



# COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

## MINUTES

Wednesday, May 13th, 2020, 1:00P.M.

Department on Disability

Zoom Video Conferencing

### COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

### COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Betty Wilson

### DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY:

Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability

Lourdes Sinibaldi, Program Coordinator, Community Outreach Referrals and Education, Department on Disability

Richard Pope, Project Coordinator, Disability Access and Services Division, Department on Disability

\*AUDIO TAPE(S) and CAPTIONING NOTES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

**OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS:**

Chris Lee, City Attorney

Jaime Lesinski, Battalion Chief, Los Angeles Fire Department

**GUESTS:**

Lucia Choi, Staff Attorney, Disability Rights California

Heidi Joya, Staff Attorney, Disability Rights California

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

The Commission will review the minutes of the February and March 2020 meetings and vote to approve them.

No Action Taken: Minutes were not received ahead of the meeting to review and will be deferred to the next Commission on Disability meeting.

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

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

**ITEM NO. (3): DISABILITY RESOURCES DURING COVID-19: FOOD, HOUSING, AND TESTING**

Presentation from various City Departments and organizations from the greater Los Angeles area regarding resources for People with Disabilities during COVID-19.

- I. Presentation by Lourdes Sinibaldi, Program Coordinator, Community Outreach Referrals and Education, Department on Disability (DOD). In Los Angeles County, 41.4% of people with disabilities reported living in food insecure households. This is nearly double the percentage of those without disabilities in the County. Community organizations have expressed a need to assist people with disabilities with their food needs so that they do not need to go out and put their health at risk. DOD, in collaboration with the Mayor's Office, Access Paratransit, and FOX Corporation, initiated a month-long program to deliver 2,000

meals to people with disabilities in the City of Los Angeles five days a week. As a result of this program, Access Paratransit was able to rehire 60 drivers. Within the first three weeks of the program, 30,000 meals were delivered to over 650 families. FOX Corporations has extended their initial month-long donation to May 29<sup>th</sup>.

The next phase of this program includes an expansion of 1,000 additional meals. Khalsa Care Foundation has joined the program and will be providing vegetarian Indian meals. Once the partnership with FOX Corporation comes to an end, Khalsa Care Foundation will produce all 3,000 meals needed for the program. Organizations and individuals can sign up for the program via a Google form on DOD's website under the COVID-19 banner. Due to a high volume of interest, applicants that submit their forms after May 14<sup>th</sup> may be put onto a waitlist. Reports are reviewed nightly to troubleshoot delivery instructions, remove those no longer interested, and add applicants on the waitlist.

- II. Presentation is by Lucia Choi and Heidi Joya, Staff Attorneys, Disability Rights California (DRC). They presented on the evictions process in California and discussed federal protections under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The eviction moratorium restricts evictions based on nonpayment of rent. No new evictions can be filed for nonpayment of rent, but local ordinances will determine if households may be evicted after the emergency is lifted. Additionally, evictions can still be filed for other reasons.

California's executive order delays evictions and is not a moratorium. In order to be a protected tenant under the Governor's order, tenants must have lost income due to COVID-19, must tell their landlord in writing within 7 days of rent being due, and must have documentation of their lost income due to COVID-19. Protections vary between counties and cities. Tenants are encouraged to check local ordinances. Ultimately, there is no waiver for rent, so renters should pay if they are able to in order to avoid eviction or debt collection.

- III. Presentation is by Jaime Lesinski, Battalion Chief, Los Angeles Fire Department and Richard Pope, Project Coordinator, Disability Access

and Services Division, Department on Disability. There are eight COVID-19 testing sites open throughout the City completing thousands of tests per day. On May 12<sup>th</sup>, the sites completed over 9,000 tests. Volunteers were recruited to help staff the testing sites, and 200 to 250 report in daily. A main focus for the testing sites is to ensure accessibility for everyone. There have been requests for mobile testing to be available for assisted living homes. Nurses at assistive and convalescent homes can administer the tests and drop them off for results. In addition to the testing sites, more shelter sites have become available since the last Commission meeting. There are 24 shelters, 6 trailer expansion sites, and 8 childcare sites open across the City. DOD has played an essential role in the opening of these sites, ensuring accessibility in the physical spaces and providing assistance with communication accessibility.

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).

Even though most of DOD employees are working from home, all of the basic services have remained up and running during this time. DOD is answering all Title II Complaints and giving technical assistance both to City departments and to the community. DOD also worked with the Mayor's Office, City Emergency Management Department (EMD), other city departments, and community service providers to develop programs and services to address the needs of people with disabilities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These services include making the shelters and testing sites accessible, having VRI on the Mercy Hospital ship and at the shelters, and creating the meal delivery program. DOD is also working on a reasonable accommodation policy for the people who are unable to wear a mask for an extended period of time in a public setting. For the next budget year, DOD did not sustain sufficient cuts on programs. However, one major issue is the staff furloughs starting as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Since DOD provides a lot of support and has additional programs, the department is working on exemptions to keep DOD staff available to the community and the City. Since LA County is moving to Stage 2 of reopening, DOD is working with the Mayor's Office and EMD to assess the needs of

people with disabilities who are in need of services throughout the City.

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.

President De Vera would like to extend a belated Happy Mother's Day to all of the moms. She would also like to announce that May is Mental Health Awareness Month and more than ever we need to be mindful for those having difficulty dealing with the pandemic. Be gentle with your words and practice kindness and generosity because you never know what they may be going through.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

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

The meeting was adjourned.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT APPROXIMATELY 3:01 PM