

Athens City Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes
June 16, 2021
5:00pm – 6:00 pm

Meeting was held via zoom and set up by Scott Thompson and Ryan Schwartzhoff with the government channel.

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by Davey McNelly. Announced that Sylvester Mata may be moving out of the State very soon.

Quorum Established:

Present: Davey McNelly, Carolyn Lewis, Arian Smedley, Noah Trembley, Cheryl Prusinski, JW Smith, Rose Dikis, Lisa Simpson

Reading of Mission: Noah Trembley

Approval of Minutes: Davey McNelly made motion to approve May minutes. Lisa moved. Cheryl 2nd. Minutes approved.

New Business: Davey explained that he spoke with Patty from the Mayor's office. She said it is now required that the Commission meetings be held in person and to stop the virtual meetings after tonight. Thus, July meetings will be held in person in the City Community Building.

There was lots of discussion wanting to continue having the option of attending virtually by zoom or call-in if needed. This would have to go before the Legislature and be approved. Rose Dikis talked about the desire to attend by zoom as she can't always attend an in-person meeting. Davey said he would pursue an answer. It was also suggested to poll others that aren't at this meeting to get their input.

Committee and Commission Meetings will no longer be broadcast.

It was suggested that Commission meetings be increased to 1.5 hours to be able to accomplish what's needed. There was discussion as to how the ASL interpreter would manage the longer time making sure there is a break after 1 hr.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee– Davey

- Submitted a letter to the city regarding an ordinance to not discriminate against a person using a section VIII voucher when applying for housing. The ordinance was approved.
- Met with mayor regarding the existing framework for accessibility. Requesting assistance to design a brochure regarding accessibility and tips for businesses along with contact numbers.
- Last Walk and Roll shared how many businesses have accessible entrances that people may not know how to access, how to ask for help, etc.
- JW thanked the city for the great barriers that were put up that helped him get around, especially the building next to the Schoonover building.

Accessibility Committee - Davey

Met with Jessica at the city building regarding the streetscapes that are set for construction in 2022 & 2023. The committee addressed accessibility issues.

- The Second Street stairs will be removed and turned into a sidewalk.
- The West Union Project plans are set for the Spring.
- There are 3 other locations that need curb cuts that will be completed this summer.
- Discussed the 7 best ways to be accessible. David Driggs was a guest.
- Plans to meet with Terry Moore from Parks & Recreation in August to complete a tour of the parks and have a conversation about adding more accessible playground equipment. The goal is to have a real plan and not just piecemeal. The Committee will invite others to get feedback.
- Cheryl stated that we need to think about other types of communication/accommodations other than just physical accessibility, such as visual and audio needs. The Committee will invite citizens with different types of disabilities to attend another meeting.
- JW mentioned that you can take an audio tour of the OU campus as an example and Davey mentioned the story walk at Sells Park that the library gave.
- Cheryl mentioned that she was thinking about the need for more accessible community events such as the outside event “Under The Stars” that the Athena Cinema sponsors and how it could be more accessible for those that are deaf. Someone asked if captioning was offered? Cheryl explained that she wasn’t successful with getting anyone to meet with her to ask these questions.
- The Accessibility Committee agreed to follow-up with the Athena regarding accessibility. It was mentioned that the College of Fine Arts oversees the Athena.

Advocacy Committee

The committee meeting was tabled due to lack of quorum. Sly is going to be leaving the area. We will need to discuss the next step.

Communications Committee

- Claire has taken a temporary leave. Arian offered to step as chair or tag team.
- Made progress on letters to the editor and the columns.
- Claire and Dianne successfully had their letters published.
- The next column will be about the Athena Award. Dr. Lewis and/or Berry Dilley volunteered to write the column.
- It was suggested that the committee write a letter requesting permission to continue to allow virtual or call-in to the meetings. Rose volunteered.
- Noah attended as a guest asking for the 7 tips for businesses regarding accessibility.
- Athena Award Promotion – looking at July & August to discuss.
- Requested someone be assigned to make posts on the Facebook page. Current administrators are Carolyn, Claire and Rose. It was suggested to add Arian and Cheryl. Cheryl agreed to help with administration on the new page.

- Noah caught that we have 2 separate facebook pages. Rose will make the final posting rolling over to the new page. Add to next Meeting Agenda: Create schedule to share the load **manage the facebook page.**
- The Committee will welcome back Claire when she is ready to rejoin.

Education and Outreach Committee

- Carolyn explained that the artist is working on a prototype of the Athena Award. Braille and Visual included. She further explained the texture that's planned.
 - The Award Ceremony is planned for November 3 at Arts West.
- TBA – Next Meeting Location
- There was a motion made to end the June meeting which was seconded by Noah.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lisa Simpson, Commission Member
June 28, 2021