



City of Duluth  
Commission on Disabilities  
Monthly Meeting Minutes  
March 1, 2017

Amber Madoll	P	Amanda Crosby	P
Beverly Richardson	P	Ann Roscoe	P
Amy Burke	P	Carl Crawford – Staff	P
Gerald Salveson	A		
Randall Vogt	E		
Michelle McDonald	P		

1. **Welcome**

The Commission welcomed Josh Gorham a Public Health Nurse from St. Louis county who works primarily with Duluth area schools.

The commission also welcomed community members Roberta Cich and Josh Smerdon.

2. **Approval of Minutes & Current Agenda**

Ann called the meeting to order. *Amber motioned to amend the current agenda by moving the “Public Comment” section to the top of the agenda allowing Josh Gorham adequate time to share with the commission. Ann approved this motion.*

*Amber approved the January minutes and Michelle seconded this motion.*

3. **Public Comment**

Josh Gorham works with in schools and with the community to improve pedestrian environments and pedestrian mobility. Pedestrian mobility includes an inclusive view and how pedestrians access different areas of the city. This includes individuals who use wheel chairs or other mobility devices. Josh is currently working with city council member Alyssa Hanson. Josh wanted to receive the point of view of the commission

with the hopes that we can assist each other to work towards better pedestrian mobility across the Twin Ports area. Commission comments include; improving snow and ice removal, adding curb cuts and sidewalks, improving sidewalks and crosswalks (especially downtown) better access to bus stops, adding audible signals on traffic lights, and enforcing vehicles to follow traffic signals and yield to pedestrians (including bicyclists). Areas of town that need immediate improvement include downtown, the mall area, and the corner of Blackman and Central Ave.

Amber suggested that Josh apply to be a member of the commission. Josh agreed that further collaboration would be beneficial and he will attend the commission meetings as a community member often. He also noted that he is the chair of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee that works on metro area planning and organization. He felt strongly that the Commission on Disabilities should be represented on this committee and as the chair he extended an invitation. Ann will be able to attend these meetings. The meetings are held quarterly on the first Monday 11:30-1 at the ARDC offices. Josh will connect with Ann to follow up on details.

#### **4. Current Disability Issues**

There are concerns about the new apartment complex that has been built in the mall area behind Buffalo Wild Wings. This was an apartment that was promised to be "affordable" for individuals of all income levels. At this time the average cost to rent an apartment in this building is \$1000.00. The commission discussed getting the median income of individuals in Duluth, individuals with disabilities in Duluth and the highest rate HUD Section 8 rental will pay for a single person. The commission also discussed reaching out to Keith Hamry in city planning and City Council Member, Anderson.

Roberta Cich made the commission aware of a public round table discussion with Representative Nolan held by the Head of the Lakes United Way. It will be held Friday March 3<sup>rd</sup> 3p-4p at the Underground, Duluth Depot. The discussion will involve the possible repeal of the Affordable Care Act and proposed Medicaid cuts both of which would have a significant negative impact on persons with disabilities.

#### **5. Action & Advocacy Reports**

##### **a. Parks & Recreation**

Amanda reported that she shared the contact to the parks department to the Person's with Disabilities for Change group and they will be writing a letter to the city regarding the accessible swing promised to the community.

Amanda also gave an update on the area of the WWFT near Indian Point Campground. There had been some push back to the city from Wheels on Trails organization about

the steep grade near the trail head. Amanda took a wheel chair to the trail to test grade and accessibility.

b. Wheel Chair Accessible Task Force –

No updates at this time. Concerns on wheel chair accessibility in regards to pedestrian access across the city were noted during the discussion with Josh Gorham.

c. Olmstead Plan Update

No current update.

**6. Accessible Parking Requests**

There are legal concerns with commission members doing accessibility reviews on private property in Duluth. This is a process that is currently being worked on with the city of Duluth. *Michelle motioned that the “how to’s” of the process be moved to our May commission meeting while the process is being ironed out with city staff.*

**7. Other Business/Announcements**

Business Accessibility for Customers and Employees, reasonable Accommodations for ADA compliance training is a free seminar for Duluth area business leaders. RSVP’s have been coming in but the commission would still like to see other community members represented. Inviting ASI (Accessible Space Incorporated) and well as a representative from Essentia Health were discussed. Commission members were encouraged to continue advertising for the event. There was also a discussion of alerting the media to do a quick interview about ADA and how it affects employers and employees in Duluth. Roberta offered to contact the media and Amanda as well as community member Josh Smerdon offered to be the “face of the commission” and stress how important having knowledge of the ADA is when it comes to employment.

Amanda announced that Amy Cyr from the Improve Group is looking for volunteers from the community to assist with looking at what works for individuals with disabilities, what needs improvement to assist with area research. There will be a \$10 Visa gift card given to all participants in the focus group.

Carl noted that all of the current members have been reappointed by the commission. Roberta Cich has been approved by City Council and is waiting for Mayoral approval. Amanda will reach out to Randy to see if he is still interested in being on the commission. Carl also suggested changing the bi-laws to allow individuals who could not be at the meetings in person still have a chance to be a part of the commission by calling in or using media to be a part of the meetings.

March is also a time where all boards and commissions are reappointed. Even though terms begin in March individuals can still apply and become members of the commission throughout the year.

The commission also needs to work on an updated comprehensive plan and send a typed report March 2016-March 2017 to city council. Amanda as the secretary will write the yearend report. Carl mentioned presenting this report in person. Roberta Cich has done this before as a commission member in the past. This is a good way to tell the council how valuable the commission is and also providing disability education such as Person First Language.

Commission executive board elections will also be held.

*Michelle motioned to adjourn the meeting and Beverly seconded this motion.*

The next Commission on Disabilities meeting is scheduled for Wednesday April 5, 2017 3:00 pm at City Hall, room 303.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Crosby  
Secretary