

Athens City Commission on Disabilities
January 20, 2021
Minutes

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 Chairperson McNelly at 5:01 p.m.

Establish Quorum

Present: Dianne Bouvier, Rose Dikis, Samorra Dower, Claire Gysegem. Carolyn Lewis, Sly Mata, Davey McNelly, Arian Smedley, jw Smith; Nico Fuentes (ASL interpreter); Scott Thompson and Ryan Schwartzhoff (Government Channel)

- Nine Commission members were present; 6 members constitute a quorum. Quorum established.

Reading of Mission - Carolyn Lewis read the mission.

Approval of Minutes

- Rose Dikis moved to approve the November 2020 minutes (no December meeting), jw Smith seconded. Approved by unanimous consent.

Treasurer's Report

- Carolyn Lewis reported that the City budgeted \$3,000 for the City Commission for 2021—\$1,800 for Calling All Artists and \$1,200 for the Award Ceremony and other expenses. We are grateful to the City for this allocation. jw Smith made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, Arian Smedley seconded. The Treasurer's Report was approved.

New Business

- COVID Vaccine info Update – Davey shared screen with vaccination information, info is available on State of Ohio website corona.ohio.edu or Athens County Health Department. There has been some confusion as to who/when people with disabilities would get the vaccine. Clarification is coming from the State.
- Clarification – if you do not get the vaccine when your “time comes,” you can get it later.
- Regarding the second vaccine: Carolyn said when vaccinated, she received a card that had the date for the second vaccine on the back.
- Stephanie Morris read that only 468 vaccines issued in Athens County
- Arian Smedley said there are limited vaccines; the process is being determined at the state level and implemented at local level. She said that people are encouraged to contact county board to take advantage of early phases.
- Membership Update - Davey said that the City and Commission has not sent out new member and renewal member letters. Davey will follow up with the City re: Lisa Simpson and Noah Trembly's appointments to the Commission.

Old Business

- SOCIL Steering Committee
Davey said that if anyone wants to receive info, contact the Southeastern Ohio Center for Independent Living – jw said that at the last meeting he felt really encouraged and felt like the CIL will help this community. It will serve as a central place for Disability info. It has cleared some hurdles on the State level, the next step is to look for space.

Committee Reports

Executive Team

- Set intentions in Committees for 2021
 - o Inclusive, Growth, Sustainability
- Time for committees to think about new members
- Anyone is welcome to join an Exec Team meeting, to see what it's like
- Executive Committee will onboard Lisa Simpson to the Commission
- Next meeting – January 22nd at 11:30 am or 1 pm (Contact Davey if interested in attending a future meeting)

Accessibility

- Dianne and Davey talked about recent meetings with City officials:
 - o The committee met with David Riggs, Director for Code Enforcement, at the January meeting. The discussion focused on ways for the Accessibility Committee and the City Code Office to provide information and support to businesses that seek a building permit to do construction or renovation. The goal is to issue a joint letter, highlighting ADA code and offering assistance in helping them understand the needs of the disability community.
 - o We've had positive meetings with City officials – Jessica and David have been invited to attend follow up meetings in the spring.
- Goals for 2021 [some were inadvertently omitted from the Commission Meeting]
 - o Recruit 2-3 new members with people who live with different disabilities
 - o Work with the City to request regular sidewalk grinding maintenance
 - o Restart the Walk and Roll events, including educating people about the new SeeClickFix app that the city is using to identify and report issues in the City of Athens
 - o Work with the City to raise curb cuts to be level with the street
- Next meeting – February 11th at Noon via Zoom.

Communications

- Claire Gysegem reported that the last meeting had some technical difficulties, so they developed 2021 goals through email. They have a new member, Michael Rodriguez, who is the student production coordinator for WOUB.
- 2021 Goals
 - o Highlight the Commission and Committee members and the strengths they bring to this work.
 - o Use Media.com format to start introducing members to our audience

- Establish a monthly column with Athens Messenger – Claire received a follow-up from Sydney Dawes. They are working out the details - word count and when, to develop a regular presence, seeking a column name (send ideas to Claire). Let committee know if people have topics for columns or interest in writing
- Develop a form for committees to provide information and promote the work of different committees
- Increase and measure social media presence, to track progress
- Discussion
 - jw Smith interviewed Dr. Lewis Conversations from Studio B – would like to spotlight various members of the commission. Carolyn will send links so people can listen to them. It was set up remotely through WOUB, Adam Rich is the producer.
- Next meeting – February 11th at 5:30 pm

Education & Outreach

- Carolyn Lewis reported that Cheryl Prusinski is the new co-chair
- Goals for 2021 –
 - Review Athena Award process and language. (Reviewed Award ceremony and language everyone pleased and appreciate all hard work - big thanks to Claire!)
 - Select a panel from local art community to select a new award design and oversee its production (About 6 submissions to date)
 - Continue oral history project
 - Expand city Speaker bureau – People are looking for speakers for 15-20 minutes – this can help get presence and possible future members out there (Let committee know if interested)
 - Expand outreach activities
 - Produce the Athena Award ceremony in November
- Next meeting – Tues, Feb 9 at 5:00 via zoom

Advocacy

- Sly reported Goals for 2021
 - Create a form or submission process for people to bring issues to our attention.
 - Review what's been done and results
- Discussion
 - Possible advocacy topic - Dianne mentioned in ACCD Annual Report to the City Council–HB 404 [[Virtual Public Meeting option extended through July 1, 2021](#)]. Governor DeWine extended the ability for public business to be conducted remotely. Changing this permanently would allow inclusion for some people with disabilities.
 - jw offered to help with this committee
 - Davey said that there will be ways to blend CIL with City Commission, creating a hub for disability advocacy in Athens
- Meeting time to be arranged.

Announcements

- Jw Smith announced that OU-Southern is doing an MLK celebration on Monday evening, Jan 25th – he did a video music they will be airing that. He'll send info.
- Interest in there being a Commission event the first half of the year.
 - o Walk and Roll – when permitted after COVID
 - o Developmental Awareness Month - could partner with that – in March
 - o Disability employment awareness month – in October
 - o Stephanie Morris said the Athens Community Choir is doing a membership drive– all meetings through zoom right now. They are also looking for advisory board members.

Adjourn

- Arian made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Carolyn Lewis seconded.
Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 5:57pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Bouvier
Secretary, Athens City Commission on Disabilities
January 21, 2021