



City of Surprise  
Disability Advisory Commission  
Wednesday February 18, 2009 - 6:00 P.M.  
*Surprise City Hall – Council Chambers*  
*12425 W. Bell Road, D-100*  
*Surprise, Arizona 85374*

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

### Members Present:

Wayne Nielsen, Chairperson  
Michelle Lewis  
Jacob Taylor  
Scott Hjalmervik  
Tracy Smith  
Michelle Hernandez

### Staff Present:

Nanette Bowles, Disability Advocate  
Paul Frie, CRS Sports & Adaptive Rec. Div. Manager

### Members Absent:

Ken Hill, Vice Chair

#### 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Nielsen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Surprise City Hall, Classroom, 12425 W. Bell Road, D-100, Surprise, Arizona 85374, on Wednesday February 18, 2009.

#### 2. **APPROVAL OF JANUARY 21, 2009 MINUTES**

Chairman Nielsen called for approval of the January 21, 2009 minutes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Smith moved to accept the minutes as presented, second by Commissioner Taylor. Motion approved 5-0.

#### 3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ginny Clark-Wright from the Hearing Loss Association approached the Commission with her appreciation of Mayor Truitt and the city's efforts towards the disability community.

#### 4. **CURRENT EVENTS AND REPORTS**

Commissioner Smith reported that she was at the scene of a serious accident on the 303 and Greenway a few weeks ago and assisted one of the victims. She expressed her appreciation for the staff from the Surprise Fire and Police Departments.

Commissioner Lewis reported that a group of Deaf and hard-of-hearing residents in the Surprise area have been trying to contact Ultra Star Cinemas about providing more movies with Open Captioning.

Chairman Nielsen reminded the group that a lot of changes may be made throughout the country and state related to services for people with disabilities so keeping updated on Legislative actions is important.

Disability Advocate, Nanette Bowles reported that a Caring Surprise Series is scheduled to start on April 4<sup>th</sup> at the Northwest Regional Library and will occur every one to two months, depending on demand. The topics scheduled to be covered so far include:

- Adaptive Recreation
- Assistive Technology
- Autism
- Caregiver Resources
- Emergency Preparedness
- Fair Housing
- Fire and Crime Prevention
- Job Seeking Skills
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visitability

Ms. Bowles also announced that the Disability Empowerment Center at 5025 E. Washington Street would be holding its Open House on Friday February 20<sup>th</sup>. This 62,000 square foot universally designed accessible building is home to the

- AZ Bridge to Independent Living
- AZ Center for Disability Law
- Raising Special Kids
- AZ Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society
- Joni and Friends
- Statewide Independent Living Council
- AZ Autism United
- AZ Spinal Cord Injury Association
- Valley Center of the Deaf
- PRN Medical Services, Inc.

## 5. **AGENDA**

- A. Swearing in of New Commission Member – Sherry Aguilar, City Clerk  
Ms. Aguilar swore in new Commissioner Michelle Hernandez for a term that would expire on July 1, 2012.

## **PRESENTATION**

- B. Christina Ramirez, City of Surprise Neighborhood Services Program Supervisor talked about their various programs. Some of these included:
- Community Development Block Grant
    - Under this, they are hoping to do a sidewalk connectivity project on Bola Drive between El Mirage Road and Greasewood, which will go to Council in April.
  - Housing Replacement / Housing Repair
    - This can assist income eligible residents with things such as modified bathrooms, ramps, and grab bars.
  - Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)
    - Under this, the City would purchase three lots or homes and construct three homes that would include visitability features.
  - Events-it is being proposed to Council that April be designated as “Fair Housing Month”

## **STAFF REPORT –Nanette Bowles, Disability Advocate**

- C. Reports
- a. Accessible America Award-Ms. Bowles reported that the winner of this award has not been announced yet but the Commission will be kept up to date.

- b. ADA Audit Status-Ms. Bowles reported that over the last three years approximately 300 have been completed and over 80 have been modified. The opening of the new City Hall will eliminate many of the items that are not yet due to be completed.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **D. Transition Plan – Nanette Bowles, Disability Advocate**

Ms. Bowles reported that the Department of Justice requires all government entities to have a Transition Plan which covers:

- Employment
- Nondiscrimination in Programs and Activities
- Effective Communications
- Program and Facility Accessibility

As part of this process, the regulations require that, at a minimum, the transition plan:

- Identify physical obstacles that limit the accessibility of the public entity's programs, services, or activities to people with disabilities
- Describe the methods to be used to make the facilities accessible
- Provide a schedule for making the access modifications; provide a yearly schedule for making the modifications if the transition plan is more than one year long
- Indicate the public official responsibility for implementation of the transition plan

Though a full ADA audit of city facilities was conducted in 2006 and significant progress has been made towards completing the suggestions made, this Transition Plan will encompass all of the items described above.

## **AREA REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

### **E. Adaptive Recreation Report – Commissioner Taylor**

Commissioner Taylor reported that Wheelchair Power Soccer is continuing with a practice coming up this Saturday.

### **F. Section 8 Housing Report – Commissioner Hjalmerik**

Commissioner Hjalmerik reported that he would like to have a meeting with representatives from the Dept. of Housing and Surprise Neighborhood Services to see how the Commission can be involved their projects related to visitability.

### **G. Roadrunner Basketball Team Report– Vice Chair Hill**

Community and Recreation Services Sports & Adaptive Recreation Division Manager Paul Frie reported that the Roadrunners played a tournament in San Diego over Valentines weekend. They played six games over two days and made it to the championship game. They finished #2 in the tournament and the season with 9 wins and 9 loses.

### **H. ALDA (Arizona Late-Deafened Adults) Report – Commissioner Lewis**

Commissioner Lewis reported that a potluck social will be held in Chandler on February 28<sup>th</sup> and that the first Surprise meeting of ALDA will be at the Senior Center on March 21<sup>st</sup>. The Disability Information webpage was displayed to

show the Commission of the progress being made towards programs for the Deaf, Late-Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.

I. Community Education and Resource Development Report – Commissioner Smith

Commissioner Smith reported that new residents have been calling her for resources and that she has also helped encourage participation on our Strategic Plan survey and Buddy Ball activities by passing out fliers, emailing her contacts, etc. She also reported that a group of Boy Scouts is interested in doing community service for residents with disabilities and/or seniors by helping clean yards, paint, etc. Another Boy Scout who is trying for Eagle Scout is interested in providing 10-15 wheelchair ramps for individuals in need within Surprise and the neighboring cities. As part of his project, he will be required to provide materials and already has an engineer and carpenter on board to assist. He will likely work with the city to identify individuals in need.

J. Access Northwest Index Report – Commissioner Nielsen

At Chairman Nielsen's request, Ms. Bowles reported that several new businesses have participated in the Access Northwest Index including Chick-fil-A, Homeland Furniture, Bedsmart, Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Carrabba's, and the Heard Museum. A new component of the website will include not only the results of these basic assessments but an educational component for businesses to learn more about tax incentives for increasing accessibility and providing effective customer services to individuals with disabilities.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

K. Discussion and Possible Action on the 2009 Enhancement Fund – Nanette Bowles, Disability Advocate

Ms. Bowles reported that, on February 12<sup>th</sup> the City Council was presented with the possibility that the remainder of the ADA Enhancement Funds would go back to the City. Though this will be officially voted on at the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, new projects that would have been presented are on hold until a final decision is made. It was also pointed out that many of the projects completed through the Commission have impacted permanent and positive change within the city towards new standards. The Commission is to be commended for their efforts to go above and beyond the ADA in the City of Surprise.

L. Discussion and Possible Action on the Strategic Plan – Nanette Bowles, Disability Advocate

Ms. Bowles provided a quick overview of the four key result areas identified in the January 2006 5-Year Strategic Plan. With the topic for the February and March meeting on the first area: Accessibility, each item was reviewed. Results from the 30 survey responses were available in a report and presented on the screen for the Commission and audience. Public Comments were made by three individuals.

Jim Olmstead commented that visitability needs to have a stronger presence within the City with the Commission taking a stronger leadership role towards

achieving it. He also stated that there needs to be stronger presence from the Commission related to building codes that ensure full compliance with the ADA.

Jean Marie Elkins commented that many local stores have product displays that block the accessibility of isles. She stated that there needs to be more emphasis on education related to traumatic brain injury because people with hidden disabilities have a hard time getting or keeping a job which affects their ability to support themselves, afford housing, etc.

Ginny Clark-Wright commented on how impressed she is by the work on the Commission and the proactive efforts to solicit feedback from the disability community.

Chairman Nielsen asked that an update be given to the Commission within two weeks as well as a format for each Commissioner to identify their top three priorities related to accessibility. These will be factored in, along with guest and survey comments for the March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

6. **AGENDA ITEMS FOR MARCH 18, 2009**

Agenda items for the next meeting will include:

- Public Comments
- Current Events and Reports by Commissioners or Staff
- Presentation by the Surprise Neighborhood Services
- Commissioner Taylors Report on Adaptive Recreation
- Commissioner Hjalmerik Report on Section 8 Housing
- Commissioner Hill's Report on the Wheelchair Basketball Team
- Commissioner Nielsen's Report on the Access Northwest Valley Project
- Commissioner Smiths Report on Community Education & Resource Development
- Commission Lewis' Report on ALDA (Association of Late-Deafened Adults)
- 2009 ADA Enhancement Fund Report
- Accessible America Award Update
- Discussion and Possible Action on the Strategic Plan
- Transition Plan Report

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 pm, second by Commissioner Hjalmerik. Motion approved 6-0.

Chairman Nielsen adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

  
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Wayne Nielsen, Chairperson

**ATTEST:**

  
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Nanette Bowles, Disability Advocate

**CERTIFICATION:**

I, Nanette Bowles, Disability Advocate for the City of Surprise, Maricopa County, Arizona, do hereby verify that these are the true and correct minutes of the Disability Advisory Commission meeting held on **Wednesday February 18, 2009**.

*Nanette Bowles*  
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Nanette Bowles, Disability Advocate