

# City of Danbury, Connecticut

## Commission on Persons with disAbilities

### Minutes

April 8, 2008

Present were Commission Members: John Gentile, Chad Sinanian, Frank Reed and Frances Ryan

Also present were John Gentile Jr., Joe LaPorta and Amy Mitchell

#### Agenda:

1. Welcome: John Gentile

2. Open Discussion:

3. Phone Log: John Gentile

4. Next Meeting: May 13, 2008

- 1) John opened the meeting with a discussion concerning Governor Rell's March 29, 2008 announcement concerning funding to increase employment for individuals with disabilities:

<http://www.ct.gov/governorrell/cwp/view.asp?A=3293&Q=412426>

Governor M. Jodi Rell and Department of Social Services Commissioner Michael Starkowski announced that 10 organizations and non-profit agencies had been awarded funding of up to \$200,000 each toward their plans to implement creative ways to help people with disabilities join the workforce. According to the press release, the Danbury area is not included in this funding.

- 2) Welcome guests Joe LaPorta and Amy Mitchell from Paracare International Inc. Paracare works with young adults with developmental disabilities. Currently there are many resources for these individual and their families until age 21. Programs within the Danbury School system see to their needs with activities and gainful employment. After age 21, they are sent off into the world with few opportunities. Paracare's vision is to have a center for adults with developmental disabilities, in a farm setting. They are a start up non-profit organization, which has been selling firewood to raise money. Paracare purposes a plan for a community garden in Danbury at Tarrywile Park that would be open to all interested parties.

- 3) Review topics

a) Lyme disease seminar at Western Connecticut State University, Westside campus Wednesday, April 30, 2008 from 6 pm to 9 pm

b) The Connect-Ability program will host a Transportation Forum on May 15 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Connecticut Expo Center in Hartford. The event will take place during National Transportation Week and will include a round table discussion highlighting transportation challenges that confront people with disabilities and the opportunities available to them

[http://www.ct.gov/opapd/ical/eventDetail\\_page.asp?event\\_id=8979](http://www.ct.gov/opapd/ical/eventDetail_page.asp?event_id=8979)

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- c) John has invited Brian Koonz from The News-Times to attend a commission meeting. Mr. Koonz had a previous commitment this evening but said he would attend the May 13 or June 10 commission meeting.
  - d) Melissa Adams in the City of Danbury IT department updated the commission web page links and added a notice concerning WeCAHR's upcoming Understanding Special Education course which will be held on April 19, 2008
  - e) The Commission was invited by Larry Robinson to speak at the next Danbury Area Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative at 5:30 pm May 8 at Ability Beyond Disability
  - f) Frank Reed attended the March 19<sup>th</sup> workshop of Disability and Medical Decision Making: Ethical Issues in Policy and Practice, sponsored by the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities. It was the second of fifteen (15) workshops on "Life Threatening Public Policy" offered during 2008. The series was particularly directed at members of ethics committees and patient advocates in Connecticut's forty-one (41) hospitals but self-advocates, parents, providers and the public were invited to participate in many of the workshops.
- 4) Phone Log – 5 phone calls
  - 5) Meeting adjourned by John Gentile. Next meeting will be May 13, 2008.