



Commission on Disabilities
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
August 2, 2023

Commissioners: *indicate present (P) or absent (A)*

Laurie Berner - P

Ashlie Castaldo - P

Amanda Crosby - P

Allison Fochs - A

Dianne Naus - P

Samantha Smingler – P

Brooke Marinan - A

Chris Johnson - A

Also present:

Human Rights Office Carl Crawford

Officer Mark Bauer from Parking Commission

Mike Rasmusson -community observer

Chair Crosby called the **August 2, 2023** Commission on Disabilities meeting to order at **3:37pm**, there was a quorum(4).

Approval of current agenda: 1st Commissioner Castaldo, 2nd by Commissioner Naus

Approval of the June minutes: 1st - Commissioner Berner, 2nd Commissioner Castaldo

Public Comment/Information:

- Mr Carl Crawford - Human Rights Office has received phone calls concerned about bus routes being changed. One specific example is a man concerned that he will now have to walk 5 blocks to get to Church. Uses Stride and DTA, but tries to limit Stride use.

- Chair Crosby - would it be helpful to invite the DTA into a COD meeting?
- Mr. Crawford- Yes, especially with how the current complaint process works with the DTA
- Commissioner Castaldo - encourage folks to check the current map- is it a temporary delay or a permanent one.
- Commissioner Castaldo: bring to attention that the last four videos from the city did not have closed captions. Ex. one about Superior Street.
- Commissioner Castaldo - constituent complaint: In Duluth downtown there is a lack of signage for accessible routes during construction. Hard to see signage from a wheelchair especially. Follow-up: Commissioner Castaldo will send videos and images to Human Rights office.
- Commissioner Smingler: Mentor North is looking for adults with disabilities to mentor youth with disabilities.

Guest speakers or presentations:

N/A

Accessible Parking Update:

- Successful meeting last month - quorum was met and many cases were approved.
- **8 new applications:**
 - 32 North 63 ave W - approved
 - 610 N 57th Ave W - approved
 - 2305 W Superior St - approved
 - 1058 Ave W - approved
 - 580 W Elenor St - approved
 - 614 N 60th Ave W - approved
 - 4817 4th St. - approved
 - 1829 East 2nd St. - approved
- 3 new applications
 - 1602 Minnesota Ave (Park Point) - resulted from enforcement of public parking spots. Current residents are trying to privatize public spots. Homeowners would put up signs to say no public access, or no parking signs. That can then limit emergency services. Citizen requesting the stall has current ADA credentials, so this stall will be recommended. Police department is knocking on doors to find solutions regarding the false privatization of public parking.
 - 2515 Jefferson St - applicant uses a walker and wheelchair. Site visit shows tuck under garage with a truck in it. Had not been

maintained - so asked if that could be? Primarily needs the space for pick up from Stride and pharmacy delivery.

- E 2nd Street. Site visit showed multiple parking spots, but a significant grade to the house. Will be recommended for a stall.
- Chair Crosby: Thank you to Office Bauer for answering a parking question in an HRA building, which has an accessible spot. Told they could only park in the stall for 4 hours. The 4 hour time limit is intended for on street parking, and should not affect off-street lots.

Parks and Rec Report:

- Haven't met since June- also had July off.
- Voted positively for the Lake Walk interpretation plan. Cultural, economic, historical, etc. stories to share.
- Hillside sport court located on 7th Street E, on a hill. Looking at redoing that park to make it accessible and usable. Working with another non-profit to build a community garden. Sept will have more updates. Looking forward to having a safe accessible park in that neighborhood with food access.
- Question: Mr Carl Crawford - off-road vehicles - any more news on the process of that? No update other than the grant was received by the city. Plan is for the off-roading wheelchair to live at Hartley. It will need to have a trailer. Will create a better option for families to come to visit and experience Duluth nature once it's ready!
- Construction is still going well on the Lincoln Park accessible playground.

Old Business:

Annual Meeting

- Set up a Longer Meeting
- Work with Laura to do a doodle poll.
- Can happen at a different location, with more accessible spaces
- Hoping for September - focus on 2-3 key focuses for the year.

Update to the Bullying Letter to ISD709

- Commissioner Castaldo was asked by a board that represents loved ones with disabilities to join them in coming to the school board next month when school starts.
- Mr. Crawford - what support do you need from Human Rights office? - information or infographics - what do you really mean, words to replace the R word.

- Commissioner Castaldo - Met with Denfeld athletic department, and the football team to discuss student-athletes being role models for better language.
- Chair Crosby - have names of folks at Arc that would like to be helpful in that outreach, training, etc. with ISD 709.

Snow Removal Task Force

- Monday, Aug 14th invited to present at 6:15pm to the city counsel - committee of the whole. No public comment after the Snow Removal presentation. Can just sit at the 6:15pm portion, then stay for the longer meeting. Discussing weed smoking in Duluth parks.
- Sharing sample letters to send to the council.
- Goal: Pack the chambers! On Monday.
- Over the last 8 months meeting with a diverse set of community and city officials to gather a framework of the issues (Duluth Aging Support) created a case document - why should you care, strong content. City counsel will receive it in advance to review before presentation.
- Made a succinct presentation for the city counsel. - will be shared electronically with the commissioners.
- Goal: have funds dedicated to the effort of sidewalk snow removal.
- Summary update from snow removal task force: Work on the Sidewalk Snow Removal Task Force is moving quickly. The task force presented to city council on 8/14 at the committee of the whole to ask for resources and equipment to assist with sidewalk snow removal in priority areas of the city such as Lincoln Park, Grand Ave, 6th Ave East, Safe Routes to Schools and bus stops. We shared a similar presentation to the council that we did during our "call-to-action" last December 2022. We also presented the "Making the Case" document put together by Duluth Aging Support with content from our task force.

Open Meeting Law

- Commissioner Castaldo spoke to another official from the state about pushing the issue to be put on the next agenda. Maybe we need to have group letter to help grow awareness of the interest. (*Who do you think the letter needs to go to?)
- Let's plan to work on this after sidewalks.
- Prior Commissioner Roberta had started a letter to the Attorney General about open meeting law.

New Business:

- Mr. Crawford - conversation with citizen Josh Axelton and an interest in splash pads, opportunity for folks of all abilities to have fun together in the summer.
- A few pop ups have happened through Duluth parks this summer.
- Portman Square would be his proposed location. Mr. Crawford thinks it's a great idea. Depends on where the water is pulled from. Very family friendly. Located in the hillside community and higher rental areas, that you can walk to. Accessible to locals! Bring the community together.
- Ask of the commission: Help show the need.

Other Business:

- N/A

Announcements:

- Commissioner Berner: Stepping on Up program still in process. Legal and Architect donating space. Support homeless young people. Also learned of 2 other locations - above harbor Highlands, and by Salvation army - would target other populations.
- Housing forum at the Radisson. Mr. Crawford is attending. Arc housing advocates will be there too.
- Possible for the retreat: 988 - get a report on what the mental health calls that are coming in. What are the challenges our community is facing with mental health? How can we better understand and focus on mental health - impact on housing.
- How is the law enforcement and social workers combined unit? Invite an officer to a future COD meeting - Commissioner Castaldo learned on a recent ride along- even when they drop folks off at Essentia, they are released an hour later. We need more long term support. Only 4 new mental health beds.
- How to decriminalize mental health?

Adjourn: by Chair Crosby at 4:48pm

**Next meeting *September 6th*, 3:30 PM
City Hall Room 330**