

**Athens City Commission on Disabilities**  
**May 19, 2021**  
**5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Called to Order** — Davey McNelly called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm

**Establishing Quorum**

Present: Dianne Bouvier, Rose Dikis, Claire Gysegem, Samorra Dower, Sly Mata, Davey McNelly, Lisa Simpson, Arian Smedley, jw Smith, Noah Trembly; Nico Fuentes (ASL interpreter), Scott Thompson (government channel)

Not present: Carolyn Lewis, Cheryl Prusinski

10 of 12 members present (7 needed). Quorum established.

**Minutes**

Davey opened for discussion, no discussion. Rose made a motion to accept the April 21, 2021 meeting minutes; Samorra seconded, motion approved.

**Committee Reports**

Executive

- Davey reported that the Exec team met on April 23 and met again May 17 to prepare for upcoming meeting with the Mayor's leadership staff on May 24th.
  - We will give overview of the Commission and make requests for what we would like them to consider re: the ADA and accessibility in each of their areas.
  - New people expressed interest in committees after the virtual Walk and Roll
- Exec Team would like every committee to have chair and vice chair, to provide internal support and share the work.

Accessibility

- Dianne and Davey provided overview of the April Walk and Roll - the tech worked well, well planned, important information for businesses – we will move forward with developing templates for businesses to display in their windows (i.e., how to get in, who to contact to request accommodations, etc.)
- We are asking the Chamber of Committee if we can attend their meeting
- Next two months guests - Jessica Adine (about Stimpson and other projects) and David Riggs (on partnership with Code Office)
- West State Street Park – scheduling an audit in August
- Discussion: jw brought up an issue for the Chamber re: the increased number of businesses with outside dining with added tables and chairs. Navigation issues for those with vision impairments. Obstacle. Need to systematize which side of sidewalk so benches, tables, and chairs are set up in a routine way.

Advocacy

- Sly Mata presented that they have been having guest speakers with their most recent being Alison McKey from Disability Rights of Ohio. She discussed her work and possible collaboration areas. Committee would like to see they can work with other committees. She can provide links with other orgs.

## Communications

- Claire reported idea to publicize the oral history project by creating clips from oral histories.
- Would like to create a Commission video – on the work of the Commission and what happens with City.
  - Pass along ideas of what to include – send to Claire.
- Athens Ability – May 12 – penned by Davey. June topic – racial justice and intersectionality with race/disability justice. Claire will start, let her know if interested. Juneteenth. jw will help.

## Education and Outreach

- Dianne reported for Carolyn
- Berry Dilley is working with Luke Hawk on the new Athena Award. They will start promoting in June for award applicants/nominations.
- Committee will work with different entities such and the Athens public library to have sessions about the Commission and exhibits.
- Athens Former Mayor Ric Abel has agreed to be interviewed for the next Oral History.

## New Business

Guest Speaker - Mayor Steve Patterson

Mayor Patterson opened up the floor to questions/discussion.

- Discussion from jw comment about navigating outdoor dining furniture:
  - Are there apps for visually impaired to where they can be loaded with tables out front?
  - Can give walking directions. Seeing eye app – could the City create a seeing eye app for area near Union and Washington. By code, restaurants cannot extend further than five feet out from facade of building. Frequent info on street sales – put your wares outside. Sidewalks are eleven feet wide. Is information given to businesses?
- Davey – we will talk about training in meeting with City leadership – anything else?
- jw – was impressed with what the City has done with racial equity and social justice and said that should be promoted. We also need to promote what is happening with Accessibility. Disability commission could do a joint op ed with the Mayor on things that have been done.
  - We need audible crosswalks. Mayor said they have Ohio dept of transportation grant for 2023 to install audible crosswalks at Washington and State, Court and Washington, Court and State and Court and Union.
- Mayor said there is funding from ARPA (relief money from pandemic) - some could be used for other ADA improvements
- Comment that Accessibility Committee will be meeting with Jessica Adine. An issue we have noticed is that when construction projects happen, there is not enough signage. (i.e., Simpson – no marking for accessible path to get down to stores. Stimpson is a difficult project – they are rebuilding the Pharmacy side of the street, including replacing and installing new gas lines.
- jw asked whether there are any persons in the City building who are employed who have an obvious disability? The Mayor said no one has visible disabilities, and some have invisible

disabilities. The Mayor understands stigma associated with disability. Hopes that one day it can happen. Mayor told HR dept, if FANS (Board of DD) ok, they could hire someone part time with the City.

- jw and Davey expressed appreciation on behalf of the Commission for the Mayor's visible and clear support.
- Davey commented that representation matters and it is important to have accessibility goals in annual reports to give voice to issues.
- Lisa asked if Putt People First miniature golf course could be made accessible. It may not be the best space, difficult terrain and shelter house is not accessible.
- Mayor said Commission members can reach out to him with accessibility needs.
- Scott took a picture of Commission meeting members

**Old Business** – no old business

### **Announcements**

Next meeting June 16, 2021, at 5 p.m.

Dianne announced that the Passion Works Parade in Place – this coming Sunday at Zenner House – May 23, 1-3.

### **Adjournment**

Lisa made a motion to adjourn. jw seconded. Davey adjourned the meeting at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dianne Bouvier*  
*Secretary, Athens City Commission on Disabilities*  
*May 26, 2021*