



TOWN OF HAMDEN

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Scott D. Jackson
Mayor

Hamden Government Center
2750 Dixwell Ave
Hamden, CT 06518
Tel: (203) 287-7100
Fax: (203) 287-7101

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY RIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

MINUTES: The Hamden Commission on Disability Rights & Opportunities held a Regular Meeting on Monday, January 12, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Friends Room, Miller Library Complex. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Chris Balogh, Brian Barry, Rachel Dobin, Jon Dwyer, Rosalie Cavanaugh, Pat Delaney

Commissioners Excused: Eileen Carpinella, Marc Dupont, Annmarie McConville

Guests: Carl and Joyce Saracini,

Others in Attendance: ADA Coordinator Chris Marchand, Commission Clerk Gerry Tobin

1. Review Minutes of November 10, 2014

Dr. Barry made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2014 meeting. Mr. Dwyer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

2. Correspondence

Mr. Balogh reported that he received the Memorial Day Parade application, Commissioners agreed they should march and Dr. Barry's car is available. The commission will invite people to join them like we did last year.

3. Chairman's Report

Mr. Balogh reported that Mayor Jackson is on board with taking on a disabled intern to handle general constituent inquiries. This will be done in cooperation with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and the Bureau of Education Services for the blind (BESB). Dr. Barry said this is a good opportunity to put the Town in position for the disability friendly business award. Mr. Balogh will serve in this position and will be paid by the town and the town will be reimbursed 130% by the state. Mr. Balogh thanked Mr. Dupont for bringing the job fair to his attention, which is where he

made contact with a person from BRS/BESB. That contact and a letter to Mayor Jackson brought this internship about. Mr. Balogh also interviewed with Jewish Family Services.

4. ADA Coordinator's Report

Mr. Marchand has had no complaints, issues or calls. He did receive one email which was resolved. He has been able to provide two ADA ramps through the Community Development Block Grant. Ramps are not restricted to the block grant area.

5. Committee Reports

Ms. Cavanaugh received information regarding tickets for Quinnipiac games. They have several programs including \$1 tickets for people with disabilities. We can also raise funds by receiving tickets for \$1 and selling them for profit. There is a game in February that will be played by Quinnipiac as a fund raiser for Special Olympics. There was discussion as to how accessible the arena is.

Ms. Delaney reported that she did not have an update on the commission's bank account.

6. Old Business

Mr. Balogh complimented Mr. Dupont on his efforts to get pertinent information out to the commissioners.

7. New Business

Carl and Joyce Saracini are here this evening. Mrs. Saracini has lived in Hamden for almost 30 years. She formerly worked for the Hamden Public Schools and had Mr. Dwyer as a student. She currently works as a Realtor^(c).

Ms. Saracini explained how her life has changed since being diagnosed with Star Guard's Disease and Retinal and Macular Degeneration. She has been legally blind since 5/31/13, and had to surrender her driver's license. She feels we are being denied benefits. She is a member of the MyRide program. She qualifies for the ADA paratransit services according to their application. She qualifies for the ADA services but she is limited because of where she lives, which is 3/4 of a mile from the nearest bus route. Services are provided from 10:00 a.m. To 4:00 p.m. Monday Through Saturday. There are no Sunday services. Scheduling is a nightmare. She must schedule rides one week in advance at 11:00 a.m. She has called at 11:10 and was told no rides were available the following week. It is very difficult to make arrangements for a ride to a doctor's appointment, as it is difficult to determine a pick up time. Her office used to be in Cheshire, but she cannot get rides from Hamden to Cheshire or Waterbury, although those two towns are serviced by MyRide. She can only go to businesses. There is no service to a residence. All of this is not how it is stated on the MyRide ride program information. If she complains, she is told that this is how The town has contracted with my ride services. This violates services as defined by the state OPA. MyRide services are not available for disabled residents over 60.

She is grateful to the Metro Taxi program which matches her funds up to 50% until spending exceeds a certain amount. They charge her \$20 to go the the Hamden Mart, and \$40 to go to New Haven.

Mr. Marchand explained that Mrs. Saracini referred to the contract for the Town's Elderly Services program. The Town eliminated its buses and drivers and contracted with the Greater New Haven Transit District for those services.

Ms. Delaney presented many examples of problems with the Transit District including problems getting her daughter to and from her job.

Dr. Barry asked Mr. Marchand what the commission can do to help. Mr. Marchand explained that he is on the Transit District Board and will be at a Board meeting on Wednesday. He will find out if someone from the public is allowed to speak at the meeting, and if so, he invited Mrs. Saracini to make a presentation. He and Mrs. Saracini exchanged contact information.

Mr. Saracini said the process is very fragmented. Mr. Marchand explained that there are multiple transit districts. Funds are distributed to the DOT by the Federal Government, and the DOT is in charge of distributing the funds to the various districts.

Ms. Dobin explained that she is a social worker with Jewish Family Services in New Haven, and works with clients with both physical and mental disabilities. Her clients have always experienced problems with MyRide, and it would be extremely difficult for anyone with a mental disability to negotiate the system. She also mentioned a service called Uber, which provides rides and is less expensive than a taxi service.

8. Adjournment

Ms. Delaney made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Barry seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m..

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk