

## The Houston Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes for February 11, 2016

The Houston Commission on Disabilities met on Thursday, February 11, 2016, at the Houston Metropolitan Multi-Service Center (MMSC), 1475 West Gray, Houston, Texas 77019.

Chairman, Cornelius Booker, opened the meeting at 4:02 PM.

Commissioners Present: Louis Maher, Maria Palacios, Benigno Aceves, Cornelius Booker, Tina Williams, Roland Bienvenu, Monte Osburn, Eddie Jessie, Shelley Townsend, Frankie Sims, Lesa Jackson Lazard, Karen Cunningham, and Elizabeth (Beth) Delledera.

Commissioners Absent: Tony Jones, Brandon Bowie, and Charles LaDay.

Ex Officio Present: Jay Stiteley, Division Manager, MOPD

Ex Officio Absent: Matt Russell, ADA COORDINATOR

Legal Present: Tiffany Evans

### Announcements

#### Meeting for New Commissioners

For new HCOD commissioners, there will be a meeting on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and on Robert's Rules of Order. The meeting will take place on Saturday, February 13, 2016, at 10 AM, at the MMSC. Commissioner Booker will send out a reminder e-mail on this meeting.

#### HCOD Sponsorship of three ReelAbilities Film Festival Movies

The HCOD was asked to sponsor three short ReelAbilities Film Festival movies occurring on Tuesday, February 16, 2016, from 7 PM to 9 PM. There will be a discussion after the movies.

Sponsoring movies means that the HCOD would volunteer for that evening, and would invite other individuals to these movies. The movies will be at the Edwards Greenway Plaza theater.

The movie theater address is:

Edwards Theater Grand Palace Stadium 24,  
3839 Wesleyan St,  
Houston, TX 77027

The movies are: Coaching Colburn, Hear This! and One Year Later, followed by a post screening discussion featuring the "One Year Later" film star & Director: Rosa Post and Nick Chambers.

Advanced registration is required to reserve your seat.

Tickets are available online at ([www.ReelAbilitiesHouston.org](http://www.ReelAbilitiesHouston.org)) or call 832.786.0361.

### Minutes

The HCOD minutes for January 14, 2016, were approved without alterations.

### Public Comments

Ms. Debra Nowinski urged each disabled individual to get ready for emergencies, especially hurricanes. Electricity dependent people should leave town when a hurricane approaches. Ms. Nowinski said that the HCOD commissioners should spread this message throughout the disabled community.

Ms. Nowinski said that the hurricane workshop would occur on Saturday May 21, 2016 at the George R. Brown convention center between 10 AM and 3 PM, with registration opening at 9 AM.

## Committee Updates

### Policy Evaluation and Improvement – Louis Maher, Chair

The HCOD Policy Evaluation and Improvement committee met on Tuesday, January 26, 2016, to review the HCOD committee structure.

Commissioner Maher made the following report. He suggested that the number of committees be reduced due to insufficient staffing. He said that the criterion for keeping an HCOD committee would be the interest of the HCOD individuals who would staff the committee, and the importance of the committee focus. The committee suggested that the Employment and Parks & Accessibility committees be dropped.

The committee made the following further suggestions:

1. The Policy committee should ask the public for help on determining which city policies needed to be improved to help the disabled.
2. The Mayor's Disability Advocate of the Year Award (MDAYA) committee should Combine the Disability Awareness Kickoff and White Cane Safety Day awards. It was hoped that all the award applications could be completed by the end of July.
3. The Houston Application Review Panel (HARP) should start its consideration of new HCOD commissioners now, and deliver its results to the city council by May to accommodate the August HCOD membership change.
4. The HCOD should participate in activities as an identifiable group. The hurricane workshop and school backpack project are two such events.
5. It was suggested that committees could combine their efforts to work on events. An example would be for the Emergency Preparedness and Marketing committees to work on the May Hurricane preparation workshop.
6. Often HCOD members do not have much knowledge concerning the topic of their committees. In such cases, the committee should attempt to recruit knowledgeable others who could guide the committee.

After some discussion, it was decided to keep the Employment committee and combine the Parks & Accessibility committee with the Metro/Transportation/Parking committee.

Mr. Stiteley pointed out that the Mayor's Disability Advocate of the Year Awards (MDAYA) committee did not have jurisdiction over the White Cane Safety Day awards. Mr. Stiteley said he would look into reducing the number of awards. He will give a follow-up report on the awards issue at the March HCOD meeting.

### Emergency Preparedness – Monte Osburn, Chair

Ms. Debra Nowinski will chair this committee. Commissioner Osburn will remain on this committee.

Ms. Evans said that non-HCOD individuals could chair HCOD committees.

### Employment – Benigno Aceve, Chair

Commissioners Booker, Lazard, and Palacios want to join this committee.

### Metro/Transportation/Parking – Tina Williams, Chair

The Parks & Accessibility committee will be merged into this committee. The new committee's name will be Metro/Transportation/Parking/Recreation

Commissioner Williams spoke on the MetroLift fare changes that went into effect on February 1, 2016. Monthly passes can still be used to go for trips in the basic MetroLift service area. Trips in the extended MetroLift area cost two MetroLift tickets. The monthly pass does not count for any part of the extended service area fare. She said that there is great confusion on the part of the MetroLift employees and passengers on where the extended areas are. She said that the monthly pass should account for at least one of the two tickets that trips to extended areas cost.

Commissioners Booker and Palacios want to join this committee.

Commissioner Williams asked that people interested in this committee should e-mail her at (mstinaxwill@yahoo.com).

Housing & Tenancy Issues Involving Individuals with Disabilities – Lesa Jackson Lazard, Chair

Commissioner Lazard is trying to help a recent stroke victim to relocate to help his disability.

Commissioner Booker will send Commissioner Lazard a list of possible Housing committee members.

Mayor's Disability Advocate of the Year Award (MDAYA) – Tony Jones, Chair

Mr. Stiteley will look into reducing the number of awards given by this committee.

Marketing – Frankie Sims, Chair

The City of Houston's public posting guidelines had been sent to the HCOD. The Marketing committee must get city approval before they post any Facebook items.

Commissioner Sims spoke about the ReelAbilities film festival. See the information in the announcements section above.

HARP (Houston Application Review Panel) – Eddie Jessie, Chair

The committee is waiting for the 2016 HCOD application forms to be approved.

Police Response to Persons with Disabilities – Charles LaDay, Chair

No updates.

K-12 Disability Related Issues in Public Schools – Karen Cunningham, Chair

Commissioner Cunningham said that Texas does not designate many children as being disabled as it should.

Commissioner Cunningham announced several special education events.

Metropolitan MSC Update – Chuck French

Mr. French summarized the MMSC repair schedule. It is hoped that all construction will be completed by July 1, 2016.

The MMSC offices should be opened by March 7 2016. Early voting starts on February 16, 2016.

A representative of the Houston Parks Department will brief the HCOD on new construction at the MARCH HCOD meeting.

ADA Update - Matt Russell, COH ADA Coordinator

No updates.

MOPD Update – Jay Stiteley, Division Manager

MR. Stiteley reported on the following items:

1. Those attending ReeAbility events need to reserve their tickets in advance. See the announcement section above.
2. From 9 AM to noon, On March 9, 2016, there will be a workshop, at the MMSC, entitled "From Disability to Productivity". This workshop is for professionals in the employment field interested in the "Ticket to Work" program.
3. At the May 21 hurricane workshop, there will be an area dedicated to practical demonstrations such as how to change a chainsaw blade.
4. On February 25, the republican presidential candidates will have a debate at the University of Houston.
5. The Houston Center for Independent Living (HCIL) in cooperation with Texas Disability Project (TDP) have confirmed the day/date/time for the: REV UP Texas Rally and Press Event, WHEN: Thursday, February 25, 2016, WHERE: TIRR, 1333 Moursund (Rear Parking Lot), HOUSTON, TEXAS 77030, TIME: 10:30 A.M. (ARRIVAL) TO 1:00 P.M. The purpose of the event is to promote the growing influence of the DISABILITY VOTE NATIONWIDE and in Texas. If there are any questions, please call 512-431-4085, or e-mail ([revuptexasvote@gmail.com](mailto:revuptexasvote@gmail.com)).

#### Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Palacios promoted the REV UP Texas Rally, and the April 23, 2016, "Annual Women with Disabilities Empowerment Fair" at the MMSC.

Commissioner Townsend provided the following announcement:

Monday, February 29, 2016

Rare Disease Day is a world-wide celebration to raise awareness amongst the general public and decision-makers about rare diseases and their impact on patients' lives.

This event will be at the Health Museum, 1515 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004

Booths with members of over 25 rare disease organizations will be there.

Time: 4:00-8:00PM.

5:30-6:30pm Reception

For more information, please contact

Susan Fernbach at [geneticevenings@bcm.edu](mailto:geneticevenings@bcm.edu)

or see SPECIAL EVENTS on the website:

[www.bcm.edu/eveninggenetics](http://www.bcm.edu/eveninggenetics)

The HCOD meeting adjourned at 5:51 PM.

Minutes submitted by Louis Maher ([ljmaher@swbell.net](mailto:ljmaher@swbell.net), 713-444-7838).

Please submit any corrections to Louis Maher.