

## COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

November 18, 2003

ATTENDEES: John Gentile, Janet Ross, Tony Vitti, Kris Ginty, Kenny Lee and Chad Sinanian

ABSENTEES: Roberto Perez, Robie Barile, Carlene Barker, Doris Pietras

Meeting Commenced 6:30PM

- John distributed the NEW AGENDA for this meeting.
- October meeting minutes reviewed and accepted.
- September meeting minutes have been posted to our website per Melissa Adams. The link works!
- John reviewed the guidelines regarding the National Disability Mentoring Day - it is a very involved undertaking. We would need a "local organizing committee." The Commission does not have the people to take on this big task. He suggested that we link up with the Business Leadership Program but he added that the issue remains open to see if anyone would like to take on this responsibility.
- John distributed a handout about Congressman Tony Coelho's recent speech at New York Law School. The text of the speech can be found on <http://nyls.edu/pages/1863.asp>. "Charging that none of the 10 major Presidential candidates has dared to take the concerns at the center of our community and place them consistently at the center of their campaigns, former Congressman Coelho urged the disabilities community to only support candidates who adopt a 5-point agenda for dismantling barriers to work for the disabled." For more information contact Jim Hellegaard, Director of Communications, Office of Public Affairs @ 212-431-2191, [jhellegaard@nyls.edu](mailto:jhellegaard@nyls.edu).
- John distributed a list of Internship Programs for College Students with Disabilities. Two of them have deadlines of December 15. They are:
  - Summer Congressional Internship Program for College Students with Disabilities sponsored by the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation (MEAF) and administered by the AAPD. Accepted candidates will work in congressional offices in Washington. For additional information and an application, visit [www.aapd-dc.org](http://www.aapd-dc.org).
  - 2004 Summer Information Technology Internship for College Students with Disabilities sponsored by Microsoft Corp. Accepted candidates will work in various agencies in the executive branch of the federal government. For additional

information and an application, visit [www.aapd-dc.org](http://www.aapd-dc.org).

- John also distributed an Information and Resources handout. It is November's collection of disability related news, publications, upcoming events and web sites.
- Chad suggested that the Commission get involved with a Voter Registration Drive. He will contact Mayor Boughton for more information on this project.
- Kenny brought up a personal problem he recently had when voting. Being disabled himself and confined to a wheelchair Kenny not only had trouble accessing the voting booth but actually reaching the voting levers. Very difficult for someone in a wheelchair. The feeling is that the disabled should not only be offered an absentee ballot but they should be able to vote like everyone else.  
SEPARATE IS NOT EQUAL! More discussion on this issue is needed.
- Chad discussed a problem he has on the street he lives regarding the dumping of discarded appliances, etc., making it very difficult for everyone to walk down the sidewalk/street safely.
- The phone log is 2 years old. Janet received 2 calls in the month of October. One was from Carol @ Public Works wanting to know our code. The other call came from a Danbury resident wanting information on disability eligibility for herself. Janet returned both calls relaying the information requested. Kenny will monitor the calls and the log for the month of November.
- Janet discussed the "Best Buddy Program." The Department of Mental Retardation and Western Connecticut State University are teaming up to make successful matches; more of a social commitment. This is in conjunction with Community Connections and it involves not only Danbury but also surrounding areas.
- Kenny spoke with the individual who complained about lack of transportation available to him/her because of the weight limit of his/her wheelchair. The individual stated that he/she can get out of the wheelchair with little help and that the Senior Center van can and will pick him/her up.
- Reappointments to the Commission are in the process of being reviewed.
- Next meeting is December 9.  
Meeting adjourned 7:40pm