

**ATHENS CITY COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES  
ATHENS COMMUNITY CENTER  
SEPT. 17, 2016**

**Call to Order:** 5:42

**Members Attending:** Lori Kinney, Joe Wessinger, Lara Edge, Scott Dennis, David McNelly, Noah Trembly

**Members not attending:** Robin Brigante, Steve Patterson, Darrell Purdy, Rose Dikas, Carolyn Lewis

**Non-members attending:** Larry Jageman, Donald B. Eager

**Approval of Minutes**

08/17/16

- Approved with typo corrections of Darrell's name and Lift instead of Life

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Guest speaker: Donald B. Eager, expert on Fair Housing**

A discussion on state and federal fair housing regulations as they relate to disabilities, and how to assist residents that have trouble with reasonable accommodations, service animals and housing.

**Highlights from discussion include:**

- Eager's extensive (decades) experience working on Fair Housing issues, especially with group homes and local advocates. Most recently in Lancaster in which he fought resistance against the construction of a group home for people with mental disabilities (It did get built).
- Finding safe, affordable housing for people with disabilities is a big issue
- Athens is ahead of the curve with its progressiveness. Out of the 81 Ohio counties with small cities that qualify for aid from state and federal governments, Athens is the only one with a Disabilities Commission.
- Through the hotline number he manages, 1-800-850-0467 (TTY 1-800-750-0750), most complaints center around the right to reasonable accommodations.
  - The right to have service animals
  - The right for parking spaces in a safe and easily accessible location
  - The lack of ramps
- By calling that hotline number, residents and those seeking residence can get legal advice, help filing a suit, help with navigating the red tape at HUD, etc. Eager says they call back within 24 hours.
- The reason ADA doesn't address housing in its regulations is because the Fair Housing Act covers those regulations extensively. The two work together.
- Section 505 of the housing rehab act says if you have an apartment complex that gets federal funds (even just \$1) they must meet needs of disabled

- It's a myth that landlords must pay for renovations for disabled. The tenant is responsible (examples include widening doorways, lowering counters). Landlords are responsible for outdoor accessibility, though, such as parking.
- Eager and his colleagues are seeing more and more pushback from communities when trying to enforce fair housing regulations, especially for those with mental disabilities.
- Ohio has the second oldest disability law in the nation.
- There are tax credits available to developers who build accessible housing. Details are at
  - <http://ohiohome.org/ppd/htc.aspx>
- When a developer /landlord is renovating buildings, they are responsible for providing temporary quarters to the tenants - NOT the tenants, under the Relocation Act. In Athens, Sheltering Arms, Beasley Mills, and Carpenter Hall are undergoing renovations. Bruce Burns in Columbus is an expert on this topic. His number is 614-570-2726.

### **Parking**

Robin and Pete

- Tabled

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **PACDAP Discussion**

- Tabled until Mayor Patterson can attend

#### **Nomination of Vice-Chair**

- Tabled

#### **Progress on Uptown Accessibility Project:**

- No list of accessible businesses from either the Chamber of Commerce or the Visitors Bureau. Although the AAA includes icons in its publications to indicate accessibility but not what type of accessibility
- Lara Edge will contact both the Chamber and Parks and Recreation for comprehensive list of businesses and facilities as a starting point. Include trails playgrounds, city facilities, etc., and be sure to include restrooms.
- Lori Kinney will find out what Darrell found at Casa, Jackie's, and Wendy's when he assessed them.

### **Committee Reports**

**Communications:** Sent via email from Rose Dikas: 1) Our primary communication outlet continues to be Facebook where we have two pages. ... The original one and the group page (Athens Disability Commission) that appears on each group members individual page.

Encourage people to join the group and they will get the latest news. 2) We post meeting announcements, special events like the Athens chair lift unveiling (that Lara Edge posted) and disability news from all over. If you see an event, post a private message to me and I'll post it on our page. 3) If anyone wants to publicize a commission event in the media, just let me know and we can contact all the local media like we do for the Challenge.

### **Announcements**

**Friends of Stroud's Run Accessible Trail Funding Secured**

- Project is scheduled to begin in mid-March. Everything appears to be a go.

**Sells Park Accessible Trail Ribbon Cutting 9.22/16 11 a.m.**

- Noah Trembly and Larry Jageman plan to attend.

**Walk the Walk for Mental Health Awareness**

- Saturday, Oct. 22, at 11 a.m. Starts at the Athens County Courthouse and includes lunch at the end of the walk.

**Next Meeting - Wednesday, October 19, 2016**

**Adjournment: 6:51**