



Los Angeles County
Commission on Disabilities
Celebrating 31 Years of Leadership & Advocacy



MEMBERS

Janet A. Neal
Chair

Richard Krzyzanowski
Vice Chair

Kecia Weller
Treasurer

Ruth Ann Acosta
Mary Chambers
Viola Vivian Corbett
Ernest T. Hamilton, Jr.
Michael G. Gureckas
Harley Rubenstein
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Alexia Teran
Steve Thompson
John B. Troost
Wendy Welt
Shelia D. Wright

MINUTES OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

The regular meeting of the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities was held on Wednesday, August 16, 2006, at Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 374, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Neal at 1:25 p.m. Introduction of Commissioners, Staff and audience members followed.

APPROVAL OF THE JULY 21, 2006 MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Siegel, seconded by Vice Chair Krzyzanowski, and duly carried, (Commissioner Rubenstein abstained) the minutes for the meeting of July 21, 2006 were approved with the following corrections:

Page Nos. 4 and 5 under ATTENDANCE

Add: Steve Thompson as Present

Change: Ruth Ann Acosta, Viola Vivian Corbett and Wendy Welt to Unexcused Absent

Page 5, under GUESTS

Correct spelling: ~~Rainey~~ Ranie Riley
Kathleen ~~Pich~~ Piche
Osbee I. ~~Stangster~~ Sangster

Add: Joshua Smith
Cherlyn Smith

Delete:
~~John Longoria~~

Page 2 under PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Griffieth spoke about her discontent with the culture of the Los Angeles County appointed Commissioners' discretion when making appointments to County Advisory Boards. ~~Area Agency on Aging, and the operation of its advisory board groups.~~

PUBLIC COMMENT

Hugh Hallenberg - requested the Commission invite a representative from the Department of Public Social Services to a future meeting to address the Quality Assurance Program. He provided the name of a speaker to address this issue.

Mary Griffieth - spoke about the difficulties she has encountered when trying to contact City and County agencies to lodge a complaint or concern in relation to disability issues; expressed that she is not satisfied with services and accessibility provided to persons with disabilities; and said that she is especially dissatisfied with accessibility at the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) in the El Monte Station, particularly for wheelchair users.

Osbee Sangster- spoke about her dissatisfaction with services and educational opportunities available to persons with disabilities, and stated that in her opinion State, City and County agencies are not enforcing ADA policies or delivering equal opportunities to the community with disabilities.

Bruce Rhoden-stated that the Commission should address the issue of the mistreatment and lack of sensitivity by law enforcement representatives particularly when dealing with persons with mental disabilities who may be acting irrationally because they have not taken their medication; transgender individuals; and persons living alternative lifestyles. In addition, Mr. Rhoden stated that the Commission should also investigate the treatment of and practices of staff and administrators of the elderly in board and care facilities.

Linda Block- spoke about the need for the government to enforce the Deficit Reduction Act, in particular the rule that requires Medicaid recipients prove their U. S. citizenship in order to be eligible for benefits.

Donna Dougherty - gave an overview on how the Griffith Observatory will be operating after it has completed its \$93 million renovation and expansion. Ms. Dougherty, who has been advocating for the installation of an accessible entrance in the front of the Observatory, stated that the current plan calls for an accessible entrance that is located in the rear left wing of the facility, which is totally unacceptable to many members of the disability community. Ms. Dougherty has been protesting this issue with the City Council in hopes of having them approve a design change to the front of the building. So far, City council members and other interested

agencies **PUBLIC COMMENT (Cont.)**

and architects have approved the plan as it stands. However. Ms. Dougherty has contacted Councilman Labonge who has offered to take up the issue and will be planning a tour of the facility in September to assess its accessibility. Ms. Dougherty encouraged interested parties to contact her at (310) 393-1847 if they wanted to go on the tour.

Jaime Watson - from CALIF (Californians Living Independent and Free) stated that her organization feels that if people with disabilities cannot use the front entrance to the Observatory, no one should, and is encouraging citizens with or without a disability to boycott using the front steps to the Observatory.

Ms. Watson also advised that her organization has been receiving calls from very distraught patrons of ASI who didn't pass the certification process and as a result, have been denied transportation services. Ms. Watson stated that many of these people have some type of mobility disability and truly need the use of ASI to get around.

Ms. Watson then explained the process which she witnessed firsthand and stated that to her, it seems very demeaning, inhumane, and the rider "test obstacle course" does not realistically reflect the actual terrain of the streets and sidewalks of the city. Ms. Watson would like clarification on the certification procedures and would like to know how it is determined and who makes the decisions as to who passes and who fails.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Commissioner Attendance

Chair Neal expressed the difficulty of conducting Commission business and activities without full participation and attendance by appointed Commissioners. Chair Neal stated that a letter would be sent to Commissioners to ascertain if they are still interested in serving on the Commission. Following 30 days, if a response has not been received from them stating their interest to continue on the Commission, a letter will then be sent to their respective Supervisors requesting that they be replaced.

STAFF REPORT

Mrs. Ward reported the following:

- The Tainter Scholarship Presentation and Reception went very well. The recipients and their families were very grateful and the Supervisors treated them graciously and the presentations went smoothly.

STAFF REPORT (Cont.)

- The 2006 Access Award recipients have been notified of their selection and sponsors are being sought for the event.

PRESENTATION ON UPCOMING 7TH ANNUAL ACCESSIBLE CITY EXPO

Deanna McNeally, City of Los Angeles Department on Disability, distributed flyers promoting the 7th Annual Accessible City Expo, Community Resources and Employment Fair that is being held at the Los Angeles Convention Center on October 5th in West Hall B. The event is free to the public and features over 100 exhibitors, assistive technology, community resources, live entertainment, raffles, give-aways, free health screenings, HIV testing, job opportunities and resume assistance. Workshops will be conducted by the L. A. Fire Department, HUD, Jobbing Online and others. For more information or to receive copies of the flyer please call (213) 485-6334 (Voice), (213) 485-6655 TTY, or www.LACity.org/DOD. Parking is free with the flyer. Ms. McNeally also offered the Commission a free booth at the expo.

PRESENTATION ON INITIATIVES AT UCLA

Al Aubin spoke about a new initiative being offered by Pathway at UCLA for recent high school graduates with disabilities. The courses are a post-secondary education and enrichment program for young adults with intellectual and other developmental disabilities who want to gain life skills in preparation for a fulfilling and independent future. The program is a two-year certificate program for young adults 18-25. Pathway will welcome the first students to UCLA in the fall quarter of 2006, and the two-year program will officially commence in fall of 2007.

Regina Lark, Program Director in Humanities, Social Sciences and Languages at UCLA Extension also reported that in the Fall of 2007 the university is launching the first of its kind course curriculum on Disabilities Studies. A core curriculum is being designed to teach professionals in fields such as health care, academia, legal, etc. how to work and interact with people who are disabled. The first class is an 11-week course on Policy Studies being offered next month. Ms. Lark would like assistance from the Commission in promoting the program and evaluating the course curriculum.

DISABILITIES CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE SECTION (DCRCS)

Kurt Hagen, ADA Compliance Officer, reported that the Emergency Evacuation Procedures created for County facilities have been approved by the Emergency Management Council. The procedures provide policy on the evacuation of persons with disabilities in a County facility during an emergency. The procedures will become an official part of the County's Procedural Manual and County policy.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Relations Committee

Vice Chair Krzyzanowski reported he recently represented the Commission at Disabilities Awareness Week at East Los Angeles College, and will also man the exhibit booth at the Accessible City Expo and the Tamale Festival, September 8-10 at Salazar Park in East Los Angeles

He also reported that he attended the Tainter Scholarship Presentation and Reception, which was excellent and is working to promote the event in the County Digest.

Update on Community Forum Radio Program

Chair Neal reported she had Deanna McNeally on the radio program this morning to promote the Accessible City Expo. Since the beginning, the program has been very popular with its listening audience and Chair Neal has received many positive comments about the program's content.

Update on 2006 Access Awards Luncheon

Chair Neal reported that plans are progressing well with the luncheon and urged the Commissioners to participate in the "sponsorship challenge" and seek out sponsors for the event, particularly their respective Supervisors.

Executive Committee Report

Vice Chair Krzyzanowski reported that the Committee met and discussed the theme for the upcoming luncheon, which will be in celebration of the achievements of people with various types of disabilities and celebrating "wholeness". Vice Chair Krzyzanowski will also have the Commission's brochure updated and translated into Spanish.

Transportation Committee

ASI Report

Jess Segovia reported the following:

- Access Services is having a series of meetings beginning September 11 and ending October 15, to address proposed policy changes, service delivery and new policies. Riders and interested parties were encouraged to attend and learn about the issues that will affect service delivery.
- ASI is also accepting nominations for its 2006 Spirit of Accessibility Award, which is held to acknowledge the hard work of individuals and organizations promoting fixed route transportation.

Mr. Segovia also addressed the issue raised at the meeting today of the certification process used to determine the eligibility of ASI riders, saying that the process and the “obstacle test” is not meant to demean or humiliate anyone but is intended to: 1) simulate the experiences an individual may encounter in the community; 2) determine if they are able to make use of fixed route transportation 3) determine their ability to get to and from the bus; 4) measure their mobility; and 5) discourage fraud.

Mr. Segovia offered to put together a tour of the facility for the Commission to view ASI’s operation.

MTA Update

Chip Hazen reported the following:

- The North Hollywood Station is still working on the problem with individuals obstructing the path of travel designated for persons with disabilities. They have marked the pathway on both sides for disabled parking and have posted warning signage for motorcycles and bicycles, but the violations have continued. They will be having a meeting next week to discuss further policy on the misuse of the disabled parking area.
- Sensitivity Training has been implemented for Rail operators on dealing with people with disabilities.
- The Rail Operations Center has undergone an upgrade and now has the most up-to-date state of the art equipment for monitoring the rail system.
- In September, MTA will be hosting a California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CalACT) Autumn Conference in Burbank for smaller transit operators such as Dial-A-Ride.

MTA Update (Continued)

- The MTA Station in El Monte is being torn down and rebuilt for total accessibility. The renovation should be complete the latter part of next year.

ITEMS NOT ON THE POSTED AGENDA TO BE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA

- Presentation by Mr. Bruce Kasper
- Treatment of elders in board and care homes
- Treatment of mentally disabled, transgender, and alternative lifestyle citizens by law enforcement
- Certification process for ASI

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Teran reported that she had a very bad experience while using public transportation recently. She reported the driver was insensitive to her disability, very uncooperative when operating the chairlift and ensuring that she was safely on the bus, and was very hostile towards her. When asking what recourse she could take in reporting the driver and lodging a complaint, she was informed the proper manner to report such incidents would be to: 1) inform the agency what direction you were going; 2) the time of day you were traveling; 3) the cross streets; and 4) the station location and line number.

Chair Neal also spoke about experiences she has had at governmental agencies where the security officers have been hostile towards her, have threatened to have her services cut off if she did not do as she was instructed, and have adjusted their firearms in a threatening manner when dealing with her or other patrons they considered "having an attitude". Chair Neal would like this matter investigated and addressed at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present

Janet A. Neal, Chair
Richard Krzyzanowski, Vice Chair
Mary Chambers
Michael Gureckas
Bernard Siegel
Harley D. Rubenstein
Alexia Teran
Steve Thompson
John B. Troost

Excused Absence

Ruth Ann Acosta
Ernest T. Hamilton, Jr.
Kecia Weller, Treasurer
Sheila Wright

Unexcused Absence

Viola Vivian Corbett
Wendy Welt

Board of Supervisors

Dedie Ward, Staff
Martha Arana, Staff

County of Los Angeles

Kurt C. Hagen

ASI

Teddie Joy-Remhild
Jess Segovia

MTA

Chip Hazen

Guests

Jessie Padilla
Osbee I. Sangster
Mary Griffith
Donald Brandon
Carlton Lindo
Jamie Watson

Leslie Olmos
Albert E. Aubin
Bruce Rhoden
Marvin White
Hugh Hallenberg
Valerie Chatman

Maria Villasenor
Regina F. Lark
Ray McKeever
Donna Dougherty
Deborah "Justice" Foulls
Linda Block