

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

1999 Annual Report

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW:

The Commission on Disability had a very active year during 1999. We had a productive retreat at the end of 1998 at which time we created a detailed work plan and sense of teamwork to accomplish it. There were significant changes during the year in that the staff liaison changed from Blair Leist, who had been very active with the Commission for some time, to a new team of Bob Palmer and Steve Seefeld. We greatly appreciate the work of Blair Leist in the past years and do miss him. We have warmly welcomed the new liaisons and are working with them to continue to provide good coverage of our goals. We lost two members during the year, Mark Cummings, and Stacey Abate. They both worked hard for the Commission and have been missed. A new member joined the Commission in 1999, Dave Markres.

Commission members were active in addressing the challenges in the work plan and in handling new issues as they came up.

In addition to many specific programs and activities, the Commission fielded questions and concerns from individuals in the City regarding accessibility and resources. A strong connection was developed with the Northern Colorado Cross Disability Coalition. The Commission also maintained contact with the various departments, boards and commissions within the City government to provide appropriate input and consultation.

SUPPORT OF THE TRANSIT TAX:

In January of 1999, the Commission decided to add an important item to the work plan. Since the vote on the transit tax was coming up soon, the Commission decided to support the transit tax and did so by writing letters to the editor and soapbox columns for the newspaper. Members worked directly with the teams supporting the transit tax. Since many persons with disabilities in the community rely on public transportation, this was considered a primary objective. Even though the transit tax did not pass, the enthusiasm of the Commission was well-presented.

DISABILITY AWARENESS COMMITTEE:

The Disability Awareness Committee which had been formed in 1998 continued to function actively during the 1999 year. This committee, chaired by Alan Apt. met a number of times during the year bringing together members of the community interested in disability awareness. Representatives from Hewlett-Packard, the Multi-Cultural Commission, Poudre School District, Larimer County Government, Front Range Community College and other City and local agencies were involved. Meetings were also held with the Easter Seals Foundation, Chamber of Commerce and Business Connections. Several members of the Committee attended the Hewlett Packard Disability Awareness days and were impressed with their efforts in hiring and supporting disabled people within their organization.

Over the year the focus of this committee changed somewhat and it is now called the Employment Subcommittee. The focus is on helping people with disabilities actually find employment within the community. To facilitate this, efforts have been made to connect both employees and employers to the COD web site and to provide links to other sites which may be helpful. The overall goal is to enhance job opportunities for individuals with disability and establish better communication for potential employees and employers.

The subcommittee worked with several outside groups. A strong connection was made with Easter Seals. A new local office will help people with disabilities and may provide supportive technology. The Chamber of Commerce agreed to link to the COD web site and also plans to co-sponsor a local chapter of Business Connections for individuals with disabilities. The Northern Colorado Business Report was contacted by this committee and created a space in their Bravo Awards Banquet to announce the winners of the Mayor's Awards. The activities of the subcommittee will continue through the 2000 year.

PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS:

Lila Vizzard has made a commitment to work with the public relations. During the year she made significant contacts with different media sources within the community and shared specific information about the function of the Commission on Disability in the community. She was also active in bringing to their attention activities by the Commission or by other agencies which were related to disability issues. The specific activities will be continued through the next year. The Commission also continues general public relations activities in providing information to visitors who attend commission meetings and in our other contacts within the community and the city government.

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY WEB SITE:

During the 1999 year, Mark Kramer contributed considerable effort and expertise in expanding the web site from a one-page description and goal statement to a more comprehensive listing which includes names of members, bylaws, the work plan and the annual report. He is also working with other departments and agencies to link the COD web site to employers, persons with disabilities in the community, and other service agencies. The web site was also used as a means of publicity for the Mayor's Awards. We have added a calendar of disability-related events. We will continue to expand this web site during the upcoming year.

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY VIDEO:

As may be noted in 1998 Annual Report, Mark Cummings had been involved in developing a video to be used in public relations efforts and to provide information to the community or other agencies. This video was completed during the 1999 year and does an excellent job of presenting the Commission and the City of Fort Collins in a useful way. The Commission has been using this video in our presentations to various groups and will continue to have it available for use by the City and in the community.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETINGS:

An important item on the 1999 work plan was to conduct outreach meetings to increase the visibility of the Commission on Disability and to connect and coordinate with the City and community groups. The initial meeting was held April 28, 1999. Members of a number of City departments were invited to this meeting. An orientation to COD services was provided and input was gathered about common needs and issues. The meeting was successful in its goals to acquaint us better with the personnel, needs in City departments, and orient them to the strengths and resources of the COD.

A second outreach meeting was held July 8, 1999. Agencies and service providers within the community, which, serve individuals with disabilities were invited to this meeting. This meeting was very well-attended and there was an energetic interchange. The community agencies identified the most important needs for people with disabilities as transportation, housing, and employment. We discussed sources of information and other available resources and set up ongoing networking to coordinate these resources more effectively.

A third outreach meeting was held October 28, 1999. Members of other City boards and commissions with similar interests and goals were invited to this meeting. The discussion centered around relationships among boards and useful ways to provide input and consultation to the City Council.

This series of meetings was well-received, by both members of the City and the community and will provide a springboard for future meetings.

DIRECT INPUT TO THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING PLANNING FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR:

In April of 1999, we received a request from the City Council to provide input about areas which we considered important in budgeting and planning for the up-coming year. A letter was submitted which highlighted our strong support for improved transportation services for persons with disabilities. A copy of this letter is included.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT LOCAL OFFICE:

In July of 1999, a meeting was held with Jean Batchelder who is a regional affiliate for the Rocky Mountain Disability and Technical Assistance Center. She presented a request that the Commission on Disability become a local affiliate. The Commission was highly supportive of close connection with this program and is continuing to evaluate the feasibility of becoming an affiliate.

INVOLVEMENT IN CAMPUS WEST SUB-AREA PLAN:

In June of 1999, we received a request from Advanced Planning about being involved in planning for the Campus West sub-area. A member of COD was assigned to be involved in this project on an on going basis. We will receive input from th member to consider appropriate input and involvment in this process.

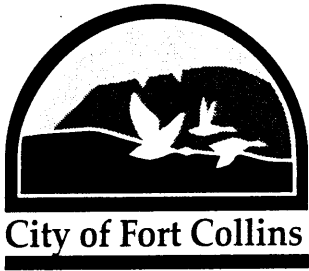
MAYOR'S AWARDS:

The Mayor's Awards have become an important function of the Commission on Disability. It is a way to recognize the efforts of the City and of particular individuals and agencies who serve individuals with disabilities in our community. Nominations were taken for: Employer of the Year, Service Provider of the Year, Volunteer of the year, and Dorothy Lasley Award. The awards presentation was held October 22, 1999 at the Lincoln Center. Attendance from the community was excellent. Mayor Ray Martinez presented an inspirational welcome, which, was followed by a presentation by Scott Flores. Working with Easter Seals and using his own expertise and motivation, Mr. Flores has established a model program for employment of individuals with disabilities. The Award Winners were as follows:

Employer of the Year- Marriott Hotel, Resorts, Suites
Service Provider of the Year- Steve Sutter, Hewlett Packard
Volunteer of the Year- Cornelia Vander Bosch
Dorothy Lasley Award- Sarah Allmon

RETREAT AND PLANNING SESSION:

A retreat was held November 18, 1999 during which time a work plan was created for the year 2000. Enclosed is a list of current members.



RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
AND
NOTE OF APPRECIATION

TO: Diane Jones, Deputy City Manager

FROM: Don Fish, Chairman
Commission on Disability

DATE: May 12, 1999

RE: Input for 1999-2001 Council Policy Agenda

The commission on Disability has been working diligently this year to clarify our objectives and communicate them to the city council and the community.

We are strong supporters of the Transportation Tax which would have provided better Dial-A- Ride and transportation services for disadvantaged and disabled persons in our City. Since the tax didn't pass we strongly encourage the City Council to review any possibility to increase funding for service in this area. Persons with disabilities depend on public transportation to get to work, to access services, and to integrate in the community.

We appreciate the Council's support of inclusive recreational programs and anticipate that this support will continue. We also appreciate that the City has hired people with disabilities. We urge the City of Fort Collins to continue to hire and support differently able persons.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input relative to your process.

Sincerely,

Don Fish

DLF/rap

cc: John Fischbach, City Manager

COMMISSION ON DISABILIY PHONE LIST

Feb. 10, 2000

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Nancy Baker 1630 Briarcliff Fort Collins, CO 80524	home 493-0185 work 226-4844
Mark Beck 230 N. Sunset St. Fort Collins, CO 80521	home 493-1427 work 416-9956
Laura Burnett 1807 Effingham Street Fort Collins, CO	home 204-6643
Don Fish 3320 W. Prospect Fort Collins, CO 80521	home 221-1708 work 484-9086
Robert & Romola Fritz 3609 Jaguar Place Fort Collins, CO 80525	home 225-9573
Mark Kramer 2319 Sunleaf Court Fort Collins, CO 80525	home 498-1725 work 295-5158
David Marckres 2613 Stanford Road Fort Collins, CO 80525	home 206-1625
Initha Stuckey 413 Baylor Fort Collins, CO 80525	home 472-1229 work 377-4155
Lila Vizzard 2812 Buckboard Court Fort Collins, CO 80521	home 407-8690 work 472-6794