

The Houston Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes for March 11, 2021

The Houston Commission on Disabilities met on Thursday, March 11, 2021. Social distancing guidance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the Commission to meet online through Zoom.

Chair Aguillard called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm with a quorum present and welcomed attendees to the meeting. Next, Chair Aguillard asked Commissioner Edmonds to proceed with the roll call.

Roll call of the Commissioners:

Present	Position 1: Ismael Garcia Cantu
Present	Position 2: Ricky Don Harris
Present	Position 3: Ann M. Bacon
Present	Position 4: Daquan Minor
Present	Position 5: Raul A. Gallegos
Present	Position 6: Richard Petty - Chair Emeritus
Absent	Position 7: Tina Williams
Present	Position 8: Kimberly Aguillard - Chair
Present	Position 9: Sara Freeman Smith
Present	Position 10: Meridith Silcox
Present	Position 11: Eileen Edmonds
Present	Position 12: Mark Potts
Unfilled	Alternate 1: Vacant
Unfilled	Alternate 2: Vacant
Unfilled	Alternate 3: Vacant
Unfilled	Alternate 4: Vacant
Absent	Ex-Officio: Gabriel Cazares, Director, MOPD
Present	Human Resources: Marshall Watson, Administrator Coordinator – ADA, City of Houston, Human Resources Department, Civil Service & EEO Division
Present	Legal: Rebekah Wendt
Absent	Legal Alternate: Tyrone Lin

MOPD Staff:

Present	Amanda Boyd
Present	Alex Chau
Present	Luis Moreno
Present	Angel Ponce-Trevizo

Multi Service Center Staff:

Absent	Charles French
Present	Hannah Walker

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Ann Bacon motioned for the approval of the January 14, 2021 HCOD minutes; Commissioner Edmonds seconded the motion. Commissioner Ann Bacon motioned for the approval of the February 11, 2021 HCOD minutes; Commissioner Edmonds seconded the motion. The January and February HCOD minutes were approved by HCOD.

Public Comments

Angel Ponce directed the public to request to make a public comment by inputting it into the chat feature box. A member of our team will read your question. Thank you.

ReelAbilities Houston's Andie Palagi thanked everyone for their support with this year's ReelAbilities Houston Arts and Film Festival.

Speakers for Today - Hannah Walker's Presentation about Tabata Tuesday

Tabata started 2 ½ years ago @ the MMSC. It's based on HIT training, timed interval training; 4 minutes of work, 10 minutes of rest. Anyone can do it. Pre-pandemic, up to 60 people participated in Tabata on Tuesdays in the gym for a 60-minute workout.

In the age of COVID-19 Tabata Tuesday has gone mobile. Thanks to Metrolift and organizations like the ADA Southwest providing parking lot space, they are taking it into the community 6 or 7 locations each week. It's a 30 minute workout on the road using medicine balls, battle ropes, different band exercises, etc. Hannah shared a video with participants' testimonials – [Houston MMSC West Gray Participant Testimonials - Mobile Fitness Program during COVID-19. - YouTube](#)

<https://youtu.be/R5uxIK1aE6Y>.

Anyone interested can contact Hannah Walker at hannah.walker@houstontx.gov.

Questions were asked by the public and answered.

MOPD Director's and Staff Report

Angle Ponce thanked the HCOD for their support throughout the winter storm.

- Reel Abilities finished its run last week with UP Abilities. MOPD staff spoke with schools through Reel Education. Thousands of people across Houston participated in this film and art series.
- MOPD is working through 52 applications request for modifications to sidewalk standards and 3 requests for accessibility review and sidewalk repairs.
- MOPD staff have focused their attention on providing food and water for residents with disabilities who cannot leave their homes during the severe winter weather. MOPD and its partners provided 21,050 hot meals and 12,500 face masks.
- Planning another food and water distribution for the third ward the end of this month. And working on a drive-through vaccination for people with disabilities.
- April's HCOD will focus on emergency preparedness.

Question: to prevent issues for individuals on ventilators and other devices during power outages?

Commissioner Petty – MOPD is looking into the activation of the State of Texas Emergency and Evacuation Response list (STEER).

Metropolitan Multiservice Center – (Chuck French/Hannah Walker)

- March 22 Softball and soccer programs
- MMSC still closed
- New grass and soil for the baseball field
- Traveling Tabata partnership with Metrolift has been able to reach participants where they live and get them moving with safety protocols. Travelled over 5 – 600 miles to well over 100 participants. If anyone is interested in West Gray's Traveling Tabata contact hannah.walker@houstontx.gov. People can find out more about the program here - <https://youtu.be/R5uxIK1aE6Y>.

Chair Aguiard thanked the MMSC Staff for their reports.

Committee Updates

Community and Transit Access (Tina Williams, Chair)

No update.

Public Awareness and Community Awareness (Mark Potts, Annie Bacon)

No update.

Education (Eileen Edmonds, Chair)

Commissioner Edmonds shared information and resources provided through Partners Resource Network (PRN) at no cost for families of students with disabilities receiving educational services. PRN provides individual assistance by phone, workshops for parents and professionals throughout the state, and resources, printed publication, and online materials on relevant topics.

Here is a link from a recent webinar they conducted related to the agenda of the state legislature as it pertains to services for individuals with disabilities - https://prntexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/210303.PRN-webinar_87th-Legislative-Session-Update_DRTx-FINAL.pdf

Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery (Ricky Harris, Chair)

The EPRR Committee is unsettled by the recent multi-layered disaster, along with COVID. Oxygen dependency and internet access were the top priority in the disability community. Power outages fatally effected people with disabilities inside and outside of Houston. The power outage left the deaf and hard of hearing with a huge disadvantage who could not use video phones or video usage services.

Organizations from outside the state Crowdsourc and a few other organizations helped people with disabilities. Then Baker Ripley Area Agency on Aging eventually connected people with services. A lot of Office of Emergency Management contact information was out of date.

The National Hurricane Center has moved the start of hurricane season up by two weeks, from May 15 to June 1.

EPRR recommends the local OEM fill the AFN Specialist for Harris County. Reliable tools, contacts, available resources so that an emergency occurs a plan can get implemented. Websites to be fully accessible. Disability community partners to work together.

Commissioner Gallegos recommended including generalized email addresses for organizations when updating the OEM -provided contact list.

Employment and Transition to Employment (Vacant)

No update.

Housing and Tenancy (Vacant)

No update.

Law Enforcement and First Responder Response to the Disability Community (Vacant)

No update.

Immigrants and Refugees with Disabilities (Ismael Cantu Garcia, Chair)

1,000 families were provided \$500 for emergencies A wheelchair user currently faces a problem with a caregiver not providing adequate care. There is no water in his apartment. Angel Ponce will connect with Commissioner Cantu to provide assistance.

Strategic Planning and Commission Membership (Richard Petty and Sara Freeman-Smith, Co-Chairs)

No update.

ADA Update - (Marshall Watson Administrative Coordinator – ADA, City of Houston, Human Resources Department, Civil Service & EEO Division)

No update.

Commissioners' Comments

Chair Aguillard thanked MOPD for their excellent work being a consistent source of information and advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities. She shared that one year ago was the marker for when COVID became real and a lot of things shut down. Take care of yourself and your mental health. Outreach programs like Tabata can support those efforts. Prioritize ourselves so we can be there for others.

The HCOD meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.
Motion to adjourn: Commissioner Daquan Minor
Seconded: Commissioner Freeman Smith

Minutes submitted by Eileen Edmonds (eileen@tuts.com, 281.797.3796).

Please submit any corrections to Eileen Edmonds.