

## COMMISSION ON DISABILITY 2004 ANNUAL REPORT

2004 was a relatively quiet year for the Fort Collins Commission on Disability. Our work plan was developed at our annual retreat in November of 2003. Our staff liaisons, Steve White and Rachel Palmer from the Facilities Department were helpful throughout the year providing support during our meetings. Allen Apt and Jill Lancaster completed their term of service at the end of 2003. The COD welcomed two new members near the first of the year; Patrick Miller and Rose Russell. Patrick resigned without ever attending a meeting and Rose resigned in April. In July, Diane Dittus resigned from the Commission due to health concerns. The COD welcomed another new member. Steve Rierson began attending meetings as a community member at the beginning of the year and became a regular member as of the July meeting. At the end of the year, the Commission has nine members with two open vacancies. The main focus for the COD in 2004 was completing the revision of the bylaws, the Creative Abilities Art Show, Practical Housing for All and the Annual Mayor's Awards.

### Membership

COD members at the end of 2004 were: Mark Beck (Chair), Laura Burnet, Joan Cook, Paul Ostrof, Jerry Patterson (Secretary), Susan Williams (Vice Chair), Melinda Suits, Jeff Harris (Historian) and Steve Ryerson. Staff Liaisons were Steve White and Rachael Palmer. Council Liaison is Marty Tharp.

### Budget

Operating budget for the COD was transferred from the City Managers Office to Operations Dept at the first of 2004. The COD requested a budget of \$4050 with \$3000 of that being for the Mayor's Awards.

### Bylaws

In 2003 a sub-committee consisting of Jerry Patterson and Joan Cook examined the bylaws and made several recommendations that would bring the bylaws up to date with the actual operation of the Commission. The sub-committee recommended nine amendments. Seven of those were voted on and accepted at a special October, 2003 meeting. Two others were tabled until May 2004 when they also were adopted. In May the bylaws were updated, reprinted and distributed to the COD members and submitted to the City Clerk.

### Housing

The Practical Housing for All subcommittee of the COD continued regular monthly meetings on the second Thursday of the month, just prior to the COD meeting throughout the year. The committee is comprised of members of the COD; Mark Beck, Paul Ostrof, Felix Lee of the F. C. Building Dept., Dana McBride, NCHBA Board Member and architect Peggy Haller and other occasional members from the building and realtor community. Several associates of Concept 360 also took part in the meetings including Steve Wolf and Dr. Kelly Kesler. The primary goal of the group is to encourage builders and developers to voluntarily and routinely offer basic accessibility in building designs to their consumers. Routine accessibility prescribes a barrier free entry into a home with accessibility into all areas on the ground floor.

The PHA Committee revised the design features so that a PHA home is not just "visitible", it is "livable". The PHA building features are

- A wheel-chair accessible exterior route to a no-step accessible entrance and entry door;

- A main floor with no less than a kitchen, a full bathroom and a room that can be used as a bedroom with sufficient maneuvering space for a wheelchair.
- A minimum 32" clear opening at all doorways. Lever handles hardware preferred
- A 36 inch wide level route, except at the doors, throughout the first floor or main floor;
- A full bathroom that has a minimum 30' X 48" clear space in front of the sink, toilet and tub/shower and reinforcement in the walls around the toilet and tub for grab bars.
- Electrical switches, thermostats, receptacles and electrical panels located between 15 and 48 inches above the floor.

In July, the Fort Collins City Council adopted a new Resolution supporting the inclusion of the new design features of PHA.

Mayor Ray Martinez continued to champion the PHA concept. He encouraged the Fort Collins Board of Realtors to make PHA a cornerstone to the Sensible Housing Summit, June 3, 2004. Mark Beck, Chair of the PHA sub-committee took part as a panel member at the summit and then led a Break-out Educational session in the afternoon with co-presenters, Dr. Kelly Kessler, Dana McBride, Steve Wolf and Peggy Haller. Mayor Martinez also presented a PHA resolution at the National Conference of Mayors in Boston in September where it gained unanimous approval. He also presented PHA to the Municipal League of Colorado in Steamboat Springs in July where it was favorably received. The members of the COD and PHA wish to thank Mayor Martinez for his support for PHA and other COD endeavors.

#### Heavy Doors Project

The Heavy Doors Project continued this year. The project, started in 2002, help assess and encourage adjustment of hard to open doors to businesses in Ft. Collins. Volunteers, mostly CSU students, canvas businesses, provide them with a pamphlet and offer to check the amount of force it takes to open entry and bathroom doors and provide suggestions for adjusting them so that they meet ADA guidelines. Maps of the major Ft. Collins business areas have been created. Canvassers have completed covering most of College Ave, down town, North of Olive St. The Project will continue under the guidance of Susan Williams and Joan Cook.

#### Creative Abilities Art Show

Susan Williams chaired a committee to produce the 2nd Annual Creative Abilities Art Show. Members of the committee included Jeff Harris, Steve Rierson plus other occasional members. The Creative Abilities Art Show was held July 31 on the Downtown Mall in conjunction with Arts Alive Street Art Project. Twenty artists, who had a variety of disabilities, had the opportunity to publicly display their art. The show was considered a success and plans are being made for the third Annual Show in July 2005, again in conjunction with Arts Alive.

#### Mayor's Awards

October 6, 2003 marked the twenty-fourth annual Mayor's Awards, held at the Marriott. For the third year, the COD and the Fort Collins Business Leadership Network (BLN) collaborated to produce the Mayor's Awards. This year, the BLN lead by the tireless efforts of Steve Sutter, organized the event, including a Lifestyles/Career Fair that immediately followed the Awards. The focus of the awards this year was employment of people with disabilities. Cathy Shelley of CSU Center for Community Participation acted as MC. Mayor Ray Martinez hosted the event.

The COD focused on nominations and the actual awards process. Winners of this year's awards are: Business of the Year – Whole Foods, manager Tim Gates; Service Provider of the Year – Barb Staples director of Back Country Discovers; Volunteer of

the Year – Murray Kamens; Dorothy Lasley Award – Murray Kamens; Spirit of Fort Collins Award – Rich Hicks.

The Commission thanks Mayor Martinez, the Mayor's and City Manager's offices for support and participation in this important public recognition of volunteerism in Fort Collins.

#### Accessible Playground Project

In August, 2003, Mayor Martinez made a presentation to the Commission about creating a fully accessible playground in the City of Fort Collins Southwest Park development and asked the COD for endorsement of the project. The Commission unanimously supported the concept. Commission member, Jerry Patterson is a member of the Playground Planning Committee.

#### Handicap Parking Spaces

There were a number of concerns brought before the Commission concerning handicap parking. To answer questions regarding the enforcement of tickets for violations Mark Workman from Magistrate Court who hears those cases explained to the Commission his job, the regulations and how they are handled. A question was raised about the legality of the occasional, but all too common practice of piling snow in Handicap parking spaces. Mr. Workman's response was that it is illegal to impede access to those spaces. The Commission wrote a letter to The Downtown Business Authority, Gallegos Sanitation and the City Streets Dept. asking them to refrain from blocking the Handicap parking spots on Remington Street with Porta-potties during Downtown events.

The problem of two cars with Handicap Placards in extra-wide or "striped" spots was discussed. The City did respond by altering the painted spacing on some spots to a 13', "one and a half wide" space. As per COD request, one handicap space was added on Magnolia Street near the Lincoln Center and the Handicap Spaces in the Lincoln Center Parking lot were re-painted to reduce the improper use of those spaces. Three Handicap spaces were added in the one and two hundred blocks of South College.

Another concern considered by the Commission included hard to access entry doors at the Fort Collins Youth Clinic. A letter was written from the commission to the Clinic asking them to improve the entry.

#### 2005 Executive Board

The 2005 Executive Board was chosen at the November meeting. They are: Susan Williams, Chair; Steve Rierson Vice Chair; Jerry Patterson, Secretary; Melinda Suits, Historian.

The Commission on Disability completed an active and involved year. The concern for persons with disabilities that is present in the Fort Collins community is remarkable, and the Commission takes pride in contributing to the example that the City administration has set.

Respectfully submitted  
Mark Beck, COD Chairman  
December 2004