



COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

MINUTES

Wednesday, August 11, 2021, 1:00 P.M.

Department on Disability

Zoom Video Conference

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Myrna Cabanban

David Wolf

Iran Hopkins

Dr. Robert Bitonte

Richard Rothenberg

Alisa Schlesinger

Betty Wilson

Candace Cable

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Robert Williams

DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY:

Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability

OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS:

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

GUESTS:

Carmen Tellez and Diana Kogan, Ezra Network
Samuel Frank, Post-Bar Fellow

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

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

Action Taken: The Commission approved the minutes for July 7, 2021.

ITEM NO. (2): PUBLIC COMMENT

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (3): SERVICE METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE EZRA NETWORK

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. Carmen Tellez and Diana Kogan will discuss the model and best practices used by the Ezra Network in providing a broad range of assistance on connecting community members with social workers, legal counsel, career counseling, and assistance in navigating government eligibility programs. The Ezra Network's aim is to address the need of the economic downturn by community members who were going to synagogues and clergy members that were looking for ways to help the community. The clergy were overwhelmed with the needs of their congregants because they were there for spiritual and emotional support, they were not social workers. They did not understand how to apply for certain benefits, such as SDI, Cal Fresh, job counselors, legal counselors, and other services that a family or individual may need. Out of this need for a one-stop shop, Ezra Network was created to provide a multifaceted assistance for any

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Minutes August 11, 2021

Page 3 of 4

individual or family in the Jewish community who is looking for assistance. The Ezra Network provides case management, employment readiness, and benefits navigation for individuals and families with specific needs at synagogues. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they are no longer location-based, but work virtually to continue providing these services.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (4): UPDATE - SSI MOBILE OUTREACH

Guest speakers provided the Commission with an update on the Commission on Disability's ongoing Mobile SSI Project.

- I. Commissioner V.P. Bitonte and Post-Bar Fellow Samuel Frank will provide an update on the COD's ongoing Mobile SSI Project, an initiative to help persons with disabilities and persons experiencing homelessness on how to navigate the application process and obtain Supplemental Security Income and related services. Recent activities, future benchmarks, and proposed deadlines will also be covered. Commissioner V.P. Bitonte presented to the Mayor's Office this past Monday on the four-year journey to establish a concept of taking social security to the streets. Commissioner V.P. and Post-Bar Fellow Samuel Frank presented on recommendations and public policy statements to move forward with implementing the SSI mobile outreach program.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (5): COMMISSION CALENDAR

The Commission on Disability will discuss and recommend topics and items for revisiting for the 2021/2022 COD calendar

- I. The Commission on Disability will discuss, review, and recommend topics for the 2021/2022 COD calendar.

Action Taken: The Commission on Disability has approved to adopt the current calendar as a tentative calendar.

ITEM NO. (6): EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ongoing update on items relating to Department activities, metrics, budget, planning, and/or other relevant issues. Presentation was conducted by Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability. The department's durable medical equipment pilot project is off and running from the creative element block grant to help and give priority to people who have disabilities and are experiencing homelessness or those with a high risk of homelessness. The medical equipment that has already been distributed by the department and includes everything from wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds, and power chairs in emergency situations. The department also has separate funds for anyone who is not eligible under the block grant program. The Department on Disability is also participating in the Inclusive Urban Sidewalk project to get data to allow the city to look at all public rights of way, sidewalks, and access mapping that include all different types of barriers that are currently not available in most commercial mapping programs. The department's L.A. County Bar Association project is having the first training, from the AIDS legal services program, to expand services to people with disabilities particularly those again experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. ReelAbilities Film Festival 2021 will be held on the weekend of October 14th and will run Friday night through Sunday using a virtual platform and is currently in the process of approving the full schedule for three days and in the process of creating a ticketing platform.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (7): 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. No new business to report.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (8): ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT APPROXIMATELY 2:08 P.M.