



Regular Meeting Minutes

City of Los Angeles Commission on Disability

Thursday, November 21, 2024

2:00 P.M.

Edward R. Roybal Board of Public Works Session Room

Room 350

Los Angeles City Hall

200 N. Spring Street

Los Angeles, California 90012

Zoom Video Conference

Commissioners Present:

Akiko Tagawa, President

Mary Grace A. Barrios, 1st Vice President

Myrna Cabanban, 2nd Vice President

Candace Cable, Secretary

Alisa Schlesinger, Commissioner

Iran Hopkins, Commissioner

Jorge E. Acevedo, Commissioner

Robert Bitonte, Commissioner

Robert Williams, Commissioner

Commissioners Absent:

Robert Williams, Commissioner

Mary Grace A. Barrios, 1st Vice President

City Staff Present:

Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability
Alison Everett, Assistant Executive Director, Department on Disability
Kayvon Wroten, DOD Staff
Salina Goytia, DOD Staff
Gail Delgado-Huezo, DOD Staff

Other City Departments:

Kim Kasreliovich, Assistant General Manager, Los Angeles Civil and Human Rights and Equity Department

Guests:

Nicole Bohn, Executive Director, Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)

Item One (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 Two (2) - Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the October 2024 regular meeting and voted to approve them. There was an abstention made by Commissioner Schlesinger .

Action Taken: The Commission approved the minutes for the October 2024 regular meeting.

Item Three (3) - Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda

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 Four (4) - The Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights) Presentation

Kim Kasrelivich, Assistant General Manager of the LA Civil Rights, provided a brief history, related law and regulation, as well as the process of contacting and filing a complaint with the LA Civil Rights.

- I. Kim Kasrelivich explained how the LA Civil Rights Department was created in 2020 as a result of community advocacy, particularly for groups like the Black Workers Center and MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund), to help the people of Los Angeles who might be dealing with civil rights violations at the local level. There are state and federal protections when dealing with disability rights. She stated that the civil and human rights law for the City of Los Angeles says if you live, work, play, or pray in the City, you have the right to be free from discrimination. Adding that you do not have to reside in the City of Los Angeles to file a claim, but the allegation regarding the discrimination or violation of civil rights has to have occurred within the City within the last 3 years. There are a number of protected classes on which a claim could be based upon, disability being one of them. LA Civil Rights enforce civil rights in the private sector, specifically in the area of commerce which includes day to day business transactions like getting a haircut or grocery shopping. Private sector examples are private schools, private employment and case cannot be brought against government entities, LAUSD or the Police. They can also bring cases against housing discrimination with limited jurisdiction. There are many ways to contact

LA Civil Rights and complaints can be made in over 50 languages. Phone lines are staffed with live representatives every day 9:00 am to 5:00 pm with a voicemail return rate of 3 business days. One can also make online complaints. They encourage individuals to reach out, even if unsure about the discrimination, to receive proper guidance or referrals. Confidentiality is maintained as much as possible, and anonymous complaints are accepted, although actual witnesses are often needed. The department aims to fill gaps where private legal action may not be feasible, ensuring that even minor acts of discrimination are addressed to protect the community. More information can be found at civilandhumanrights.lacity.gov.

No Action Taken, information purposes only.

Item Five (5) - Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) Presentation

Nicole Bohn, Executive Director of DREDF discussed DREDF's work where it intersects municipal policy, legal advocacy and support, and the Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), as well as additional resources and news from DREDF.

- I. Nicole Bohn highlighted her prior role as the ADA Coordinator for San Francisco. She briefly explained DREDF's mission to protect and advance disability rights, focusing on areas such as education, housing, healthcare, public benefits, transportation, and more. Nicole emphasized that DREDF is a national organization with over 45 years of experience, providing legal support, parent training, and policy advocacy. DREDF offers technical legal assistance, partners on disability litigation, writes amicus briefs, and provides public statements and blogs on key issues. They also run a parent training center offering services and bilingual education to families with children with disabilities. Their policy work includes advocacy on transportation, healthcare, and education, among other issues. Nicole encouraged the use of DREDF as a resource and shared contact information, emphasizing their commitment to advancing disability rights through legal support, education, and policy work. More information can be found at www.DREDF.org.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

Item Six (6) - Review Commission on Disability Meeting Presentation Coordination Instructions

The Commission reviewed and may choose to approve the draft of the Commission on Disability Meeting Presentation Coordination Instructions..

- I. Alison Everett, Assistant Executive Director, Department on Disability provided background information on the Commission on Disability Meeting Presentation Coordination Instructions steps and template email when reaching out to presenters. Commissioner Barrios motioned to adopt the Commission on Disability Meeting Presentation Coordination Instructions with the amendments of reviewing at the annual COD Retreat and adding a thank you email, Commissioner Bitonte seconded the motion.

Action Taken: The Commission approved the adoption of the Commission on Disability Meeting Presentation Coordination Instructions with the added amendments.

Item Seven (7) - Ad Hoc Committee Updates

The current ad hoc committees - Commission Bylaws and Advocacy, Disability Culture and Legacy, Aviation and Transportation Network Companies (TNC), Accessible Infrastructure and Communication, Housing Equity - provided work plan updates and written recommendations, if any, which the Commission may choose to act upon.

- I. Commissioner Cabanban gave an update on the Commission Bylaws and Advocacy committee stating that a meeting was held and they are waiting on finalization of the Bylaws from DOD staff to continue updates and accomplished the DREDF presentation held today. The committee also wants to draft a letter to the Mayor's office to express concerns regarding the budget and would like potential dates to submit the letter. In addition, the committee has been finding guidelines that the Commission can utilize for recommended language to be used. Stephen Simon referenced February, March and after April 20th 2025 as key dates for budget advocacy with June 1st 2025 being the end date. There were no updates provided by the Disability Culture and Legacy nor the Aviation and TNC committees. Commissioner Barrios provided an update for the Accessible

Infrastructure and Communication committee and stated the committee met virtually and are continuing to work on the list of accessibility barriers in the City of Los Angeles they also contacted the Public Works Department and would like the contact information of the General Manager of the the City of Los Angeles General Services Division (GSD). Commissioner Bitonte provided an update for the Housing Equity committee stating the committee will continue to hold off on any recommendations to the City of Los Angeles until after the new federal administration takes place. Commissioner Bitonte would also like to disseminate previous years reports to the Commission at the next Commission Meeting, and before his recommendation is made.

No Action Taken, information purposes only.

Item Eight (8) - Executive Director's Report

The Department on Disability Executive Director, Stephen David Simon, and/or other department staff will provide an update on items relating to Department activities, metrics, budget, planning, and/or other relevant issues.

- I. Stephen Simon focused on the budget challenges faced by the Department. The Mayor's budget guidelines arrived in late September, with new submission requirements and a strict timeline. Despite these challenges, the team is finalizing the budget for submission. Key points include staffing issues. The City took many vacant positions, and permission is needed to hire for open roles. Several key positions remain unfilled, impacting operations and project management. Resource Reductions: The department faces significant cuts in non-staff resources, particularly affecting outreach and community engagement efforts. Opportunities and Challenges: Major upcoming events like the Olympics, Paralympics, World Cup, and Super Bowl present opportunities for accessibility improvements but strain current staffing capabilities. Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan: Without additional administrative support, the plan may halt. The team is seeking to address these challenges through budget requests and advocacy. The total requested budget is approximately \$6.85 million, including an additional \$1 million to support baseline operations, event preparations, and the self-evaluation plan. The Department's ability to continue its work depends on securing this funding. Every year as part of the Department's executive summary there's a couple of sentences that talk about how our budget is derived or

utilized. The Departments budget breakdown for 2024 - 2025 is 5,607,000 and of that budget, 62.8% is delegated to salaries. 62% goes to those salaries and staff we have and 34.6% to contractual services. 2.6% is the operating budget for regular office administration, HIV and AIDS support, and constituent engagement.

No Action Taken, information purposes only.

Item Nine (9) - New Business and Announcements

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.

- I. DOD staff announced Tiffany Yu is a disability rights advocate and entrepreneur who founded Diversability, a social enterprise aimed at promoting disability pride and inclusion. In October 2024, she published "The Anti-Ableist Manifesto: Smashing Stereotypes, Forging Change, and Building a Disability-Inclusive World." This book examines disability biases and offers guidance on fostering a more inclusive society. She has generously gifted the Commission on Disability a copy of her new book. We appreciate her thinking of the Commission on Disability and the Department on Disability. There is an important upcoming opportunity with LA Metro to participate in Tactile Wayfinding Testing at select Metro stations! Metro is conducting small, in-person focus groups to test the effectiveness of tactile wayfinding systems and gather feedback from customers to improve navigation and accessibility. If you rely on tactile wayfinding, mobility aids (wheelchairs, canes, walkers), or use strollers, carts, or luggage while traveling, your experience can help shape a better Metro system for everyone. Deadline: Please complete the survey by Friday, December 6th, 2024. President Tagawa announced she participated in the Art Exhibition sponsored by the Department on Disability and it had a fantastic turnout. Also, for Commissioners not in Ad Hoc Committees, the committees will be doing some outreach and there are openings to help and will proceed with the December meeting. Commissioner Bitonte would like a presentation from the DME program about specificity regarding how many requests have been denied and who denied them and in addition, he would like DREDF to attend the presentation to see if they can help.

No Action Taken, information purposes only.

Item Ten (10) - Adjournment

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:11 P.M.