

ITEM 2-A
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUES
MEETING MINUTES OF
Wednesday, October 11, 2017 6:30 p.m.

LOCATION: City Hall, 2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Third Floor, Council Chambers
Alameda, CA 94501

1. ROLL CALL

Beth Kenny: I would like to call to order the Commission on Disabilities meeting for Wednesday, October 11th, 2017.

Laurie Kozisek: Chairman Beth Kenny?

Beth Kenny: Present.

Laurie Kozisek: Vice-Chair Arnold Brillinger?

Arnold Brillinger: Here.

Laurie Kozisek: Commissioner Anto Aghapekian - he had an excused absence.

Laurie Kozisek: Commissioner Jenn Barrett?

Jenn Barrett: Present. [Commissioner Barrett expressed that she was ill and left at 6:50 PM.]

Laurie Kozisek: Commissioner Susan Deutsch?

Susan Deutsch: Present.

Laurie Kozisek: Commissioner Lisa Hall?

Lisa Hall: Present.

Laurie Kozisek: Commissioner Tony Lewis? [Commissioner Lewis arrived at 6:45 PM, just after roll call.]

Laurie Kozisek: Commissioner Jenny Linton?

Jenny Linton: Present.

Laurie Kozisek: Commissioner Tom Mills? Okay, we have six, so we have a quorum.

2. MINUTES

2-A Approval of Minutes for the June 14, 2017 meeting

Beth Kenny: Wonderful. Thanks for your patience tonight. So, agenda item two, the minutes, we

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have two sets of minutes to approve tonight. The first set is from our June 14th, 2017 meeting. Did anyone have any changes or corrections they'd like to see made in those minutes? Unless there is anyone who has anything, I move that we adopt the minutes as is from the meeting of June 14th, 2017. All in favor?

All: Aye.

Beth Kenny: All in favor? Any opposed? Passes six to zero.

2-B Approval of Minutes for the July 25, 2017 meeting

Beth Kenny: And now to the meeting, our special meeting on July 25th, 2017, does anyone have any changes they would like to see made to those minutes? I move that we adopt the minutes as they are. All in favor?

All: Aye.

Beth Kenny: Wonderful, another six to zero adoption of minutes.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/NON-AGENDA (PUBLIC COMMENT)

Beth Kenny: We move onto item number three, oral communications non-agenda. Do we have any public comments for non-agenda items tonight? Did we receive any speaker slip for the non-agenda items?

Laurie Kozisek: I did not get any. [Addressing the audience:] Do either of you want to speak on non-agenda?

Audience [off mike]: No

4. NEW BUSINESS

4-A Presentation by the Pacific ADA Center [Jan Garrett, Program Manager]

Beth Kenny: Then let's move on to new business. Tonight we have Jan Garrett, program manager from the Pacific ADA Center here to tell us a little bit more about what the Pacific ADA Center does and... Very excited. Welcome, Jan.

Jan Garrett: Thank you all for inviting me, it's nice to be here. And on behalf of Erica Jones, our Director, I just want to express my appreciation that so many of you came to our ADA conference that we just had in late September. So we really appreciate the support from all of you, and we hope that you learned a great deal, and also had a good time. And I wanted to explain a little bit more about who we are for those who may not have been able to attend the conference, and for those who may be watching this later or reading the minutes. So the Pacific ADA Center is one of ten ADA centers across the country. And so we're regionally based. We are at the Pacific ADA Center in

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Region Nine, and we serve Arizona, California, Nevada, and Hawaii, and the Pacific Basin territories of Guam, American Samoa, and the commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Jan Garrett: So we have a very large territory, even though we're only one of ten regions, and the other ADA centers serve different regions; some of them are more rural and some of them have more urban areas, but we sort of have a mix of urban and rural in our region. And the 800 number that you can call to reach us, 1-880-949-4232, if you call that number anywhere in the United States, you will get the center that serves you, from your area code that you're calling from. So it's the same number nationwide that you can get the ADA Center. So that's helpful for people to know that may be in other parts of the country, or may have friends or family in other parts of the country. So what the ADA centers do, and what we do, is we provide technical assistance on our 800 hotline from our region. And technical assistance can be mostly on the ADA, of course, but it can be on other disabilities civil rights laws as well. So it might be on the Rehabilitation Act, it might be on the Air Carriers Access Act, or Fair Housing Act. Even though, really primarily, what we try to help people with is the ADA and that's what we're funded to do, we do answer questions about other laws just because they end up being related, a lot of times, to the ADA, and people have questions about those.

Jan Garrett: So we do end up answering those questions. People can also email us at Adatech, that's A-D-A T-E-C-H at adapacific.org. Adatech@adapacific.org. So they can email us, of course, anytime. It doesn't have to be between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, but we do answer the phone during all those hours, including lunch time. People are often surprised when they get someone on the phone and they say, "Wow, every number I call, everywhere else, I get a recording." So I think people find it helpful to actually get a live person. But feel free to also email us if you're not calling Monday through Friday, eight to five. And we can talk you through things, we can talk with you about California law or Hawaii law or Nevada law, at least as it relates to disability issues, as it relates to building code issues for accessibility, other things like that.

Jan Garrett: So that's the advantage of the ADA centers being regional is that we can, not only know what the federal laws are, we can also know about state laws and about state building codes and other things of that nature. So that's helpful to people. And we often talk through buildings with architects or with the building code officials or with individuals with disabilities, so we talk about a wide variety of issues. And I must say that probably our most popular issue, in many forms, is service animals. So whether it be a service animal, an emotional support animal, other kinds of animals, we get lots of calls about that, both from the business community and people with disabilities, and from people in housing as well, from housing owners, as well as tenants and residents. So lots of calls about that. But we certainly answer questions across the board about many different things.

Jan Garrett: We also have lots of materials. We have a lot of materials that we send out electronically these days, so we'll send them out by email or people can download them from our website. They can also download them from the ADA National Network website, which is Adata.org, which stands for ADA Technical Assistance, but it's Adata.org. And so there's lots and lots of materials there, as well as our materials.

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Jan Garrett: And we are also in a leadership role, with regard to the ADA National Network, in working on emergency preparedness issues, which I know is of interest to many of you. And so, we have done a number of webinars, actually, since 2012. We have many webinars that are now archived on the website. And we do one pretty much every month. Sometimes there are months that we skip, but most of the time we're doing some sort of emergency preparedness and inclusion of people with disabilities webinar. And we have people from FEMA on those webinars. We have people from the International Code Council. We have people from other states describing what best practices they've used in emergency preparedness, in a variety of ways, with regard to people with disabilities and inclusion. So there are many, many different topics on those webinars that are available, and they're free, and they're always on the second Thursday of the month at 11:30 AM, Pacific Time.

Jan Garrett: So you're welcome to sign up. You do have to pre-register, but you don't have to pay anything. You just have to put in your email, and then we'll send you an email confirming that you've registered, and then you can sign in when the time comes because we send you a link. And we use Blackboard Collaborate to do the webinars because we found that it's the most accessible webinar system that's out there that we have found. So we do encourage you to listen to the webinars. We also encourage you to go to our website under the emergency preparedness section, and there are many materials there as well, that you might find useful, that you can download. And if there's ever any technical assistance that we can give you about emergency preparedness, we're also happy to do that. So that's... And the other piece that we do a lot of is training, so we do it through webinars but we also do in-person training. And we do our conference pretty much every year. So that's something that we do for lots of different people, lots of different groups, that's available. So before I move away, are there any questions that people may have about the ADA Center, and what we do, and how we can help you?

Beth Kenny: I have some questions. So first, I want to know what the webinars... Are they archived so that we can go back and watch old ones?

Jan Garrett: They are, they're archived all the way back to the first ones from 2012.

Beth Kenny: And so you work with the state laws and the federal laws, which is amazing. Do you work in conjunction with any of the state or federal organizations like the EEOC or Department of Fair Employment and Housing?

Jan Garrett: Well, we definitely partner with them, and we partner with many of them to present at our conferences, but also, the advantage of the ADA National Network across the country is that we receive direct training from the EEOC, the Department of Justice, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Education, so the Federal Agencies give us direct training. And so we often know things a little bit early, and that's helpful for us in terms of giving technical assistance and training. And we have direct contacts with those agencies. Now, we don't really give out direct contacts, but it means that we can call them directly and get a specific opinion from them about a particularly grey area that someone may have called us about. So we work directly with them. And we do have some contacts at the state level as well, that we can call and get more of an opinion on difficult, challenging questions.

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Beth Kenny: Wonderful. Do any other commissioners have questions? Or I... Go ahead, Commissioner Lewis.

Tony Lewis: Yes, I was wondering, have you done any training or work with the rideshares? You mentioned about service animals. The rideshares, Uber or Lyft, in terms of taking service animals or... Have you got anything with that?

Jan Garrett: We have not actually worked with the rideshare companies. They have not asked us to work with them.

Tony Lewis: I guess the bigger question is, has anybody reached out to you who've been discriminated, with service animals?

Jan Garrett: Not to us specifically, no. And if they have, it was just for technical assistance for us to tell them, "Is this discrimination under the ADA or is it not?" which we would have said, "Yes, it is, if they have turned you down because you have a guide dog or another service animal." And actually, there are specific policies, at least I'm aware of, with Uber that I have actually seen, that they have a policy that says you must accept people with service animals, and you can be disciplined or decommissioned, whatever they call it, as a driver if you do not accept people that have service animals. So I specifically have seen that policy and know that it exists, and we can tell people about that.

Tony Lewis: Yes, and I guess also, the thing with service animals is that there seems to be a lot of confusion about therapy dog service animals, emotional support. Is there any training that you've done with them? Have employers reached out to you about training regarding it? For them, what's clear about that? The differences, and what constitutes what, and what is a legal certified service animals, emotional support animal, or a therapy animal?

Jan Garrett: Well, sometimes employers have reached out to us. I will say that I think the concept of service animals, and maybe even emotional support animals in the work place, is a relatively new concept, even though service animals have been around for a while. I don't think they've been in the work place all that much, although they are starting to be more so, except for of course people who are blind who have brought their guide dogs, and I think that's been happening for quite some time. But other service animals haven't really been that prevalent in the work place, and I do think that's starting to change. But the people who call us more often about service animals are businesses, restaurants, shops, other kinds of businesses that are wondering, do they have to allow these animals? What questions can they ask?

Jan Garrett: All of those kinds of things. And then we have a lot of housing providers that call us as well, because in housing, it's different. Housing needs to allow service animals and emotional support animals. So the landlords and housing providers, and tenants as well, often have questions about what kinds of animals can be allowed in housing. So that's mostly the people that call us about service animals and emotional support animals.

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Beth Kenny: So are the businesses and organizations that you work with, are they self-selecting in that they reach out to you? Or do you ever get... have people who are referred... that might be having problems understanding, whether it be the ADA or Unruh Act, can they be referred to you.

Jan Garrett: They can, and people call us all the time that are referred. But because we're a neutral entity, and I do want to stress that. We don't do enforcement of any kind, and we don't take a side. We just tell people what the law is. And we think it's important that we're neutral because we do want everyone to call us, and we want people to know that if they call us, we're not going to call Department of Justice, or we're not going to call Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to tell on them or to turn them in, in some way. We're just going to give them information. And sometimes an employee can call us and tell us, an employee with a disability, many things that are happening and the difficulty they may be having with reasonable accommodation with their employer, and 10 minutes later the employer calls, and it's clear that it's the employer of the employee who had just called.

Jan Garrett: But because all of our calls are confidential, we don't tell either one of them that we have talked to the other, and we give them both the same information. So that's one advantage of having us is that we would give everybody the same information across the board. We don't take sides, we don't enforce, and we don't reveal any calls or emails that we've had.

Beth Kenny: Well, thank you very much. Does anyone else have a question?

Tony Lewis: I have one more. So in a case, there was a gentlemen two weeks ago who mentioned to me, he was in a wheelchair. At the post office, he has a PO Box that's out of his reach from his wheelchair, and so what's customary was, he asked the person behind the window to get his mail out of his PO Box, and she refused, because she said that it was illegal for her to touch someone's mail. So he was upset, and the customers in line were upset, everybody was upset about it. What you're saying is that you wouldn't call the post office and say, "Hey you're out of compliance." You would just give him the information, the citation of the law, and say to him, "This is what you can tell the person."

Jan Garrett: Well, we would give him the information, and if we know that someone can complain to a specific person, if we know that there's a specific entity or person with whom they can file a complaint, we will tell them how to do that. We will give them the website or the phone number, the name of the entity or the person, and tell them that they can file a complaint. For example, US Postal Service is under the Rehabilitation Act because it's federal government, and we would tell people to complain to the Postmaster, because that's who they would have to work with in terms of anything disability-related and mail. And that's our understanding. But we know who to complain to a Department of Justice, we know the complaint process at EEOC, at lots of the state agencies, so we would not only give them what the law is, but we would tell them how to complain, if that's what they wish to do.

Beth Kenny: Does anyone else have any more questions? Well, thank you very much Jan, this was very informative. I'm really looking forward to checking out the emergency preparedness stuff you have, and I'd love to touch base with you at some point about it.

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Jan Garrett: That would be great. We would welcome that, and we hope that you'll find our website useful, and that you'll call us with any questions or any materials that we can help you with.

Beth Kenny: Thank you very much.

Jan Garrett: Thank you.

[applause]

Jan Garrett: Thank you. Bye. Thank you.

5. OLD BUSINESS

5-A Commission and Board Liaison Reports (All Commissioners)

Beth Kenny: Now we move on to old business. Item 5A is Commission and Board Liaison Reports. So in this section, we need people to talk about if their sub-committees have met and what has happened, or the board or commission that you're assigned to, if there's anything that Commission on Disability should be aware of. So Commissioner Brillinger, Vice-Chair Brillinger, would you like to go first?

Arnold Brillinger: Yes. I want to talk about the Transportation Commission. The important thing that I want to make sure that you know is that the ICS, that's where AC Transit meets with officials from Alameda and goes over the different routes and how things were working in Alameda, they've got a meeting, I believe it's on the 18th at 10:00 AM in the morning, and it's in the room right next to the conference room, right back there. They're going to be talking about having AC Transit include the Main ferry terminal, the Main Street ferry terminal. They've got three different options. It's online that you can check it out. If you want, you can send me an email, and I'll pass it over to you of where it is. And to me, I'm always interested in transportation here in the city and the whole East Bay, because that's the only way that I get around. I can't get into anybody else's car. I can't get into a taxi. I have to use the buses and BART, and so forth. And also, I could get on the ferry. So I'm always interested in how to make that easier. So I just wanted to bring that up to the Commission, so that you would be aware of it.

Beth Kenny: Thank you. Is there anything else you would like to discuss? I think you did a street fair?

Arnold Brillinger: Well, we did a street fair, and Jen and Lisa and Tony was there. Anto helped with getting the stuff over to Park Street, and also taking it back. And so we did have a lot of participation here from the Commission. One of the things was we were in front of the Walgreens, right there on Park Street, and next to us were a couple of other booths, and they were all up on the sidewalk, even though most of the people were down in the street. But they were up on the sidewalk because across the street from us was where the big rides were, the things for kids to play on, the

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various things like a merry-go-round type things. And so they had us up on the curb. Then on the corner where the cut-out is, where I would normally go down, that was blocked by a tent. They were selling something over there.

Arnold Brillinger: And I complained. I complained to the police, I complained to the people that put on the whole deal, and most of them were eager to just say, "Well, someone had to okay it for them to be blocking the sidewalk and there's nothing that we could do about it." But I did file complaints even with Laurie, because if someone was in the street and wanted to know about something that we had on our table, and if I wanted to come around and see them and talk to them, by the time I went down to Smashburger, they'd left.

Arnold Brillinger: They figured I'd deserted them. And so then I had to go around several times that way, and that was a problem. And it's one of those things that only people with mobility issues would have noticed that. I think that it probably needs someone to help them out in some of those areas and say, "No, here's a place where people can get on the sidewalk to the street. Let's not block it." But we did have quite a few people stop by, and we did have some times when the wind gust came. Jenny bought a bunch of bottled water to put up on them, so we had some weights. And it was a good event for us.

Beth Kenny: Wonderful, I'm glad to hear that. As far as the blocking of the curb cut, do you think that it might be a good idea for us to follow up with a letter from the Commission to the people who put on the fair, which I believe is the Park Street Business District, just reminding them that that is not something that they should be doing?

Lisa Hall: Excuse me, but that should never happen again.

Beth Kenny: Yes. Do you think that something like that might be appropriate in this case? It can be friendly, but "Hey, this is a problem that needs to... You can't do this."

Arnold Brillinger: "Bringing this to your attention."

Beth Kenny: Yes.

Tony Lewis: I was wondering, it's even for strollers or crutches, or anybody who's navigating there.

Beth Kenny: Yes. Well, yes, and I definitely think that it might be nice to draft a letter, and then at our next meeting, we can vote on whether we want to send this letter or not. Would you like to draft it Arnold?

Arnold Brillinger: I will.

Beth Kenny: Okay. Thank you.

Susan Deutsch: I also volunteered and I was at the fair also. And I also think there was a problem with the location, being right across from the rides. Because I think a lot of people with disabilities

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might not even want to walk that or, even in their wheelchairs, go to that section, because that section was mostly kids and families. And it seemed like we were out of place in that location, that we really should have been more central to the fair.

Tony Lewis: Trafficked area, yes.

Lisa Hall: We were in the last block.

Susan Deutsch: Yes, because a lot of people did not come by ... at least when I was there.

Tony Lewis: It was more of an accident if they did.

Susan Deutsch: Yes.

Beth Kenny: Yes, I think that we can definitely ask about that. I do want to point out, though, that part of that is our fault because we did not get our application in until very late, and most of the spots had already been assigned at that point.

Susan Deutsch: Oh, okay. I thought I heard that.

Beth Kenny: I apologize for that.

Susan Deutsch: I thought I heard that they were putting all the non-profits in one section.

Beth Kenny: They were supposed to at one point, and then that fell apart.

Susan Deutsch: Anyway, I think we should think about that for next year.

Lisa Hall: Definitely.

Susan Deutsch: I think there might have been people that would have stopped to get information, but they were, "I don't need to go to that section because that's where the rides are."

Beth Kenny: That's a good point. Thank you. Commissioner Lewis, do you have anything to report?

Tony Lewis: I don't.

Beth Kenny: And Commissioner Deutsch, did you have anything else you'd like to say?

Susan Deutsch: I'm on the Library Liaison, and I got an email just saying that the library is going to be putting out these little libraries all over the park. Right now there are some in Alameda, like in front of people's houses, there's a little booth, there's books. You can take a book, you can put a book in to share. Well a lot of the parks now are going to have that, so that books will be more accessible to people in the community, and there'll be these little booths. Take a book, book share,

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and put books in, and I think it's a nice, really good idea.

Beth Kenny: Oh yes, that sounds wonderful.

Susan Deutsch: Yes, it sounds really good in terms of literacy and leisure reading accessibility.

Beth Kenny: Yes. One thing I was wondering about with the library, when we had the excessive heat, I know that San Francisco was saying, "Oh we have cooling stations. You can go to our libraries or you can go here." I'm wondering if that's something we should explore with the library, if they'll open to being a cooling station, because it's not going to get colder. We're going to have a lot more hot days in the future. And some people with medical issues, they need some place to go to. And there is air-conditioning in the libraries, correct?

Susan Deutsch: Yes, I believe it is there.

Beth Kenny: Yes. So it might just be a matter of them saying, "Oh, we'll be fine with that."

Susan Deutsch: Yes, it would be.

Beth Kenny: Because they're open anyways. Thank you Susan, Commissioner Deutsch? Commissioner Linton?

Jenny Linton: I'm on the event committee and I also went to the street fair, and the thing I would add, first of all, I saw everything that everyone else saw at the fair, and I would agree with the assessment. Regarding Arnold's comment about accessibility, the event was actually in the middle of the sidewalk, so it wasn't only just made inaccessible from the street, it blocked the whole sidewalk.

Beth Kenny: That might be a good thing to include in the letter.

Arnold Brillinger: It blocked the whole side.

Beth Kenny: Yes, because I've seen that before and it's definitely problematic. So if you can include that in the letter - that would be great.

Arnold Brillinger: Sure.

Beth Kenny: Commissioner Hall, did you have anything you'd like to talk about?

Lisa Hall: I do. I appreciated Jan speaking. I met her at my first Pacific ADA Center Update Conference on September 21st and 22nd, along with Anto and Laurie, in San Francisco. I thought it was a wonderful cornucopia of information. There were three different workshops at each session, so you could attend six different sessions throughout both days. Different entities such as the US Access Board, Disability Rights Education, and Defense Fund, Legal Aid at Work, were among some of the presenters. Topics varied from employment cases under ADA, recent regulations and

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settlements, emergency preparedness, fair housing and accessibility, service animals, recreation and medical equipment and facilities. ADA has been around, I don't know if she mentioned that, since 1991, and it's been instrumental in bringing rights and awareness to the disability community.

Lisa Hall: We are so fortunate to have the Pacific ADA Center right next door in Oakland. They're there to answer questions, educate, and assist. We received a great emergency preparedness resources of names, addresses, emails, etcetera, which was wonderful, and so many knowledgeable presenters. It was almost mind-boggling.

Lisa Hall: I so enjoyed it. My brain was on overload after two days. But it was just a bundle of information and really eye-opening. So feeling like you can see where their changes have been, progress has been, and where we're going, and I feel we're very lucky again, like I said, to have Pacific ADA Center right there. They were all just wonderful, and I look forward to going back next year. Also, I do want to mention at the end of this month, there is the Asian group, Disability Awareness Project Summit. Again, it's the second year. It's called "Making the Invisible Visible", and it's going to be at Maya Lin School, and it's from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM on Saturday, October 28th, and they have workshops, information speakers.

Lisa Hall: And again, I attended it last year. It was wonderful. I cannot attend this one, but I would definitely recommend you guys to come, to go and attend. Austin Tam, many of you know, is chairing this event, and it's really a good, informative event, especially around our children with many disabilities including the mental illness, so they address a lot.

Beth Kenny: Thank you, Commissioner Hall. I would like to report about the Universal Design sub-committee. We are going to have our first reading of the Universal Design Ordinance at the next city council meeting on October 17th. So that is next Tuesday. It's a pretty full agenda, so fingers crossed that we aren't bumped. But it's very exciting. The process will go through the first reading, and then there'll be a second reading, and then if everything goes well, it should be adopted. And you are all probably sick of hearing about Universal Design. We've been working on this all for so long, but I am very excited for this, and anyone who can come, should try and come to that meeting. We have a couple other things that pertain to the CDI at that staff meeting that I think Laurie is going to talk about, but I'm very excited about the first reading of the UDO. The other thing I wanted to say is, Commissioner Lewis, I think you wanted to be part of the Emergency Preparedness Sub-Committee, is that true? I couldn't remember who it was.

Tony Lewis: I don't remember that.

Beth Kenny: Okay.

Tony Lewis: I certainly would be open to it, for sure.

Beth Kenny: Because I would like to have the Emergency Preparedness Sub-Committee meet in the next two weeks. There's so much going on that every time I see something new I'm like, "We have got to get that done, we have to get on top of that." So, anyone who wants to be part of the Emergency Preparedness Sub-Committee, please come talk to me afterwards and we'll figure out a

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date. Thank you. And so that concludes old business.

6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

6-A Upcoming at the October 17th City Council: UDO, Proclamations, name change

Beth Kenny: Staff communication.

Laurie Kozisek: I'm happy to announce that at the next community council meeting, we will have the proclamation that will be for White Cane Day and Disability Awareness Month. They sort of combined the thing into one proclamation. That'll be at the beginning of the meeting, hopefully. And then, later, we'll have the first reading of the Universal Design Ordinance, and then the second reading will be a month later, in which they'll actually vote on it and have a public hearing. And then, way at the end of the meeting, is the change of the mission's title from "Commission on Disability Issues" to "Commission on Disability." And hopefully they'll get to that too, but it was one of the last items.

Beth Kenny: Thank you very much.

Tony Lewis: I had a question about the proclamation, Laurie. Are they going to be giving the proclamation to someone to receive or are they just going to read the proclamation? I just want to know how that one's going to work.

Laurie Kozisek: Normally, the way it works is, either one or a bunch of people come up, and the mayor reads the proclamation and then hands it to a representative of the interested group. Like if it's the Boys and Girls Club, or some members of the Commission, or you had a person who is an activist in the Lion community, I believe, who's interested? Whoever will accept the proclamation and get a photo op.

Beth Kenny: Yes.

Tony Lewis: Yes, there's going to be quite a few folks coming for the White Cane.

Laurie Kozisek: Okay, great. They can all stand up in front and everyone will clap, then somebody will take the proclamation.

Tony Lewis: Oh, okay.

Laurie Kozisek: You want us to get it in Braille? I can do that.

Tony Lewis: You can put it into Braille?

Laurie Kozisek: Yes.

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Tony Lewis: Laurie is multi-talented, I want you to know. I did a dragon boat with her the other week, which was pretty fun and amazing. No, I think we'll be fine, but you could if you... I have a Braille printer, so if you wanted to do that, I could print it for you.

Laurie Kozisek: Oh, could you print that on Braille?

Tony Lewis: What's that?

Laurie Kozisek: A lot faster than my slate and stylus.

Tony Lewis: Okay. Yes, if you wanted to do that, I could do it. If you could email it to me, I could do it, give her a printout of it.

Laurie Kozisek: Okay, I'll do that.

Tony Lewis: Okay.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Beth Kenny: Wonderful. So Section Seven, Announcements. I don't know if any of you have seen it, but we got a new banner for Disability Awareness month and it's been hanging up, so thank you, Laurie.

Laurie Kozisek: Actually, Kerry Parker did that because I was a little swamped. It's going to hang over Park Street for a week, and then over Webster Street for a week.

Beth Kenny: Yes. And does anyone have any other announcements they'd like to make? Then I move we adjourn the meeting.

Laurie Kozisek: Wait, wait. We need to ask if we have any speakers. Did either of you want to speak?

Beth Kenny: Carol, are you speaking about the Pacific ADA?

Carol Gottstein: I didn't know if anybody else had heard of Christina Hansen? She was a 28-year-old woman in a wheelchair, who just died in the Sonoma fire because she was in a wheelchair. CNN reported on how she had called everyone she knew. She lived right next door to her father, and her father was evidently the only one who tried to get her out, but he sustained third degree burns over more than half his body, and right now he's in a medically induced coma. They couldn't even airlift him to a burn center because the helicopters couldn't fly. So that, more than anything, underscores the importance of emergency preparedness and knowing where all the disabled people are in the community.

Carol Gottstein: I have one more thing, it's really completely separate. I didn't think of it until after

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the time to speak had passed, so I apologize. People who have low-income or are disabled are eligible for what's called the VITA Program, which is Volunteer Income Tax Assistance. It's funded by the federal government, and there are certain places around every area where people can go to have their taxes prepared for free. But, of course, these places have to be physically accessible. And most of them only operate during tax season. And if you get nailed by the franchise tax board or somebody for a delinquent tax return, even though you can still file between April and October, only problem is, there's no places open in the East Bay except one.

Carol Gottstein: I had to go there last year and I found that even though they had one of those blue disabled signs out on the front of their building, it's all on the second floor and there's no elevator, and the doorbell didn't work. So I filed a complaint against the Internal Revenue Service with the Department of the Treasury, and they found in my favor. And after six months of going back and forth and filing lots of paperwork, I got a list of things that the IRS has to do to correct this, including move it off the second floor or put it in another building, because they actually did send a site person out to explore the site and they discovered there's only stairway access and the doorbell doesn't work, so if a disabled person who can't use the stairs does show up at the front door, they can't even let the people on the second floor know that they're there. And there was no alternative.

Carol Gottstein: I mean I literally couldn't file my tax return without help and they were the only place in the East Bay. I would have to go to San Francisco to find another place. So I'm happy to share more about that if you ever want to hear about it in another meeting.

Beth Kenny: Thank you for doing that. That helps quite a few people, I'm sure.

Tony Lewis: Congratulations.

Beth Kenny: Also, if you're interested in being part of the Emergency Preparedness Sub-Committee, you're more than welcome to join us.

Tony Lewis: I wanted to mention too, I believe that there is another VITA site, but they only do operate during tax season.

Lisa Hall: I also want to just add that what you brought up is so, so sad and true. One of the workshops was, that I did attend, was the emergency planning and preparedness for people with disabilities and the cities they live in, and the gentleman told us some very sad stories about a gentleman was taking a night class, on the third floor, and the whole high school had to be evacuated, and the elevator didn't work. And they had to have all these firemen come, he was in a wheelchair, and they had to have all these firemen come and help bring him down by the stairs, and it took like an hour and a half. Thank God it wasn't a fire. But nonetheless, it was just one example of how vulnerable people with disabilities are, especially in a situation like that. What you did is a very good thing, to make the complaints, because this is what we have to do. We have to make businesses, including our own IRS, aware of these things.

Susan Deutsch: Yes, I just want to say that, in terms of evacuation of people in wheelchairs... When I was working in Berkeley, any student that had a class on the second floor, or if there were

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any stairs that there had to be an evacuation chair, somewhere near that classroom, hanging on the wall, and the teachers and instructional assistants and other people on that site had to be trained on how to use that evacuation chair, how to get somebody down the stairs, and I think it's really critical. And I know that when the person came to talk to us about that, about emergency preparedness, that was not part of what she talked about, and I remember bringing that up to her that there are these evacuation chairs that allow you to get somebody out of a building in an emergency. But you all know.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Beth Kenny: Thank you very much. Unless there are any other announcements, I would like to move that we adjourn tonight's meeting.

Lisa Hall: I second.

Beth Kenny: All right, all in favor?

All: Aye.

Beth Kenny: Thank you everybody.

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Kozisek
City Staff Liaison
Commission on Disability Issues

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