

City of Danbury, Connecticut

Commission on Persons with disAbilities

Minutes

September 11, 2007

Attendees: John Gentile, John Gentile Jr., Chad Sinanian, Roberto Perez, Frank Reed, Lisa Koepfel, Paul Kachevsky, Frances Ryan

Agenda:

1. Welcome: John Gentile
 2. Open Discussion:
 3. Phone Log: John Gentile
 4. Next Meeting: October 9, 2007
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- 1) John Gentile opened the meeting by welcoming commission members and distributing an updated contact list. A brief discussion followed about the Common Council confirming the appointments of Frank M. Reed, Lisa C. Koepfel and Paul Kachevsky to the Commission on Persons with disAbilities.
 - 2) Open Discussion
 - a) John reported Common Council member Thomas J. Saadi and other council members would make every effort to attend the commission's October 9, meeting.
 - i) The commission plans to update the council members on the commission, open a discussion concerning what they would like us to do and ask for their help in educating the public about the commission.
 - b) Chad Sinanian invited commissioners to attend the annual People First of Connecticut conference, Saturday November 3, 8:30 am-3:30 pm at the Clarion Hotel in Bristol, CT. People First of Connecticut is a statewide self-advocacy organization that believes all people, with and without disabilities, should be treated equally and respectfully. Tia Nelis, the Self Advocacy Becoming Empowered, SABE, leader and national self-advocate will be the keynote speaker. For further information and registration, contact Jean Bowen, advozealot@aol.com.
 - c) Discussion followed regarding the Department of Developmental Services, which works with people with intellectual disabilities, and the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services, BRS, that works with people who have had life altering issues, such as illnesses or accidents, which change the way they live their lives. The BRS is limited in funding streams therefore works mainly with physical and/or developmental disabilities.
 - d) Ultimately, everyone with a disability should be treated with dignity and respect.
 - e) John will contact Larry Robinson of The Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative to address the commission in November.
 - f) John submitted the commission's schedule for the year to Melissa Adams the city's web person. Also, he explained that formal notification of the meetings go to the Town Clerk, Lori A. Kaback
 - g) Paul Kachevsky thanked Chad for submitting his name to the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities. He received a package from them in a timely

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- manner. In addition, he is interested in submitting his application to be on their board, which has a three (3) year term. John explained that once Paul submitted his application there would be an interview.
- h) Frank Reed was interested in applying for the CT Rehabilitation Council. John will contact the chairman, John Simms, to get an application sent to Frank
 - i) Chad brought up Project Vote – voter awareness/training – Chad is a trainer and wants to contact organizations in order to speak with their members about voter registration. John directed Chad to speak with the Republican Town Committee, the Democratic Town Committee and the Registrar of Voters.
 - i) John mentioned the new touch screen voting system will be implemented with the November election and Chad noted it might cause some problems for people with certain disabilities.
 - ii) Frank brought up that Shelter Rock School had limited access for him during the last election. A temporary diamond ramp installed at the entrance would alleviate having to go all away around the building and travel through dark hallways to get to the voting area.
 - iii) Chad and Frank will report their findings to the commission in October.
 - j) Paul asked if there was an agenda of what the commission wants to accomplish
 - i) John requested commissioners send discussion topics to him by the 1st of the month and he will put together an agenda
 - ii) Paul asked about fundraiser events, which are not in our charter. In addition, he asked about the aim of the commission. What was the mission? John and Frances Ryan had been discussing posting the city ordinance for the commission on its webpage. Frances will follow though with getting information regarding the city ordinance posted on the internet.
 - (1) Responding to Paul's inquiry, John explained that the annual meeting schedule for the Commission on Persons with disAbilities is filed with the Town Clerk in September. Though, how the Clerk informs the public about the meetings was not clear. People can come to these meetings and air their concerns. The Commission identifies the requests of people with disabilities and reports to the Mayor and Common Council.
 - k) Next, Paul asked if there was an on going training program for law enforcement agencies, example police and probate court, who encounter people with developmental disabilities.
 - i) Suzanne Liquerman from the Department of Social Services would be a person for Paul to contact to discuss this issue. In addition, John mentioned Carolyn Finch teaches an emergency sign language for First Responders, EMTs, and other emergency personnel basic American Sign Language, ASL, signs. Lisa Koeppel added that there are agencies that are set up to do trainings and Paul could contact Jan at the mental health agency on West St. Part of Lisa's training included participating in a program that allowed a

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person to listen to how a person with schizophrenia hears the world. It helps individuals to have an understanding of how the person hears the world.

- ii) Consistency for on going training for agencies is necessary due to personnel turnover and need for refresher courses. Possibly ask Larry Robinson of the CT Disability Advocacy Collaborative if they could help with funding some of the training.
 - iii) The training effects how people with disabilities are viewed in the community
 - iv) Paul commented that people do not realize the number of programs available to people
- 3) Phone Log – 1 phone call
- a) Individual recently diagnosed with cancer. John returned the phone call by leaving a message for the person to contact him. John hasn't heard back.
- 4) Meeting adjourned by John Gentile at 8:00 pm. Next meeting will be October 9, 2007.