to approve Meeting Minutes for October 12, 2017, Commissioner Eddie R. Jessie 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from last Month.

Commission Present: Ashu Dhuka, Michael McCulloch, Tina Williams, Roland Bienvenu, Toby Cole, Eddie R. Jessie, Richard Petty, Lesa Jackson, Shelley Townsend, Benigno Aceves, Maria Palacios

Commission Absent: Frankie Sims, Emmanuel Eziashi

MOPD, Division Manager: Maria Town

MOPD Present: Angel Ponce/Amanda

Ex Officio: Matt Russell, ADA COORDINATOR, not present

Legal Present: Tiffany

Public Comments:

Audition: Jana Vanda-Leave, the needs are still need. The first symphony performance it was wonderful. Smith still played beautiful music, and went to several centers after Harvey, Mozart conquest performance. Disappointed with FEMA, and applying for relief was difficult for people. FEMA is so over powered, and form a community to perform, for conversation.

Presentation:

Maria Town, introduce the speaker, we been working with Sean Jackson, Supervising Attorney with Disability Rights Texas. Mr. Jackson works with the authority, serve as a law judge, and closely with disability acts of law, free administration.

Sean Jackson, gave a presentation about Disability Rights Texas (DRTX) and our services. P&A Organizations, Congress passed laws to protect people with disabilities from discrimination that limits their full and equal participation in society.

Disability Rights Texas is the leg protection and Advocacy agency for people with disabilities in Texas. They are funded by state grants(TAJF) and statutory federal grants. The Mission is to advocate for, protect, and advance the legal, human, and service right of people with disabilities. They also advocate for laws and public policies that protect the rights of disable citizens.

There is issue Teams setup, Community Integration, and Healthcare: HEAT (Housing, Employment, Accessibility, Transportation), IRCL (Institutional Rights and Civil Liberties), Education, Cap/PABSS (Client Assistance Program/Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security), HAVA (Help America Vote Act), and Foster Care.

Hurricane Harvey Issues: Persons with disabilities are facing many issues after, Hurricane Harvey. These are some issues; housing (destroyed, uninhabitable), access to medical services, affected schools/relocation, accessible transportation, architectural accessibility issues are some that was face during Harvey.

The guidelines for assistance are considered by the merits of a person's case, and other factors to determine if they can help, also by the extent to which the case may benefit others with disabilities. You must call, Disability Rights Texas, the Intake Line at 1-800-252-9108, and fill out a form on line at drtx.org. Other helpful numbers; Disaster Legal Services (State Bar of Texas) 1-800-504-7030, and Lone Star Legal Aid, 1-800733-8394.

Questions:

Commissioner Cole, how many lawyers do you have?

Mr. Jackson, we have about 100 employees, and 6 officers. We service Lubbock, Dallas, El Paso, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston.

Commissioner Williams, Is it free or by income.

Mr. Jackson, no income, no charge. When having a conversation with Houston Housing Authority, they work with Lone Star Legal Aid.

Commissioner Jackson-Lazard, do they handle Living Wells.

Mr. Jackson, they work with Medical Power of Authority.

Commissioner Palacios, do they work with Legal Guardianship.

Mr. Jackson, they support decision making and reversals.

Commissioner Townsend, a child with Special Education.

Mr. Jackson, a child with technical assistance needs. We have a booklet with all the information inside also.

Auditions: Ricky Harris, do you have communication assets for all disabilities. Some may be afraid of losing their merit, due to not having someone who understand their need.

Mr. Jackson, we do have a team on call to assist with communication.

Audition: Ricky Harris, how would you decide if on merit who is eligible. If they are limited in language barriers. Do DRTX cover the jail system. The family of family protection, are recognizing third party cases.

Mr. Jackson, the intake is required to know English and Spanish. They deal with the city jail, Harris County. Third party is something they can look at.

Commissioner Petty, persons who are deaf, what accommodations do you make to try to fully understand their issues. Is there training for the staff?

Mr. Jackson, we will find someone to interpret for them, it is a budget set up for this, and we currently have two to three interpreters.

Commissioner Petty, thank you for the presentation.

MOPD Director's Report to the HCOD: Maria Town, we would like to commend Eddie Jessie for his services to the Houston Commission on Disabilities, and with the HARP Committee, we have new Commissioners in place as of today. New Members of the Houston Commission on Disabilities: Position 11 Eileen Edmonds, Alternate 2 Erica Fletcher, Position 9 Sara Freeman Smith, Alternate 4 Khafilat Oyindamola Adesokan, Alternate 3 Mark Potts, Alternate 1 George Powers. Welcome to all the new Commissioners, by MOPD and all current HCOD Commissioners.

Updates from MOPD: Introduction of new MOPD staff, Jess Faerman. Jess worked at the Jewish Family Services as the Event and Social Media Coordinator.

She also coordinated the events with the Reel Abilities Art and Film Festival for a couple of years.

FEMA (Texas) is currently working on the appeals and making decisions on the amount of assistance. FEMA will be extended until November 30, 2017.

The Houston Astro's Celebration was a successful and attended by Mayor Turner. He also visited the Light House for the Blind.

For the Month of October MOPD supported outreach events, Mental Health events. Highlight of the Month was equipment was shipped to Puerto Rico, wheel chairs. Shout out to Commissioner Aceves for organizing the White Cane Safety event.

The HCOD received the Lex Frieden Employment Award. It was held in Austin, Texas and attended by Maria Town, Commissioner Townsend, and Commissioner Williams.

MOPD: Angel Pounce, Senior Customer Services Representative, gave the list of service to the disability community, as follows:

<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>NO.</b>
ADA	4
Adaptive Sports	4
Apartment Assistance	5
Child/Adult Care	0
City/Public Information	6
Durable Medical Equipment	200 +
Employment	6
Healthcare	10
Home Modifications	6
Home Repairs	10
Houston Volunteer Lawyers	10
PAR Approved	9
PAR Request	6
PAR Reviewed	13
PAR Denied	2
Policy Guidance	6
Parking Enforcement	2
Presentations	1300
Rental Assistance	4
Social Security/Benefits	5
South Texas College of Law	5
Tenant/Housing	9
Transportation	7
Treatment Centers	0

Utility Assistance	4
Visual Fire Alarms	3
Visual/Blind Services	5
Waste Management	1

Angel and Amanda attended HCC Spring Branch for an event, with 50 in attendance. Angel also attended the Annual Night Out, there was 400 in attendance, and Upright Middle School.

### **Committee Updates:**

Disability-Related Issues in Public Education- Karen Cunningham, chair),  
No Updates

Disability Unity and Pride Celebration - (Michael McCullough, chair),  
Michael, thanked Commissioner Petty. He had an emergency on that day of the DUPC event. It was the support of the Committee, who spend a lot of time, very successful. The parade will be intergraded for next year. Commissioner Palacios has accepted the position to be the chair for the DUPC Committee.

Emergency Preparedness (Shelly Townsend, chair), we received the award LEX. No Updates

Employment (Benigno Aceves, chair), we have been busy. This is the second year doing the event. It will be held on January 27, 2017, on Saturday. At the HCC campus, it also is the second year collaborating with MOPD, and other organizations and business. It is not just for the youth, but also for their parents. We can't start too early, with the youth. Parents will have worships along with the youth. The Committee is working hard to create good workshops. We want them to come and take advantage of some of the programs. Something the parent and youth can walk away with. The flyer will go out tomorrow, you must registrant for the event. Connect with Commissioner Jackson-Lazard to volunteer. Always looking for more partnership.

HARP (Eddie Jessie, chair), Richard your hard work has paid off. I just want to welcome the new Commissioners. Thank you to the old Commissioners.

Housing & Tenancy Issues (Lesa Jackson Lazard, chair), no updates. Thank you, Eddie Jessie, for all your dedication and support with the HCOD. Welcome to the new Commissioners, we are happy to serve with you, looking forward to what you will bring to the Committees.

Marketing (Frankie Sims, chair), No Update

Metro/Transportation/Parking & Parks & Accessibility (Tina Williams, chair), we are waiting on a date to view some of the community centers. There was a meeting held with Erica Griffin on 11/1, on transportation issues with communication with the drivers. We discuss some ways, not to change her independents. Other things are being meet, her needs. In two weeks we will meet again with her, the major thing is with metro and yellow cab to make the drivers aware of her need, or them not know who it is.

Police Response to Persons with Disabilities (Emmanuel Arizona Eziashi, chair)

Strategic Planning (Toby Cole, chair), thank you Commissioner Petty. We are going to be working with Harvey and the Commission in whole on recovery.

Metropolitan MSC Update (Chuck French / Hannah Walker), metal and muscle started in 2004, next one in Dec 8, 9, all adapted sports, flag football, whole range of sports on the region. Clinics and to Rugby Teams. Hotel rooms booked, free event. We had donations and sponsors.

Three teams were sponsored by TIER, adult teams, and three sponsors by the city. Fun to be able to offer those 3 different levels. Headed to Tucson, and they are in the gym tonight, if anyone would like to stop by.

ADA Update (Matt Russell, COH ADA Coordinator), No Updates

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner McCulloch, announce that there is skiing for the blind located in California.

Commissioner Jackson-Lazard, recited an original poem, that was also recited at the Disability Unity Pride Celebration entitled, “Your Time to Shine”, and cake was served at the end of the meeting in recognition of the Lex Frieden Employment Award.

Commissioner Aceves, thank you to Commissioner Townsend, for starting the program to meet the needs for youth and adults with Blindness and Autism, at the Health Sciences Museum.

The motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Cole, and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Bienvenu.

The HCOD meeting adjourned at 6:15.

Minutes submitted by Lesa Jackson-Lazard ([lesajackosn2010@yahoo.com](mailto:lesajackosn2010@yahoo.com)) 281-690-9912