

HCOD Meeting Minutes for 1-12-17

The Houston Commission on Disabilities met on Thursday, at the Houston January 12, 2017. Metropolitan Multi Service Center (MMSC), 1475 West Gray, Houston, Texas 77019

Commissioner Petty, opened the meeting at 4:00pm, and did the Roll Call.

*Official Name Change from Commissioner Lesa Jackson Lazard to Commissioner Lesa Jackson. Proof of documentation available for Mayor's office, MOPD and HCOD.

Commissioner Roland motion to approve Meeting Minutes for December 8, 2016, Commissioner Lesa Jackson, 2nd the motion to approve from last Month.

Commissioners Present: Tony Jones, Lesa Jackson, Frankie Sims, Richard Petty, Tina Williams, Roland Bienvenu, Eddie R. Jessie, Benigno Aceves, Karen Mayer Cunningham, Asha Dhuka, Shelley A. Townsend, Emmanuel Arizona Eziashi, Michael McCulloch, Maria Palacios

Commissioners Absent: Toby A. Cole, Elizabeth Delladera

MOPD Present, Landon Taylor from the Mayor's office
Ex Officio: Matt Russell, ADA COORDINATOR, not present
Legal Present: Tiffany Evans

Commissioner Petty Announcement, Mayor's Office Director: I have one announcement that I'd like to make. There is not a better place on the agenda, so let me go ahead and do that with the permission of the commissioners. He made a request on if they had select someone to fill the position of Director of the Mayor's office. Ms. Bart assured him that this a personal priority for our mayor, and he has been personal involved

Commissioner Jones, I have a comment about that, if we the commission could be involved when they have two to three candidates. Commissioner Petty will ask. in the decision process. We will be informed as soon as they have selective someone.

Public Comments: Candy Sexton Ruiz, they found a place 13,000 square feet, and it has 2.45 acres. They are working with Linda Johnson who set up the NTI school. Ms. Johnson also helped with the filing for everything officially needed by the State of Texas. Upcoming events: Community Garage Sale on January 22, to raise some funds. Super Bowl Party, February 5, and a small poker session for deaf community members. Checkout Facebook page; ghacdhouston.

Commissioner Petty, Congratulations, Ms. Sexton. Thank you.

Janice Warren, a native Houstonian, currently an art educator and advocate and a lifelong creative person. She has a child living with autism. Ms. Warren want to introduce her program entitled, "Aesthetically Artistic". It is a visual arts program for children living with disabilities, physical, mental, emotional, developmental issues. My daughter was diagnosed four years ago, and became nonverbal, there was nothing that I could do or therapies.

I introduce my program I April of this year, this will be the first, "You don't know Our Story". An opportunity for children with disabilities to highlight their works, it will be a fundraiser as well. This event is being sponsored by Meca, Multicultural Education Counseling, through the arts. I am here to spread the word, our website is "Aesthetically Artistic", we are also on Facebook and Instagram. Presently calling on all students to share their story.

Commissioner Petty, Thank you. Will you tell us the dates and the location again? When you have, printed material can you forward that to us, and we can post it on our Facebook page.

Presentation: Touch-Base: Center for the Deafblind, Ashley Davis, CTRS Program Coordinator, for the deafblind. Mr. Con, worked at the Baylor College of medicine, working for nonprofit for Honduras and Houston. His daughter was at Texas Children, she did very well. Today she is 23 years old and she's deafblind. The deaf blind family group, this was a place for her to do life skills. Then they work through some other things. They can serve 1- 6 people, 3-4 students currently come there.

Ashley Davis, program coordinator, Graduate for the Texas college. She worked there also, learning about deaf and blindness. Her purpose is to work with the students, 10 years old and older. They are getting out to the community and doing more. She met Mr. Perry as governor, at the deafblind multi-handicap association of Texas passed the deafblind Medicaid waiver as a family group.

At Touch-base, they get to use different symbols, others work with brail. They are meeting the needs, and want to reach out to help others. They are asking if HCOD Commissioners could help in any way.

Commissioner Emmanuel, we have one deaf and blind person here in Houston, if you want I can contact them for you.

Mr. Con spoke a little about the history of the deaf and blindness, in the pass. It has expanded throughout the years. Some have little needs, but some have more needs. He now knows the forum.

Commissioner Emmanuel will contact them and have the deaf and blind individual to contact you.

Commissioner Jackson, we need your physical address, contact@touchbasecenter.org, address: 54446 Carew St., Houston, TX 77096

Mr. Con, mention that they will need Volunteers, none of the student's services animals, this is a need for the organization

Commissioner Emmanuel will visit your center, Ashley thank you

Commissioner McCullough what type of equipment/technology do you have.

Mr. Con his daughter does not use brail now.

Commissioner Petty, there is nice opportunity for local support with brail.

Mr. Con, they are a 503c now, they will add this to their next meeting.

Commissioner Emmanuel, we have someone who can be involve with that.

Commissioner Petty, please stay in touch and reach out. He would also say to the HCOD Commissioners, please think about what we can do to help.

Strategic Planning for HCOD – Commissioner Petty mention that strategic planning is being worked on by Commissioner Cole, but not present at meeting. He said he reached out to one other city, that has a strong disability commission. The city of Chicago, Karen Tamley, awaiting to hear from her.

Commissioner Emmanuel, He received a letter/email about Director E., asking someone to step down.

Commissioner Petty can you share the letter with the Commissioners. None of the other Commissioners received a letter/email concerning this issue.

Commissioner Emmanuel, will bring the letter/email to the next meeting.

Commissioner Jackson, we made the decision to eliminate some of the committees, so we could focus on the ones that we are working with.

Committee Updates

COH Policy Evaluation & Improvement - No Chair

Commissioner Jackson, we made the decision to eliminate some of the committees, so we could focus on the ones that we are working with. This was one of the Committees the HCOD eliminated, due to Matt Russell who gives us the updates on the City of Houston information. If we have any decisions to make with policies, then it will be a decision by all Commissioners voting.

Commissioner Petty, was there action taken to remove this Committee.

Commissioner Jackson, yes, it was voted on and approved.

Commissioner Petty, can you help us with the Minutes that showed that was voted on and approved.

Commissioner Jackson, ok, I will look that up from the pass minutes.

Commissioner Petty, thank you, that is good background information.

Marketing, Frankie Sims – Chair, we have a Facebook page again. Thank you, Chairman Petty for your support, Melissa Ragsdale, director of social media and Citizens Net for the Mayor's office of communications. She is now an administrator of our page and will oversee it for the city.

Next phone conference meeting on Friday January 29. She will email everyone on the committee.

Emergency Preparedness – Chair, no updates

HARP - Eddie Jessie, Chair, no update

Employment - Benigno Aceves, Chair, we had a meeting, it has been revised, thank you to those who came to the meeting. We are hosting, flyer being finalized, March 4, 9am – 12pm, workshop new name “Leaping into Employee”. Located at Houston Community College, 5601 W. Loop South, Houston, Texas 77081.

The purpose is to come and allow youth with disable to experience workshops on empowerment, keeping a child’s benefits while allowing them to work, soft skills, tips on interviewing, disclosure, and issues facing parents with youth who have disabilities, ages 16 – 21. Flyers will be sent out when completed.

Collaborating with the City of Houston. Two tact’s: one for the students and the parents. meeting with the summer program representative, on how to increase people with disabilities, disclosure. What the workshops will be for the students and the parents. We will utilize the classrooms. They will need at least 30 Volunteers. Commissioner Asha is heading up the volunteers for event.

Commissioner Jones, asked if anyone know of employment ideas.

Commissioner Benigno, any type of partnership and job coaches.

Commissioner Petty, thank you for what you are doing. Great Volunteer opportunity.

Commissioner Jones going to the Workforce Board on this upcoming event, DARS. He can make mention of it.

Disability-Related Issues in Public Education - Karen Cunningham, Chair, update did go Dec. 12, Congress person Shelia Jackson Lee, denied....400 families showed up at the Region IV service center. You could sign up to speak. Over 100 people signed up to speak. They only got to about 25, and said the meeting was over. It was from 6 – 8 people jumped to their feet and began to exclaim their disdain for that decision.

They are not taking any responsibility at this point. It was a very good meeting and we were thankful that tea was there and the federal government was there to listen to the parent concerns.

Upcoming events – Jan 26th....Autism Moms of the Woodlands, Special Education Advocacy 630pm Blue Mug Cafe

Feb 4th.....Verbal Behavioral Clinic 5000 Caroline St Houston. ...10 to noon Special Education Advocacy

Jan 26th....Special Needs Resource Fair Community of Faith. ..Cypress Texas, 630 to 800p.

Parks & Accessibility - Tina Williams, Chair, we have not been doing much. We will start back going to the other centers and parks to see if it is accessible.

Housing & Tenancy Issues - Lesa Jackson, Chair, I am presently working with Ms. Christie, who is a disable Cancer patient. She received a vehicle from her descended husband, but the apartment Manager told her she could only have one vehicle parked on the property.

Ms. Christie also wanted to know why she was forced into signing a paper that if a disable person need her apartment, she would have to move. I did speak to a Representative at the Houston Housing Authority and she stated she did not have to sign anything, but she will need to contact her case manager concerning this issue.

Networking: Royce E. Sells – Administrative Coordinator, over 30 years, HCIL/Southwest Houston area, Houston Housing Authority

Upcoming event: Forum on Fair and Accessible Housing for People with Disabilities, with the Greater Houston Fair Housing Center, at Houston Center for Independent Living, 6201 Bohomme Rd., Suite 150-A, Houston, Texas 77036, on January 17, from 1pm-3pm. Speaker: Daniel Bustamante (Executive Director), open for anyone to attend.

Metro/Transportation/Parking - Tina Williams, Chair, Tina and Michael meet to see what is the problems in clear lake, but they did talk to them about the feeder program. They will take you to the nearest stop to get you to where you are going. The feeder did work, the buses out here keep passing her by and would not stop. They did send a metro lift to pick her up.

Spoke to Mr. Carry about airport systems, they want to connect with us on a regular basis.

Commissioner Petty, did you have a chance to talk over the issue about some areas not being services.

Commissioner Williams, they must have permissions from those cities.

Commissioner McCullough, yes also.

Commissioner Jones, Jerry's Village cannot bring people to the center because they don't pay their sell taxes He brought to their knowledge and they said no that is not correct. Population is getting bigger.

Commissioner Petty, request the chair metro board, need to hear from the Board. Tony, he believes it should be chair of board. Tina wanted to send an email, but Petty want to have a discussion first.

Commissioner McCullough, metro has tasks force, represented by blind individuals, and others, next meeting in March.

Police Response to Persons with Disability - Emmanuel Arizona Eziashi, Chair

Commissioner Petty, we had a discussion in last meeting we need to cover more in the meeting.

Commissioner Emmanuel, spoke to James in the committee, new chief is new, only a month. He will meet with him on a time and date. I would rather speak to them in their office.

Commissioner, Petty, no one was responsible for the questions in the HPD office, we may want to speak with some who can address people with disabilities. Are the meetings with the deaf and blind working?

Commissioner Emmanuel, I have no idea, they should not have no reason for not doing what they are doing. Next week I am going to set up a meeting with them. He will check if the chief of police come to the meeting? Appreciated.

MDAYA - Tony Jones, Chair, meeting for February, Mayors office is interested in the position of Dears.

Metropolitan MSC Update - Chuck French out of town at a Rugby basketball tournament in Alabama, Hannah Walker not present. Staff member will give the updates, her name is Sarita, she has worked at the MMSC center at West Gray for 8 years. Sarita is now working at the front of the building with programming.

Update on programs: Monday Mania, 10:30 – 11:15, Tabata Tuesdays, variety of workouts in the gym, like soccer, open for able body, wheelchair, visually impaired, hearing impaired, anyone. Walk and Roll Wednesdays 10:00 – 11:30, Fun Day Friday. More information is located at the front information desk, and many handouts are on the desk. Suggestions on programming is welcome.

ADA Update - Matt Russell, COH ADA Coordinator, oversee the ADA, wide range of programs. CAT one of the supervisory programs. ADA learning and development. Training for the Committee. 25-30 program training. Fair housing training, refer to Hud. Sometime the answer does not come from ADA. They also do referrals, and they work with service animal's issues,

and parking. Accommodations issues, design issues. Every month is different. Check with Royce Sells on training concerning housing.

Commissioner Emmanuel, ask about accommodation issues. Matt does not occur often.

Legal Representative: Tiffany, we spoke about maybe addressing the possibility of commissioners experiencing conflicts of interest in their operating as commissioners.

Specifically making sure that you avoid using your position with commission to benefit personally. There aren't really any hard and fast rules, but if you feel perhaps your duties as a commissioner become intertwined with your person business or interest. I guess the best description is your personal business, you may want to go ahead and raise the issue with chair Petty so we can explore it just make sure that there is no potential for violation.

Commissioner Petty, thank you for that, it is easy to place oneself in a quick perdition.

MOPD Update - Landon Taylor present, Angel Ponce traveling on a sport tournament. Landon wished everyone a Happy New Year to you all for an amazing 2016. I know it was filled with up and downs, but this committee and even you on an individual level have truly made sure that this community has not missed a beat in the fight for justice and the fight for equality. I Neighborhoods, and Commissioner Jones. I will make sure you get the meeting with the director.

Report for December, Tenant housing questions – six, home repairs – 3, home modifications – 3, apartment assistance – 6, utility payment request – 9, durable medical equipment – 5, transportation issues -3, south texas college of law referrals -5, Houston volunteer lawyers program request – 3, disabled parking enforcement – 3, employment – 8, child and adult care - 2, social security benefits – 3, visual and blind services – 3, Public ADA – 4, adaptive sports – 3, city/public information – 3, total of 79. I well request to send more of a detail of the zip codes. Open for suggestions.

Commissioner Jackson, asked about our HCOD business cards that had blank lines for each Commissioner to write their name.

Commissioner Sims, there is two boxes somewhere, the city purchase them.

Commissioner Emmanuel, wanted some of the business cards also.

Commissioner Jones, did not know we had them.

Commissioner Townsend, said they were blank cards.

Commissioner Jackson, they also had the HCOD website for contact, we give them out at different events, workshops, and to those disable citizens for contact, by putting our name, and email/phone numbers.

Commissioner Sims, they weren't bought in the last year. They were older than that. The last time I had them, which was last year, there were still two boxes left, waiting to be discovered.

Landon Taylor, said he would have to check on that for the Commission.

Commissioners Comments:

Commissioner Lesa Jackson - **HCOD 2016 End Year Accomplishments:**

Month of February - Reel Abilities Film Festival 2/16, at Edwards Greenway

ADA Training 2/13 – Roberts Rules of Order, Matt Russell

Rev Up Texas 2/25 – Awareness of Disability Community

Right to Vote, held at TIRR 1333 Moursund

Month of May 5/21 – Emergency Preparation, at the George R. Brown Center

HCOD had a booth, large turnout

Month of August 8/5-7 – Abilities Expo, several vendors, performance,

HCOD booths, etc.

Month of Sept. 8/30 – Mayor Sylvester Turner Ribbon Cutting at MMSC,

Jay's Room was created in honor of Jay Stitely

Disabilities Month Kickoff(DMK) – Advocacy & Empowerment

Month of October 10/14 – White Cane Safety Day, Celebration March, Great

Speakers, Lots of Vendors/MOPD/HCOD booths, etc.

We have done some great things and I am looking forward to the success of the Commission. I just ask is you have upcoming events give me a list or email me your upcoming events, so all Commissioner will have the information. Thank you.

Commissioner Townsend, did Angel get any dates for the Reel Abilities event.

I would like for the name cards to come back.

Upcoming event: Families CAN Transition Workshop - Next Thursday, January 19. Our transition workshop is happening Thursday, January 19, from 6:30 – 8pm. We will have presenters from the star plus enrollment brokers and managed care organizations, Amerigroup, Molina and United Healthcare. They will focus on transition for young adults that are transitioning with the managed care organizations. Located at Shriners Hospital on the 6th floor, and email was sent to Lesa at the HCOD meeting today.

Commissioner Bienvenu, also inquiry about the date of the Reel Abilities.

Commissioner Petty, can we check with Angel for the date of the Reel Abilities event, normally is in February.

Commissioner Cunningham, the dates are February 19 through the 23rd.

Commissioner Petty, can we find a link for our Facebook page.

Commissioner Jones, last weekend him and Dawn traveled to Las Vegas and it was easy, through Southwest airlines from Hobby. It was accessible.

Adjourn – Meeting was motion to end by Commissioner Jones, and second by Commissioner Cunningham, at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Lesa Jackson, Secretary