



## **COMMISSION ON DISABILITY**

### **MINUTES**

Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 1:00 P.M.

Department on Disability

Board of Public Works Hearing Room 350, City Hall  
200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

#### **COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

Theresa de Vera  
Myrna Cabanban  
David E. Wolf  
Robert Williams  
Dr. Robert Bitonte  
Iran Hopkins  
Richard Rothenberg  
Alisa Schlesinger

#### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

Betty Wilson

#### **DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY:**

Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability  
Deisy Gonzalez, Disability Access and Services (DASD)

**OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS:**

Noreen Vincent, City Attorney's Office

Omari Battles, Emergency Management Department

Chris Ipsen, Emergency Management Department

Sonya Young-Jimenez, Department of Recreation and Parks

Brenda Aguirre, Department of Recreation and Parks

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

Action Taken, Commission on Disability amends the February 12, 2020 agenda to read "The Commission will review the minutes of the November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting and January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting and vote to approve them.

Commission on Disability approves the November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 minutes.

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

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

**ITEM NO. (3): EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: INCLUSION & TRAINING IN RESPONSE**

Presentation from various City Departments and organizations from the Greater Los Angeles Area. Information will be presented by Deisy Gonzalez, Omari Battles, Chris Ipsen, Sonya Young-Jimenez, and Brenda Aguirre.

- I. This presentation from Deisy Gonzalez and Omari Battles focused on the rules and responsibilities of the Department on Disability (DOD) and the Emergency Management Department (EMD) during an emergency event or disaster. DOD responds to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which they hold two seats in. They provide resources on the field and deploy sign language interpreters to press conferences. Staff also responds to shelters or evacuation sites to make sure that they are ADA compliant. DOD provides many trainings for other Departments of the

City, including training on ADA Title II, Accessible Emergency Notification and Social Media, emPOWER Data Request, Video Remote Interpreting, and Incorporating Whole Community Inclusive Planning Into the Emergency Management Process. Deisy and Omari also work with the Disability, Access, and Functional Needs (DAFN) Coalition. The Coalition acts as a liaison between the DAFN community and the City of Los Angeles, and aims to make sure that stakeholders are providing technical expertise that is relevant to their services and the constituents that they serve. The Coalition is focusing on outreach to include the entire community and get people engaged in the planning process.

- II. Chris Ipsen presented on the Emergency Operations Center. He is one of four duty officers responsible for activating the center in case of an emergency. The EOC has undergone some changes in disaster planning to be more inclusive of people with disabilities. Websites used are being checked for Section 508 compliance, and new standard operating procedures have been established for evacuations. For instance, rather than only knocking on doors, LA Police Department and LA Fire Department responders are being trained to shine flashlights through windows as well to reach people that are deaf or hard of hearing. The Emergency Operations Center uses data from LA County Public Health to identify households that may have residents with special emergency needs, which has been helpful in recent fire evacuations. The EOC is continuously examining their protocols and determining where they can make improvements for future emergency events.
- III. This presentation by Sonya Jimenez and Brenda Aguirre of the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) focused on their Emergency Management Division (EMD). Within this division is the Emergency Response Action Team, who are trained professionals that assist in coordinating the response to emergencies. The EMD has more than 150 shelter sites that have been assessed with DOD and American Red Cross standards to ensure ADA compliance, which are considered “A sites”. “B sites” are those that are almost ready, but need minor modifications to be fully ADA compliant. When the shelter is in use, individuals can use an accommodation form to request specific accommodations that they need. RAP collaborates with Animal Services to shelter pets, and Hansen Dam and the LA Equestrian center to shelter large animals. Recently, there has been an increased need for durable medical equipment. EMD is working with DOD and the American Red Cross to obtain more durable medical equipment for their staging bins so that they are readily available during times of activation.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

#### **ITEM NO. (4): EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Discussion 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 (DOD). DOD is working on expanding accessibility and inclusion in Los Angeles businesses through the STEPS program. This program helps students with disabilities obtain 200 paid work hours as well as mentorships or internships. The Department is also helping develop a certification program for Certified Access Specialists and a mentorship program for Sign Language Interpreters. The Blue Curb program has made great progress in processing applications, with about 80 percent of new applications being processed within a week. DOD is also assisting people with disabilities who are facing homelessness by providing housing referrals. Lastly, DOD is also working with the Empowered Cities grant from Citi to increase economic opportunities and improve financial inclusion for people with disabilities that are lower-income.

Stephen David Simon also shared his segment with Louis Burns from ACCESS. He informed the Commission that improvements are being made in the program's processes that are used when interacting with customers. ACCESS will be providing free rides to and from voting centers for customers on the day that they go to vote. Louis Burns will confirm if there are any restrictions on the free ride during the voting period, and DOD will update the Commission with specific details.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

#### **ITEM NO. (5): NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Suggested items for the next regular meeting's agenda and announcements from Commissioners, DOD staff, and guests. Next month's topic is education, and will focus on financial aid and support programs. Commissioner Schlesinger requested an update on the mobile benefits units at the next meeting. A ReelAbilities presentation will be scheduled for a future meeting once a location has been determined for the event. DOD would like to reiterate that the Abilities Expo is taking place from Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup> to Sunday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

**ITEM NO. (6): ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT APPROXIMATELY 2:33 P.M.