



# **COMMISSION ON DISABILITY**

## **MINUTES**

Wednesday, October 13, 2021, 1:00P.M.

Department on Disability

Zoom Video Conference

### **COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

Myrna Cabanban

David Wolf

Robert Williams

Dr. Robert Bitonte

Richard Rothenberg

Alisa Schlesinger

Iran Hopkins

Candace Cable

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

Betty Wilson

### **DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY:**

Stephen David Simon, Executive Director

Jaime Pacheco-Orozco, Assistant Executive Director

Sergio Samayoa, Director, Administrative Services Division

Lourdes Sinibaldi, Director, Community Outreach Referrals and Education

Ricki Rosales, Director, AIDS Coordinator's Office

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Minutes October 13, 2021

Page 2 of 8

Geoffrey Straniere, Director, Disability and Access Services Division  
Juliana Soto, Administrative Clerk, AIDS Coordinator's Office

**OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS:**

Chris Lee, City Attorney III, City Attorney's Office

Chief Beatrice Girmala, Director, Office of Operations, Los Angeles Police Department.

**GUESTS:**

Anny Surmenian, ADA Coordinator for LAWA  
Tim Ihle, Director of Human Resources, LAWA

**ITEM NO. (1): APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

The Commission will review the minutes of the September 2021 meeting and vote to approve them.

Action Taken: The Commission approved the minutes for September 8, 2021.

**ITEM NO. (2): PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

**ITEM NO. (3): DISABILITY AND THE LAPD**

City Chief Beatrice Girmala, Director, Office of Operations, Los Angeles Police Department. Chief Girmala will discuss items of note for the LAPD, in regards to disability, personnel, and the last year as one of the nation's largest first responder department's during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The LAPD's priority is to ensure that people involved in our department's wellness programs continue to remain connected with those suffering from issues that are limiting their ability to return full-time or to return at all at this point. They have lost 13 employees of the police department to COVID-19 and have other employees who have been impacted and continue to be impacted with health issues. LAPD also reviewed the shrinking workforce issues due to the attrition planned and unplanned. Currently, they are down almost 700 officers that is affecting deployment in their quest to keep the community healthy

# COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Minutes October 13, 2021

Page 3 of 8

and safe. COVID-19 has taken a toll and increased the need to address of physical and mental health. Currently, LADP is partnering with their Behavioral Science Service Division and has appointed Dr. Dorian to operate wellness and training days in all 21 areas of LAPD operations. LAPD has also instituted an equity inclusion officer at the rank of Commander to work on internal and external relationships with the community to ensure diversity and inclusion. Chief Beatrice Girmala would like Dr. Dorian to present for the next COD meeting and highlight the activity that LAPD is doing around physical and mental health.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

## **ITEM NO. (4): DISABILITY ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DAAAC) – LOS ANGELES WORLD AIRPORTS (LAWA)**

Julia Mockeridge, of the DAAAC will inform the COD of the events and challenges LAWA has faced over the last year from the perspective and duties of the DAAAC.

The Disability Access and Accommodation Advisory Committee (DAAAC) assists Airport Management in identifying barriers to travel, and recommends ways to address the needs of the traveling public with disabilities. Committee members serve as eyes and ears of the disability community in helping make our airports more accessible and user friendly. Committee members also serve as a catalyst for informing the disabilities community of initiatives LAWA is taking to serve them better. Julia Mockeridge, PT, DPT is a board member for the last two years and is giving the Commission an update on the activities of the DAAAC. Her experience for the past two years indicates that the representative from LAWA departments including TSA, CPB, LAFP, LAX police department, airport operations and airlines, and other such entities, are very supportive of DAAAC and committed to joint goals. However, there have been some challenges that she has noted with her time on DAAAC. Most recently, there has not been consistent representation from the City Attorney's Office for the past several months. It was not until this past month's meeting that someone was present. Ms. Mockeridge hopes that going forward that they will have a regular presence because their expertise is very valued by the committee. Another challenge has been the inability for the DAAAC to tour areas in the airport. DAAAC bylaws state the committee will physically inspect at least one LAWA airport or related facility once per year. While they are made aware of the status of multiple construction projects and request for representation as most updates are honored by the respective departments. However, the ability to physically inspect areas has not been achieved and have never been formally invited to inspect areas of LAWA. The DAAAC informally inspected the Mid Field Satellite Concourse west gates and created

# COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Minutes October 13, 2021

Page 4 of 8

an informal document titled *Informal ADA Observations of the Mid-Field Satellite Concourse, MSC* it was prepared in August of 2021 and submitted by DAAAC Chairperson Cabanban and illustrates concerns about the access for travelers that will impact the potentially positive travelling experience at LAWA. DOD and COD will be partnering up with DAAAC and LAWA to reach the goal of becoming the most accessible city in America and creating a letter requesting a formal walk-through at LAX.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

## **ITEM NO. (5): DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY – Project update**

The Department on Disability Division Managers will review division functions, metrics, achievements, and goals for the past and upcoming year. Presentations were conducted by Lourdes Sinibaldi, Jaime Pacheco-Orozco, Sergio Samayoa, Ricki Rosales, and Geoffrey Straniere.

- I. The AIDS Coordinator's Office (ACO) Division is committed to developing and supporting programs and policies that prevent transmission and acquisition of HIV and improve the quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS. Juliana Soto presented on the Healthy Living Project, a collaboration with Aids Project Los Angeles Health and Cal State University, that is focused on older adults living with HIV/AIDS in Los Angeles. The goal of the project included where and what type of services they receive, understanding barriers and challenges to getting services, identifying service gaps, and exploring possible programs for this community. The populations that were studied were: Gay and Bisexual men, Spanish-speaking gay and bisexual men, heterosexual men, transgender women, cisgender women. The research highlighted the stigma, barriers to care, and concluded that the intersection of race, gender and sexual orientation cannot be addressed in silos. Practitioners must address intersectional stigma for interventions and access to care initiatives that have a significant impact and need for policy and advocacy priorities for those aging with HIV.
- II. The Community Outreach Referrals and Education (CORE) division is comprised of five team members: one that specializes on homelessness services, one that specializes on 508 services, one on information and referrals, a part-time graphic designer, and one division head. This year the division is shifting their focus from a lot of our events and INR to focusing on addressing homelessness and disability related inquiries for people that experience homelessness. CORE has recently had the

# COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Minutes October 13, 2021

Page 5 of 8

launch of the durable medical equipment through CBD funding to eliminate barriers that were often seeing on the streets for the need an insurance card the need for a doctor to sign off on some type of prescription. They have received \$75,000 that is allowing for the purchase durable medical equipment that includes walkers, rollers, wheelchairs, things of that nature to provide to people with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness. CORE will also continue to provide 400 warm hand-off referrals so in our last year we provided about 75 referrals with outside agencies and continue their partnerships to be able to provide services to people with disabilities.

- III. The Disability Access Services Division (DASD) coordinates and monitors the City's compliance with the ADA and related laws, and provides technical assistance to ensure people with disabilities have access to facilities and programs. The DASD team is Carey, Deisy, John, Luis, Rick, Kendra, and Steve and each play a critical role in helping to accomplish both the directives and the metric goals. The DASD addresses a number of services that include homelessness issues, emergency response teams, legal concerns, transportation concerns, emergency management concerns, blue curb, and the sidewalk program. For the 2,421 Accessible Parking Zone Blue Curb requests processed, 4,110 Sidewalk Repair Program Access Requests processed, field evaluated more than 40 COVID testing sites, 950+ technical assistance support engagements for small business, 700+ technical assistance support engagement for constituents, and continued to support Mayor's office initiatives for more than 2,400 Al Fresco permits. DASD is currently working on the completion of 338 Self-Evaluation assessments, capturing data intake consisting of facility features, program access, service provisions, and activities offered for the purpose of establishing an updated and comprehensive Transition Plan, full data intake is on target to be completed by July 2023.
- IV. The Administrative Services Division (ASD) provides support necessary to help DOD improve operational capabilities, while establishing Departmental processes designed for stability and growth. The ASD team is Gail, Ling, Salina, and Sergio. The ASD managed DOD's budget of \$4,509,607 during the 2020-21 Fiscal Year, not including \$371,000 of "off budget" Special Funds allocated for the Self Evaluation / Transition Plan Initiative increased the Department's annual budget allocation by \$290,639 in the 2021-22 Fiscal Year Adopted Budget, resulting in three (3) additional positions and various as-needed student workers; successfully applied for \$75,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds to purchase and provide Durable Medical Equipment for people with disabilities; and tracked and reported \$800,000 in payroll and contractual expenses for the Meals for People with Disabilities Program,

funded by the CARES Act as part of the emergency response to COVID-19. Some of the challenges last year include losing two (2) critical and highly experienced DOD employees as a result of the Separation Incentive Program: Accounting Clerk and Management Analyst, the ability to process accounts payables (40% of DOD's budget), provide services related to IT. Accessible communications were reduced, and the City is experiencing a labor shortage, especially in the area of accounting, as evidenced in the most recent round of interviews. The challenges will shape our short-term efforts, as well as our long-term strategies.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

### **ITEM NO. (6): PRESENTATION ON BROWN ACT**

Chris Lee, Deputy City Attorney, will briefly review the Brown Act from a historical perspective, as well as the changes that have been implemented during the Covid 19 Pandemic, and future expectations.

Under the Brown Act, it is especially important to follow open meeting requirements that allow the public to participate. A meeting is when Commissioners are present in one location and a quorum is when there are more than five Commission members for one meeting. However, there are also "chain meetings" and "wheel meetings." Chain meetings are when one person speaks to another about a Commission item, and the item is discussed from Commissioner to Commissioner in a chain of five people. A wheel meeting is when one person contacts five or more Commissioners individually; the initial contact is at the center, and each Commissioner is like a spoke on a wheel. Both of these types of meetings are a violation of the Brown Act. There are specific instances where a closed meeting is appropriate, such as personnel matters and negotiations. Notice is still required to be given to the public, and the outcome of the closed session meeting has to be reported. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many public meetings are being held virtually or through teleconferencing. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, AB 361 went into effect and allows the Brown Act body for the Commission on Disability to hold their meetings virtually via Zoom provided that the COD meets certain criteria and have certain findings every 30 days or less. The findings are: one is the state of emergency continues to directly impact the members to meet safely in person and the second is state or local officials continue to impose measures to impose social distances. The Department of Health in California continues to recommend social distancing as part of our routine. If the COD can make those two findings, they may continue to have the meeting through teleconferencing.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

**ITEM NO. (7): COMMISSION ON DISABILITY – ONGOING INITIATIVES**

Discussion of ongoing initiatives from the Commission members.

**A. SSI MOBILE OUTREACH**

Commissioner V.P. Bitonte and Sam Frank will review new information pertaining to the SSI Mobile Outreach initiative. The COD will continue to work and get an action for the SSI Mobile Outreach initiative.

**B. TNC (Transportation Network Company) ACCESS FOR ALL**

The CPUC will update the Commission on the current state of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs), access and accommodation among TNCs, and the progress of the ACCESS FOR ALL fund as created by SB 1376. The COD needs more data on the program to see where funds can be allocated for people with disabilities. COD will present again with any new updates related to this topic.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

**ITEM NO. (8): EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Ongoing update on items relating to Department activities, metrics, budget, planning, and/or other relevant issues. Presentation was conducted by Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability. ReelAbilities is taking place this weekend and runs all day Saturday and Sunday. DOD is hosting panels with filmmakers from all the films and will have expert discussions addressing Hollywood and accessibility. Tickets are on a sliding scale from \$0 to \$8 per show, \$20 all day passes for Saturday and Sunday and \$40 all-festival pass.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

**ITEM NO. (9): NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Suggested items for the next regular meeting's agenda and announcements from Commissioners, DOD staff, and guests. No suggested new business and announcements.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

**ITEM NO. (10): ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT APPROXIMATELY 3:04 P.M.