

City of Athens Commission on Disabilities

July 15, 2020

Minutes

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Meeting recorded via Zoom and broadcast on the Government Channel

Call to Order at 5:34 pm

Meeting was held via Zoom set up by Scott Thompson and facilitated by Davey McNelly. Reminder to say your name prior to speaking, so that interpreter can name who is speaking.

Establish Quorum

- Dianne Bouvier announced a roll call and established Quorum.
Present: Dianne Bouvier, Scott Dennis, Rose Dikis, Berry Dilley, Carolyn Lewis, Sly Matta, Davey McNelly, Cheryl Prusinski, Arian Smedley, jw Smith, Noah Trembly; Alli Kisker (ASL interpreter), Scott Thompson (technical support).

Not present: Samorra Dower

- New procedure to keep meetings within an hour. Established rotating time keeper role. Time Keeper: Sly Matta

Reading of Mission

- Executive Committee made a decision to begin each meeting with a reading of the Commission's Mission. Carolyn Lewis read the mission.
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Approval of Minutes

- jw Smith made a motion to approve June 17, 2020 Minutes. Seconded by Arian Smedley and motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

- Carolyn Lewis reported the Commission continues to have a balance of \$1,000. Noah Trembly made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, Dianne Bouvier seconded. Motion passed.

New Business

- Letter to the Editor focusing on Voting: Davey McNelly asked the Communications and Advocacy Committees to consider drafting a Letter to the Editor focusing on Voting related to procedures and information for accessible voting. This could include work done by the Accessibility Committee on Athens voting facilities.
- Review By-Laws: Carolyn Lewis named a group to the By-Laws Committee (Carolyn Lewis, Scott Dennis, Samorra Dower, Rose Dikis, Berry Dilley) charged with reviewing and updating the current by-laws. Substantive edits would need to be approved by the Mayor and City Council. Minor edits do not need to be. They will review document before the next Commission meeting.

Old Business

- Carolyn Lewis reported about publicizing Committee meetings and using Zoom. Carolyn Lewis, Noah Trembly and Dianne Bouvier met with Patty Morris-Witmer to clarify procedures and information was forwarded to committees. Carolyn Lewis had a subsequent call with Lisa Eliason to clarify sunshine law requirements. A list of all regular committee meetings was provided to Patty Morris-Witmer, as well as a general agenda. One week before each meeting, committee Chairs will send meeting time, finalized agenda and list of participants to the Communications Committee and Patty Morris-Witmer, who will coordinate Zoom links with Scott Thompson.
- Meeting links will be forwarded to participants and posted on the City Commission website. The Communications Committee will send announcement to the newspapers.
- Meeting cancellations should go to Patty Morris-Witmer and Communications Committee.
- We will double check on whether Patty Morris-Witmer needs confirmation of meeting taking place.
- Thank you to the City, Patty Morris-Witmer and Scott Thompson for their help in setting up and publicizing the meetings

Committee Reports

Executive Team

- Davey McNelly thanked everyone who contributed to the various monthly Letters to editors
- Exec Team works on getting out committee reports, minutes, agendas in a timely manner
- Exec Team created By-Laws team, Carolyn to lead
- The Commission continually seeks to find people with disabilities to serve on the Commission. Our charge indicates that 60% of the Commission membership is people who live with disabilities. Recruitment is continual. Please ask people to work with you on Committees and bring them to Commission meetings.
- Exec Team will be taking turns leading our meetings – Noah Trembly will lead next month's meeting.
- Carolyn Lewis reviewed articles that we have done since last summer – looks good. People are starting to know more about us. Davey McNelly said important for when we apply for grants that we have visibility in the community and this will help establish that awareness.

Accessibility

- Dianne Bouvier reported that the Accessibility Committee conducted another Walk and Roll with Rob Delach, who braved the heat with his phone camera, while the rest were remote. Davey McNelly explained the review focuses on accessibility for uptown areas (Washington and State; Washington and Court; Washington and College). Committee to compile list of issues and recommendations for City's 2022 project. The next is designated for compiling notes and creating a cohesive report. If people have any thoughts on accessibility for those locations, related to sidewalks, crosswalks, slope, curbcuts, protruding objects, business entrances, etc., please notify the Committee.
- Committee plans to do an accessibility audit on the City pool and will try to take a field trip this summer (and will include Carolyn Lewis and Samorra Dower's observations)

- Carolyn Lewis mentioned the City Source app, which people can download and take photos to say where issues are that are not accessible. Noah Trembly said they closed down City Source. Scott Thompson said it is being replaced, hopefully in the next couple of weeks. Information is forthcoming.
- The next meeting is August 13th, noon.

Communications

- Carolyn Lewis gave the report, filling in for Claire Gysegem.
- The Communications Committee is organizing monthly Letters to the Editor
 - o Berry Dilley is writing on her sister, Clarissa, for the 30th anniversary of the ADA (July 26)
 - o Also distributing stories from Cronkite School around the 30th anniversary
- Claire Gysegem has redesigned the Facebook page redesign – please share and comment!
- Claire Gysegem will look at City Commission website to recommend updates
- Arian Smedley thanked those who participated in the PSA on Wearing Masks – about 25 people participated.
- Arian Smedley is writing on how to make activities more accessible for organizations that do demonstrations
- Committee intends to develop a basic resource for people who move to the area.
- Davey McNelly commented how active the fb page is since there is a team of people getting more info out there.
- Carolyn Lewis and Davey McNelly thanked Rose for being a one-person Committee, doing this work over the years.
- The next meeting is August 13th at 5:30 pm

Education & Outreach

- Berry Dilley reported updates on the Athena Award Ceremony. Announcements have been sent out via email list, news release, and to nominators who were inadvertently missed last year (it went to an email that wasn't monitored). The latter are being invited to update their information and resubmit, without needing to redo everything. The deadline for submission is October 1, after which the Education and Outreach Committee will make a decision as to the top three, bring to the Commission, and to bring to the Mayor. Location is still being decided (Arts West, Community Center or closed ceremony on Zoom/published via the Government Channel).
- Art contest to find a new “actual award” (“something you can hold in your hands”) to be presented beginning 2021. Announcements went out to area Arts programs and Arts Coop. Please forward to whoever may be interested, personal requests encouraged.
- Berry Dilley working on setting up an interview with Joe Berman
- Next Meeting August 11th at 5 pm

Advocacy

- Sly Matta reported that the Advocacy Committee met yesterday and it went very well. They have a great sense of direction. For the next meeting, they want to benchmark with similar committees to get insight on what they would be able to do. Advocacy Committee can be a point of contact if another committee wants to make a response based on the work they are doing.
- Carolyn Lewis thanked Sly Matta and the Committee for their commitment.

- Sly Matta discussed BLM letter and steps taken to create and to finalize letter. Recognition of challenges in BLM being a movement and a diaspora of the Black community. Trying to stay true to original intent of letter to highlight intersection between Black Lives and Black Disabled Lives, with allyship to Disabled Lives.
- Arian Smedley appreciated how the letter is written, with connection to community and allyship and what is in common – and that we say we are an ally.
- jw Smith supports some of aspects and actions with BLM, with some ambivalence with org manifesto. Important to give support to those who are Black and differently-abled.
- Sly Matta said the letter is nearly done and asked for people to send any edits to him. They will review again in Advocacy Committee, send out in advance of meeting and will put it on agenda for next time. Message will still be significant at a later date.
- jw Smith reported that the Advocacy Committee will be reaching out and they may need people to go to Columbus or other places. Commission is ready to do that.

Announcements

- Sly Matta said that timing of meeting sections was good for timekeeping.
- Discussion and agreement to add “Are there other agenda items?” at the beginning of future meetings.
- Interest in doing something to celebrate the July 26 anniversary of the passing of the ADA. Ideas to do a zoom gathering or to do something with the Mayor. Exec Committee will follow up.

Meeting Adjourned

- Dianne made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Carolyn Lewis and jw Smith seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dianne Bouvier
Secretary, Athens City Commission on Disabilities
July 16, 2020, revisions approved August 19, 2020