



COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

MINUTES

Wednesday, May 12, 2021, 1:00P.M.

Department on Disability

Zoom Video Conference

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Myrna Cabanban

David Wolf

Iran Hopkins

Dr. Robert Bitonte

Candace Cable

Richard Rothenberg

Alisa Schlesinger

Betty Wilson

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Robert Williams (excused)

DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY:

Jaime Pacheco-Orozco, Assistant Executive Director, Department on Disability

Geoffrey Straniere, ADA Compliance Officer, Department on Disability

Zenay Hayward, Community Program Assistant II, Department on Disability

Ricki Rosales, AIDS Coordinator, AIDS Coordinator's Office, Department on Disability

Lourdes Sinibaldi, Sr. Project Coordinator, Department on Disability

Sergio Samayoa, Sr. Management Analyst, Department on Disability

OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS:

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

Claudia Luna, Executive Officer, Homelessness Initiatives, Office of Mayor Garcetti

GUESTS:

Rev. Andrew Bales, Spokesperson, Union Rescue Mission

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

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

Action Taken: The Commission approved the minutes for April 14, 2021.

ITEM NO. (2): PUBLIC COMMENT

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (3): GREATER LOS ANGELES' HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE AND RESOURCES DURING COVID 19

Guest speakers provided the Commission with information from local government, City and County experts and programs, including community-based organizations working to provide resources and access for the diverse unhoused community of Greater Los Angeles.

- I. Speakers from Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti presented on Project Room Key, its implementation within the City of Los Angeles, and the next steps for the unhoused Angelenos engaged in utilizing its services. Presentation was by Claudia Luna, Executive Officer, Homelessness Initiatives, Office

of Mayor Garcetti. Project Room Key is a FEMA program that helps the most vulnerable people in our communities and is intended to get people indoors and in hotels during the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing Dr. Barbara Ferrer's concern of an outbreak in Skid Row or homeless encampments and overwhelming the hospitals. The people who stay in the hotels are people experiencing homelessness and are not positive or have any symptoms for COVID-19. The program is funded by FEMA which in turn reimburses the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County. At the height of the pandemic, the City and the County secured hotels and motels with a total of 2,235 rooms. Currently, the City is operating nine Project Room Key sites and before the end of this month the city will have a total of 10 sites and almost 1,500 rooms. One of the challenges for Project Room Key is the reimbursement process because of the rate of the room for the hotel can range anywhere from \$100 a night to \$120 per room per occupant and the reimbursement is processed later. Another challenge is the lack of interest from larger hotels because the hotels are seeing their occupancy increasing and this places limits on a bigger hotel to help house more people in one location. Another challenge is decrease of staffing support from City because of the reopening of departments and the need for their staff throughout the City. Currently, the City is seeking to extend Project Room Key beyond the pandemic and increase permanent housing and apartments for the LA County program called *People Assisting the Homeless Program*. If you are a landlord or a property owner and are interested in the *People Assisting the Homeless Program*, please visit LeasupLA.org to get more information. If you know of anyone that is struggling to find housing or encounter someone living on the streets, you may refer them to Los Angeles Homeless Outreach Portal, 211, or 311. Zenay Hayward, Community Program Assistant II, Department on Disability introduced herself to the Commission on Disability as the liaison between the Department on Disability and any homeless related activities, she is staffing the UHRC for the Department on Disability. Currently, Zenay Hayward is working on connecting with service providers, getting people into permanent housing, and providing funding for wheelchairs, crutches, and hearing aids for people with disabilities experiencing homelessness.

- II. Speakers from the Department on Disability presented on access and compliance regarding emergency and housing sites utilized during the epidemic. Presentation is by Geoffrey Straniere, ADA Compliance Officer, Department on Disability. DOD has been supporting the community, particularly people with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and has supported constituency at City shelters and interim housing programs.

DOD has been informing on design decisions, site selection, physical architecture elements for each of the housing sites going back to when the bridge housing program launched. DOD has provided technical guidance prior to every occupancy to give supportive guidelines and provide an awareness of the disability access of each hotel or any type of housing. DOD also does assessments for the vaccination sites to ensure they are accommodating people with disabilities from the parking arrangements to the end of the visit. DOD also responds respond quickly when there are requests for the medical durable goods, such as wheelchairs, walkers, and hearing aids because some people do not take their equipment with them into the interim housing. DOD also provides guidance on issues concerning maintenance, such as door pressure because it may become a full barrier to a person with a disability, so that they do not have to be displaced prior to the housing. Since the City is reopening, DOD will continue to provide and take an active role in design elements, the occupancy post-construction, and work with the service providers once they are housed.

- III. Speakers from the Union Rescue Mission (URM) presented on their efforts and experiences during the COVID-19 epidemic. URM is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was established in 1891 which works to help men, women, and children experiencing homelessness. Presentation is by Rev. Andrew Bales, Spokesperson, Union Rescue Mission. URM is the oldest mission in Los Angeles. Since 1891, they have welcomed dads with kids, two parent families with kids, single men and women, and many people with disabilities. They have lowered their capacity down to 300 and are making satellite sites in other parts of Los Angeles to help more people. URM has a family center where everyone has their own apartment and is catered to moms and kids, single ladies, and senior citizens and all units are accessible. They are making a housing site in South Los Angeles on 132nd and Avalon with about 86 brand new apartments. They are currently looking at a property north of Los Angeles with 700 acres that could become a recovery community where those with substance abuse may recover in a sober environment. One of the main issues faced by people who are experiencing homelessness and are people with disabilities is navigating the sidewalks and bumps because they can quickly fall by a crack in the sidewalk when they are living in the streets. This is why it is necessary to quickly mitigate that damage by getting them into housing quickly as possible.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (4): RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING HEARING ACCESS

Guest speakers provided the Commission with information about hearing access and innovations to make museums, public transportation, and other venues more accessible.

- I. The Commission will review, discuss, and vote on next steps for a draft letter recommending that the City of Los Angeles initiate the process of incorporating hearing access in the form of Induction Loop technology or similar methods in a wide range of contracts and projects.

Action Taken: President Cabanban will finalize the draft and submit on behalf of the board.

ITEM NO. (5): EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ongoing update on items relating to Department activities, metrics, budget, planning, and/or other relevant issues. Presentation is by Jaime Pacheco-Orozco, Assistant Executive Director, Ricki Rosales, AIDS Coordinator, Lourdes Sinibaldi, Sr. Project Coordinator, and Sergio Samayoa, Sr. Management Analyst from the Department on Disability. DOD is currently working on launching ReelAbilities Film Festival on Friday, October 15th and will last through Sunday, October 17, 2021. DOD staff is currently working on save-the-date postcards, adding three new members to the board to help with film selection, and working on the publicity sponsor decks. DOD is also finalizing the request for proposals for the HIV prevention services. ACO is currently working to finalize the transmittal and submit it to council for expected approval by July 1st to have contracts with new services in place on the streets. DOD is currently going through the budget process and looking for ways to add more positions and services. DOD staff is currently working on the budget letter describing the impact of the mayor's proposed budget and including all recommendations and requests that would help the department meet their goals. COD was asked to comment as individuals on the budget during the budget hearings at City Council Chambers.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (6): 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. Announcement of Officer Elections and suggestions for items for the next regular meeting's agenda. President Cabanban informed all commissioners that the election process will be happening soon and encouraged Nominations and Self-nominations for acceptance. Nominations can be made verbally or through e-mail to Peter.

ITEM NO. (7): ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned in honor of American Asian Pacific Islanders month.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT APPROXIMATELY 2:37 P.M.