



COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 18, 2024 2:00 P.M.

Department on Disability

Board of Public Works Hearing Room 350, City Hall

200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Zoom Video Conference

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Akiko Tagawa, President
Jorge E. Acevedo, 2nd Vice President
Alisa Schlesinger, Commissioner
Candace Cable, Commissioner
Iran Hopkins, Commissioner
Robert Bitonte, Commissioner
Myrna Cabanban, Commissioner

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Mary Grace A. Barrios, 1st Vice President
Robert Williams, Commissioner

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Minutes January 18, 2024

Page 2 of 5

DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY:

Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability

OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS:

GUESTS:

Annabelle de St. Maurice MD MPH, Unit Director, Syndromic Surveillance and Community Outbreak Team at the Division of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention.

Jorge Minor, MD, Medical Director, Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation and Therapy Services, Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center.

ITEM NO. (1): REQUEST FOR TELECONFERENCE OPTION PURSUANT TO AB 2449

In accordance with AB 2449 Section 2(a)(i) members may now notify the legislative body of their need to participate remotely for just cause, if they haven't already done so, including a general description of the circumstances relating to their need to appear remotely. The provisions of this clause shall not be used by any member of the legislative body for more than two meetings per calendar year.

Action Taken: There were no Commission members attending the Commission on Disability meeting virtually. No action required by the Commission on Disability.

ITEM NO. (2): APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the November 2023 regular meeting and will vote to approve them.

Action Taken: The Commission approved the minutes for the November 2023 regular meeting.

ITEM NO. (3): PUBLIC COMMENT

For items not on today's agenda, but under the Commission's jurisdiction, members of the public who wish to speak on items shall be allowed to speak for up to two minutes per item up to a total of five minutes per meeting.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (4): COVID UPDATE - LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Annabelle de St. Maurice MD MPH, Unit Director, Syndromic Surveillance and Community Outbreak Team at the Division of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention will present on Covid-19 and Disabilities, focusing on vaccinations, current trends, Long Covid and other relevant aspects of the response and development of Covid-19 in the greater Los Angeles area.

- I. Presentation is by Annabelle de St. Maurice MD MPH, Unit Director, Syndromic Surveillance and Community Outbreak Team at the Division of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention. In regards to Covid, Los Angeles County is seeing a continued decrease in the emergency department visits and hospitalization for Covid-19 compared to previous years. In regards to disability and the risk of severe Covid, data that the CDC published a couple years ago demonstrate that having certain disabilities including intellectual and developmental disabilities, learning disability, down syndrome, spinal cord injuries and dependence on others for activities of daily living have been associated with an increase in mortality and increased hospitalization from Covid. Long Covid can last weeks, months, or years after developing Covid-19 and can lead to illness such as fatigue or more severe symptoms, including shortness of breath, heart conditions, and neurological symptoms that can significantly impair one's ability to have a healthy life. It is also very important to note that Long Covid is classified as a disability under the ADA. Another study was conducted by the CDC in October 2023 looking into the impact that Long Covid can have on different individuals. The data demonstrated that about 25% of adults nationally with disability ever experienced Long Covid. And this is higher than the percentage without disability who experienced Long Covid, which was 12.6%. It also found that 4.6% of adults in the US had activity limitations from Long Covid and about 5% of all adults in California have activity limitations from Long Covid. The NIH started an initiative to better understand Long Covid and to develop more effective treatments.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (5): COMMISSION COMMITTEE UPDATES

The four current committees: Disabled Homelessness, Policy and Legislation, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Emergency Management will provide updates, recommendations, or other news to the full commission, which the Commission may choose to act upon.

- I. Presentation is by Commission on Disability Committees. Commissioner Robert Bitonte, from the Disabled Homeless Ad Hoc Committee, introduced an item that aims to ensure the City's homelessness services are inclusive of and responsive to the specific needs of the disability community. The action item is to enable the disability community to access critical government resources and services such as the Social Security mobile unit, and will involve making recommendations to the Mayor's Office to supporting existing changes in legislation programs to increase opportunities to serve people with disabilities experiencing homelessness. Presentation is by Jorge Minor, MD, Medical Director, Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation and Therapy Services, Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center about identifying John Doe. The LAPD do not help identifying people unless it is a trauma level one hospital, not a community hospital. The social worker at Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center pleaded the case to a detective and gave them identifiable markers. They were able to find a match to a man from Arkansas. There needs to be a way to identify patients to find out what sort of benefits they may have under various programs if a nonverbal patient is unable to communicate.

Action Taken: The COD Disabled Homelessness Ad Hoc Committee will send a letter to the Mayor's Office and City Council indicating that community hospitals should be given the same resources to identify people as other level one trauma hospitals.

ITEM NO. (6): CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF BETTY WILSON

Former Commissioner, former Executive Director of the Department on Disability, and life-long advocate Betty Wilson will be remembered and honored by the Commission.

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Minutes January 18, 2024

Page 5 of 5

- I. Presentation is by Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability. Betty Wilson was a former commissioner. She lived from February 14, 1936, to November 14, 2023. Older sister to one brother, Lee Wilson. Both born in Chicago. She was determined to blaze new trails and break barriers. At the age of nine she was told she had juvenile rheumatoid arthritis and she would be using crutches and wheelchair the rest of her life. That was no limitation. She did everything to grasp opportunities. Betty was a banner for civil and human rights programs at an early age. She came to California with her mother and brother and worked with Tom Bradley for disability inclusion. She consulted international organizations, governments, and private industry regarding protection of architectural access and cultural diversity. She traveled to Geneva, Italy, South Korea, Mexico, Canada, United Kingdom, Russia, and Africa. There are some that would say she was stubborn and meticulous to a fault but we know her as an incredibly determined leader who knew what compassion really looked like. One of her favorite quotes, "Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there's no path and leave a trail." So, we want to take this moment and recognize Betty Ruth Wilson.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (7): EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ongoing update on items relating to Department activities, metrics, budget, planning, and/or other relevant issues. Presentation is by Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability. In regards to remote access to Brown Act meetings, the Lieutenant Governor requested that the Attorney General of California write an opinion letter about whether public entities are required to offer remote participation as a reasonable accommodation from Americans with Disabilities Act. The department is will be making a recommendation of "yes" to consider the right to have remote access to Brown Act meetings as a form of an accommodation to the Mayor's Office. The department will formally agendize this recommendation for the next COD meeting. The department is also recommending that the Emergency Management Ad Hoc Committee be invited to a meeting hosted by EMD regarding WAYMO, the self-driving cars. As the City's budget moves forward, the department submitted a budget back in November to increasing funding for different positions and the initial funding in the general fund. However, the negotiations with the unions representing City employees with have might have an effect on the budget and filling the various positions in the department. Lastly,

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Minutes January 18, 2024

Page 6 of 5

the ReelAbilities Film Festival will be May 4th and 5th at the California Plaza.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (8): NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Items for the next regular meeting's agenda and announcements from Commissioners, DOD staff, and guests, as well as follow-up items from this or previous commission meetings to be presented at the next meeting. Commissioner Robert Bitonte to present at the City of Los Angeles Innovation and Performance for funding sources. Commissioner Iran Hopkins wanted a presentation on hearing loss for a future COD meeting.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (9): ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED APPROXIMATELY 3:29 P.M.