

MINUTES

Advisory Commission on Disabilities (ACD)

Wednesday, March 16, 2016, 6:30pm
City Hall, 400 S. Eagle Street
Meeting Room B

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. A quorum was established as members introduced themselves.

ACD

Commissioners: Tim Dumler (Chair), Susan Ahlemeyer, Jorgen Philips, Barbara Stark, Sheri Baumgartner, Andrea Marwah, Kish Pisani, City Councilman Paul Hinterlong

Senior Task Force (STF):

Karen Courney (Co-Chair), Carl Skrabacz, Sue Shanahan, LeighAnn May, Jim Hill

Public Attendees:

Mayor Steve Chirico
Carol Skrabacz
Eric Blackledge
Kathleen MacLennan
Cindi Swanson
Crys Hum
Eric Hum
Mary Hamill

Staff:

Amy Emery, TED Strategic Projects Supervisor

3. Minutes. Motion made by Marwah, second by Baumgartner to approve the Minutes of the February 3, 2016 ACD Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Opening Remarks
ACD Chairman Dumler and STF Co-Chair Karen Courney offered introductory remarks. They both spoke of the opportunities a merger could provide to expand the focus of the current ACD, increase visibility, share resources and membership, add flexibility, and still retain the respect and responsiveness of City Council. They both also expressed the importance of taking time to make a thoughtful decision and provide opportunities, such as this joint meeting, to answer questions.
5. Collaborative Discussion
During the discussion, members of the ACD and STF, as well as Mayor Chirico, offered comments, raised concerns, and suggested ideas related to the idea of a merger of the two groups and also the possibility of forming a second, independent disabilities-focused commission.

Commissioner Phillips relayed his frustration that the current ACD doesn't meet often enough (due to lack of regular quorum) and stated his desire to do more than the current

Municipal Code allows. He shared his preference to merge with the STF. He does not feel a merger would diminish advocacy for disabled residents. To the contrary, believes they will accomplish far more due to the task force format. Moreover, by merging they will be able to hit the ground running and start taking action immediately.

Commissioner Pisani expressed concerns that a merger would not adequately address the needs of those with cognitive disabilities or youth populations. She believes the work of the ACD is just beginning and does not believe a merger is an appropriate action.

Mayor Chirico shared his respect for the commitment and momentum of the STF. He has proposed the merger because he believes it is an opportunity to provide more assistance to disabled populations in the City. He expressed his appreciation for all the ACD has done up to this point to make the City of Naperville, as an organization, respectful of ADA. He feels now is the time to provide additional efforts, beyond the City government. The bigger risk, as he sees it, is to remain a Commission that has already accomplished the goals set out for itself over the last 25 years with limited opportunity to do more. Remaining with the status quo limits what can be done. The task force provides more opportunities.

Commissioner Ahlemeyer asked about the possibility of having a separate task force, focused on disability issues. In her view, this will prevent the needs of the youth and those with cognitive disabilities from getting lost with a merger.

Carl Skrabacz expressed his opinion that that task force gives much more latitude than a commission. Regardless of whether a merger happens or not, he would suggest the ACD consider becoming a task force to enjoy the benefits it provides. He could see in either scenario, a merged or separate disability task force, that there would be opportunities for collaboration and perhaps even shared membership.

Commissioner Baumgartner confirmed with staff that there is no limit on the number of task forces that can be established. She expressed support for establishing a second, independent task force, with a member liaison between the two to facilitate collaboration and communication.

Karen Courney added whether the ACD decides to merge or establish its own task force, she is more than willing to share information and her experiences from the effort to launch the STF.

Mayor Chirico expressed his appreciation for all the comments this evening. He sees a very good case being made for a separate task force, with perhaps a similar structure as the STF, but a separate mission.

6. Public Comment

At this point, Chairman Dumler opened the floor for comment from the public. Four speakers provided comments. All speakers were opposed to a merger with the STF. They each maintained the differences between senior and disabilities challenges, including youth and cognitive disabilities, are too great to allow for a successful merger. Speakers were more receptive to the idea of a separate task force being established.

Two speakers, Cindi Swanson and Mary Hamill, also expressed concerns about the elimination of the ACD. They relayed their disagreement with the Mayor and staff that the

ACD has largely completed the goals and mandates outlined when the ACD was established 25 years ago. They expressed their belief that a commission is needed to provide oversight for City actions and their belief that a commission has a higher level of authority and respect than a task force.

Following public comment, the ACD and Mayor Chirico shared some additional thoughts.

Mayor Chirico expressed his belief that as a community we can always do better and he sees task force as vehicle to accomplish more.

Commissioner Phillips reiterated his desire to eliminate the commission and form a task force to do more.

Councilman Hinterlong thanked everyone for the excellent discussion. He expressed his firm belief that an action to become a task force or remain a commission is going to be a difficult decision. Whatever is decided though, he feels collaboration with the STF should happen.

The idea of retaining both the ACD and establishing a task force was raised and discussed as another option to consider.

Emery relayed that this topic will be carried over to the April ACD meeting for further discussion and possible action. That agenda will also include the ADA Facility Transition Plan and student awards.

7. Adjournment. Commissioner Stark made a motion to adjourn. Second was provided by Ahlemeyer. The ACD Meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:37 p.m.