

**Houston Commission on Disabilities**  
**January 24, 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.
- There is public WiFi in the building (TS-Web, no password)

Chair Meridith Silcox asked Stephanie 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 |
| Position 9: Mary Sias                | Present |
| Position 10: Meridith Silcox – Chair | Present |
| 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  |

Chair Meridith Silcox called the meeting to order at **4:06 PM** with a quorum present and welcomed attendees to the meeting.

**MOPD Staff:**

Angel Ponce, Stephanie Haechten, Sissel Carlsen, Kayla Melcho, Rey Herrera, Amanda Boyd, Hilary Pircher

**Metropolitan Multiservice Center Staff:**

Hannah Walker, Nolan Griffin

**Review and Approval of September Meeting Minutes**

- Motion: Commissioner Amie Jean
- Second: Commissioner Michael Cottingham

**Public Comments**

None

**Expert Speaker**

- Audrey Omenson (Owner, The Therapy Collective)
- Navigating Advocacy Work Well
  - o Intersectional Identities
  - o Nonviolent communication
  - o Building Rapport and Connection
  - o Contact: Audrey Omenson, MA, LPC-S
    - [Audrey@therapycollectivetx.com](mailto:Audrey@therapycollectivetx.com)
    - [www.therapycollectivetx.com](http://www.therapycollectivetx.com)

**MOPD Report to the HCOD**

- Angel Ponce (Director, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities)
  - o MOPD continuing same operations with new administration
  - o Information and Referral Services – Month of November & December 61 constituents were serviced
    - o Hosted 2 disability etiquette trainings
  - o Pedestrian Accessibility Review – Received and reviewed 29 applications
  - o Served over 90 turkeys and supplies in November for MMSC constituents
  - o Houston Civic Award in December- plaque was presented to former Mayor Sylvester Turner
  - o Reelabilites Festival –Abby (Reelabilites Festival Coordinator)
    - o Opening Reception Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> from 1-4pm

- UpAbilities Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> from 7-9pm
- ReelFilm Nights- Feb. 18,19,21
- ReelEducation week of Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>
- ReelMusic Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup> 7-9pm
- ReelArt Crawl Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> 10:30am-1:30pm
- ReelWorkplace Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> 11:30am-1:30pm
- Working with Office of Emergency Management
- MOPD is working on improving relationships with partners and bridging the gap

### **MMSC Report to the HCOD**

- Nolan (Facilities Manager, MMSC)
  - Holiday party with participants
  - Wheelchair basketball team had a tournament in Dec.
  - PROGRAMS are back
  - MMSC will be a warming center for weather
  - Metro will be running if MMSC is a warming center

### **Committee Updates**

- Updates
  - Education & Employment
    - SSDI & Education access resources
    - Family to Family Network conference in two weeks
  - Community Access, Transition, & Housing
    - Committee met last Thursday regarding access and getting out to the community about what they do.
    - Plans to get committee together for townhall
  - Emergency Preparedness and First Responder Training
    - Encourage everyone to sign up for Alert Houston and Ready Harris with upcoming weather
- Immigration committee is on pause – Chair Silcox wants to bring back committee next month and possible commissioners on two committees
  - March will be April orientations
  - Houston Center for Independent living offering Housing series 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month

### **ADA Update**

- Marshall Watson, Administrative Coordinator – ADA, City of Houston, Human Resources Department, Civil Service & EEO Division
  - o 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report:

### **Commission Orientation**

- March 18<sup>th</sup> orientation

### **Meeting Schedule**

- March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### **Commissioners Comments**

Chair Silcox motions to adjourn meeting. Commissioner Sashi and Commissioner Amie seconds it. Meeting closes at 5:51 PM.

Meeting Minutes recorded by Amanda Boyd, amanda.boyd@houstontx.gov.

Please email any corrections.