

**Minutes – Regular Meeting  
DISABILITY ACCESS COMMISSION  
May 21, 2014 7 p.m.  
Main Branch Public Library  
Veterans' Room  
834 Lake Street**

**Roll Call and Call to Order**

- Present: Laona Fleischer, Larry Frazee, Erica Henry (arrived at 7:39 p.m.), Leo Irakliotis, Scott Jensen (arrived 7:41 p.m.), Carol Southern
- Absent: Martin Moran
- Staff Liaison: Steve Witt
- Guests: Marianne Birko, Executive Director, WSSRA  
Helen Kossler, Director of Operations, Sequin RCA
- Quorum: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and a quorum was declared.

**Welcome Non-commissioners and New Commissioners**

Laona Fleischer was introduced as the newest member of the commission. Helen Kossler expressed interest in joining the commission; however, there are no open seats at this time.

**Agenda**

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda for the meeting. A voice vote was taken and the agenda was approved as written.

**Minutes**

Draft minutes from the April 23, 2014 meeting were reviewed and approved as written.

**Non Agenda Public Comments**

None

**Ongoing Business**

1. Subcommittee on disability awareness program: Erica Henry indicated that the subcommittee goal was to make a sensitivity and awareness program presentation to the students at Lincoln or Longfellow School. She has had no luck in making contact at Longfellow and Lincoln School was too busy to schedule for May. She indicated that Susan Hoyer of Brooks Middle School gives such programs across the country. Marianne Birko indicated she held an accessibility awareness program about 5 years ago with the Oak Park Park District and offered her assistance to the commission. Laona Fleischer suggested contacting the incoming PTO presidents at each of the schools to get a contact list to help reach out to the schools.
2. Fair Housing task force: Scott Jensen provided an update of the task force. The task force is meeting twice weekly to establish a work plan for various projects and timelines related to a

study performed by the Housing Center on discrimination in public housing in Oak Park. The DAC has representation on the Task Force as some of the people that were discriminated against are disabled. The task force must present their findings to the Village Board at the end of October. There are three basic categories under review:

- a. Enforcement of existing laws under the Human Rights ordinance
- b. Community education, targeted at landlords and,
- c. Oversight of housing agencies within the Village of Oak Park, such as the Housing Center, ResCorp and the Housing Authority

The commission would like to obtain a copy of the Task Force's approved work plan.

3. Disability sensitivity awareness training with Village: The commission needs to determine who is going to make the presentation before the training can be scheduled with the Village. Laona Fleischer presented information from JJ's List, a Disability Awareness Social Enterprise and suggested the commission consider having a representative provide training. She suggested that the commissioners look at the JJ's website to come up with a list of questions that could be addressed. Carol Southern expressed she had some previous experience in providing training in accessibility awareness. Marianne Birko suggested that the commission look at the Village's training plans for the year to see where such a presentation could fit in, and if it should be integrated into something planned or a separate event. Commissioners should bring potential discussion questions to the next meeting for review.
4. Day in Our Village: Staffing of the event by the commissioners was discussed. The commission will be sharing a booth with the Housing Commission.
5. Farmer's Market: Steve Witt will forward information related to securing a booth at the event to all by email. The commission will then need to determine what dates they want to attend the event.
6. Student representative: Discussion was held on whether the commission should consider having a junior or senior high school student on the commission and whether that student should or should not have a disability or voting rights. No decision was made on this matter.

#### **New business**

1. Marianne Birko made a presentation on the services provided by the West Suburban Special Recreation Association (WSSRA). Originally formed in 1976 as a venture with the Village of Oak Park and Village of Forest Park Park Districts, WSSRA now serves nine park districts, plus two villages without a park district or that have a recreation district, to provide superior recreation services for persons with disabilities. An emphasis is placed on socialization and fitness. Services provided are based on need and demographics.

All partner agencies levy a special recreation tax set aside to provide services to persons with disabilities. About \$1.9 million is collected annually. Of this, about \$400,000 is spent in Oak Park. The Village of Oak Park is currently the largest community served in terms of dollars spent and services provided. The WSSRA foundation raises about \$30,000 per year to cover some of the operational costs.

Services are provided in each of the four seasons. 200 children (about 30 from Oak Park) attend summer camp across 11 locations supervised by 120 staff members. 60 to 70% of patrons seek scholarships to attend summer camp. Last year, 821 persons attended 5609 program events. WSSRA offers door-to-door transportation for their patrons to attend events.

2. Call-in Number: The possibility of having a call-in number for commissioner/citizen participation is being discussed at Village Hall amongst other commissions.
3. Accessibility to Village properties:
  - a. It was noted that the lighting level at the Village Hall is not very friendly to customers.

- b. It was suggested that the commission could be proactive in working with the Village to ensure that intersections and pathways are accessible to the public.
  - c. It was suggested that the commission hold discussion on potential accessibility issues with café seating at restaurants. This led to the next item related to obstruction of public sidewalks by parked vehicles and a need for public education on the barriers created for persons with disabilities.
4. Guest presenters: Scott Jensen suggested reaching out to the John Marshall Law School Fair Housing Legal Support Center for someone to make a presentation to the commission.

#### **Future Topic Considerations**

None suggested.

#### **Next Meeting Location and Date**

The next meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2014 at 7 p.m. at the Main Public Library.

#### **Adjournment**

It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.