

The Houston Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes for May 13, 2021

The Houston Commission on Disabilities met on Thursday, April 8, 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
Absent	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
Absent	Position 11: Eileen Edmonds
Absent	Position 12: Mark Potts
Unfilled	Alternate 1: Vacant
Unfilled	Alternate 2: Vacant
Unfilled	Alternate 3: Vacant
Unfilled	Alternate 4: Vacant
Present	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

MOPD Staff:

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

Multi Service Center Staff:

Present	Charles French
Present	Hannah Walker

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Ricky Harris motioned for the approval of the April 8th, 2021 HCOD minutes; Commissioner Raul Gallegos seconded the motion. The April 8th HCOD minutes were approved by HCOD.

Public Comments

- No Public Comment

HCC VAST Academy (Ana Calvo)

Program Director of Transition Services Ana Calvo gave an overview of the VAST Academy program as well as the positive impact on their students.

Program Requirements.

- Must be 18-25 years of age and no longer attending HS.
- Function independently in a classroom setting.
- Must have at least 2.5 grade reading level or above.

Ana Calvo went over the following information

- Application Process
- Curriculum
- Student Life
- Scholarship assistance

Alex Chau was part of HCC VAST Academy and has been a great addition to MOPD.

Commissioner Questions

Do other Community colleges offer similar programs like VAST Academy?

What are career paths that students have taken over the past several years?

What scholarships and financial aid is being offered at HCC Vast Academy?

MOPD Report to the HCOD (Gabe Cazares, Director, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, Angel Ponce, Senior Community Engagement Liaison, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities)

Hosted orientation for HCOD for all commissioners. Connecting residents with disabilities has been our top priority. Houston Health Department has loosened the restrictions on in home testing. Will host a vaccination clinic at West Gray MSC and will have transportation assistance. Houston Health Department will offer \$50 gift card for those who complete a short survey at West Gray MSC.

Mayor's Champion of inclusion award announcement. Seeks to recognize individuals and allies who are breaking down barriers to accessibility. The applications are now open, and awards will be given in July 2021.

Accessibility site visit to the Houston Museum of fine arts to improve accessibility and we plan on doing more visits across the city.

MOPD is now located at 611 walker in the garden level and the move is to accommodate more staff and interns. This transition will help us communicate with other MSC departments and have a presence at city hall. We will still host constituent services at west gray MSC.

Angel Ponce sat down in the Police Reform Taskforce to ensure accessibility and transparency. MOPD will be one of the departments to help with the new Police and reform office.

Evacuation Hub exercise will be happening to ensure accessibility and safety when a disaster happens.

NO TIGER FOUND!!!!

Angel Ponce

MOPD has provided presentation to Houston Employer response team and HPW leadership team on disability 101.

MOPD has provided 22 new requests for sidewalk repairs. MOPD HPW and Planning have reviewed 69 sidewalk modifications Over the last month.

MOPD will participate in the annual leaping into employment.

MMSC Report to the HCOD (Hannah Walker, Recreation Facility Manager, Houston Parks & Recreation Department)

West Gray MSC reopening June 1st. CDC guidelines will be enforced at the multi service center. Organized programs will not be in place for the foreseeable future.

Committee Updates

Community Access (Tina Williams, Chair)

No update (absent)

Education (Mark Potts, Ana Calvo, Co-Chairs)

Met with Commissioner Potts and plan to have a meeting to implement some goals for the committee.

Planning, Membership, & Community Engagement (Annie Bacon, Eileen Edmonds, Co-Chairs)

Met with Eileen Edmonds and discussed the promotion of HCOD. Changed the date for DUPC to July 29th.

Emergency Preparedness, Response, & First Responder Training (Ricky Harris, Chair)

This committee will be focused on emergency preparedness response. I want to encourage everyone to apply to the job openings at OEM. Working with Jackie Miller on planning workshops for individuals during emergency situations.

Employment and Transition to Employment (Meridith Silcox, Chair)

Strong committee put together and will meet in June. Will put together something in October for disability employment month.

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

The committee reunited with 6 different agencies to discuss objectives for the group. Met with Director Gabe Cazares and Luis Moreno.

Strategy & Administration (Richard Petty, Sara Freeman-Smith, Meridith Silcox, Co-Chairs)

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

Reasonable accommodation request – 69 total requests

32 were physical accommodations, 6 hearing accommodations, ___ cognitive, and 15 COVID 19.

15 have been accommodated 27 in process 19 have been closed 32 are early in the process.

35 calls from the ADA line

5 ADA complaints of retail complaints

3 COH complaints

Commissioners' Comments

Will have MOPD Interns work into the HCOD agenda

No further comments

The HCOD meeting adjourned at 5:49 pm.

Motion to adjourn: Commissioner Freeman smiths

Seconded: Commissioner Ricky Harris

Minutes submitted by Luis Moreno (luis.moreno@houstontx.gov)

Please submit any corrections to Eileen Edmonds.