



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes - Final

Disabilities Commission

Thursday, February 13, 2025

3:00 PM

Regular

City Hall
Council Chambers
701 East Broadway
Columbia, Missouri

I. CALL TO ORDER

Jacque Sample called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

(Jonathan Asher, John Bowders, Patrika Brown, Kieta Clay, Vera Elwood, Ann Marie Gortmaker appeared virtually)

Staff Present: Adam Kruse, Stacey Weidemann, Earl Kraus

No members of the public appeared in person. No members of the public appeared virtually

Present: 11 - Rene Powell, Ann Marie Gortmaker, Jacquelyn Sample, John Bowders, Jonathan Asher, Danessa Clay, Patrika Brown, Cathy Dolles, Vera Elwood, Adam Kruse and Alexis Simmerman

Excused: 1 - Hazel Fields

Unexcused: 1 - Andrea Lisenby

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Statement by Chair on Virtual Participation

Jacque Sample makes a statement on virtual participation and reminds participants to keep cameras on.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Rene Powell made a motion to approve the agenda. Patrika Brown seconded the motion. All in favor; motion approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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John Bowders made a motion to approve the minutes. Vera Elwood seconded the motion. Motion approved. Ann Marie Gortmaker abstains from voting.

V. SPECIAL ITEMS

Presentation by Stacey Weideman, Constituent Services & Legislative Affairs Administrator in the City Manager's Office, with an overview and update on the City's Strategic Plan

Stacey Weidemann presents on the current strategic plan and discusses updates with

the Commission members. The Commission discusses several items and requests follow-ups on questions related to ASL services, blended versus directional curb ramps, performance measures for facility accessibility, and questions about the employee engagement survey. Stacey will look into the questions and provide a response to members.

Presentation by Earl Kraus, Assistant City Counselor with the City's Law Department, on the Missouri Sunshine Law

Earl Kraus provides a presentation to members on the Missouri Sunshine Law. Earl presents and discusses with Commission members the authority for the sunshine law, public meetings, agendas, closed meeting exceptions, public records and emails and subcommittees.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Discussion on an award-based program for accessible public businesses in the community

The Commission discussed the Dawn Z program to acknowledge accessible businesses. Adam Kruse said that he was not able to coordinate a subcommittee meeting last month. Commission members discussed that this item might be better suited if the Commission dedicates time at the next meeting to set the terms of a program. Ann Marie Gortmaker brought up the issue of whether the Commission is going to involve other groups in the program. Jonathan Asher spoke about the program in Springfield, Missouri and having a quick training program for volunteers willing to participate in the program. Vera Elwood believes that the training program in Springfield takes 30 minutes or so. Jacque Sample said another idea is to produce a video to help train volunteers. Jacque Sample says that the Commission will set time for next month's agenda so some of the specifics of the program can be determined.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion on Commission Budget and New Decision Items

The Commission discussed the current Commission budget, the ADA Symposium and what to submit in the next year's budget request. One of the items discussed was that the current travel training budget allows for 2 of the 12 members to attend the ADA Symposium, and that an increase in \$3,000 would allow for 3 members to attend. Adam Kruse says he will submit the budget request.

Vera Elwood made a motion to request to increase the Commission's travel training budget by \$3,000. Rene Powell seconded the motion. All in favor; motion approved.

Discussion on Pedestrians and Detectable Noise from Electric Buses

Rene Powell says that Rene has received concerns from members of the public about electric buses in the community and not hearing their approach because the buses do not make enough noise for pedestrians. The Commission discussed this concern for all, but also specifically for people with low vision. Vera Elwood says that this seems to be a widespread concern. Jonathan Asher says that one idea is that it could be a noise that changes with the speed of the bus. Jacque Sample says that it does not necessarily have to be the Disabilities Commission to identify the best method to resolve the issue. The Commission discussed collaborating with other agencies.

Rene Powell made a motion to send a letter to the Public Transit Advisory Commission to identify the concern and request to collaborate. Alexis Simmerman seconded the motion. All in favor; motion approved.

Discussion on Texas v. Becerra, a federal lawsuit that involves accessibility law Section 504

Jacque Sample provides an update about this pending lawsuit, joined by several states including Missouri, which challenges to revoke Section 504. Members discuss the lawsuit and concerns of the impact to the community if Section 504 were revoked. The Commission discussed what, if any, options the City has regarding this lawsuit.

Jonathan Asher makes a motion to submit a letter to City Council to request opposition of the Missouri Attorney General Office's participation in the Texas v. Becerra lawsuit. Patrika Brown seconded. All in favor; motion approved.

VIII. REPORTS

Future Agenda Items

Commission discussed that for next month's agenda to include a discussion on the DawnZ program and selecting members to attend the National ADA Symposium.

Chair

Jacque Sample says that the annual report to Council on the Commission is finalized and will be on for Monday, March 3.

Staff Report

No report.

Public Transit Advisory Commission

No report.

MU Chancellor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities

Ann Marie Gortmaker says that there was no meeting.

Safe Streets for All Working Group

John Bowders reports that the group met last week and talked about concerns with funding.

Airport Steering Committee

John Bowders reports that there is no update.

IX. GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC, MEMBERS AND STAFF

Cathy Dolles comments that Cathy's emotional support cat passed away and its upsetting because Cathy is having difficulty getting a new cat through second chance. Cathy comments that the organization is declining because it says she does not have the means to care for a cat. The Commission discussed the issue. Cathy also comments that she is on the Governor's Commission for Exercise.

X. NEXT MEETING DATE

March 13, 2025

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Rene Powell made a motion to adjourn. John Bowders seconded the motion.
Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:55 PM.