

CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ACCESS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Teleconference Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2024

1. Call to Order

Chair Chris Downey welcomed everyone and called the meeting of the Executive Committee of the California Commission on Disability Access (CCDA) to order at approximately 1:30 p.m. The meeting was on Zoom, via teleconference, and held at the CCDA Headquarters, 400 R Street, Suite 312, Sacramento, CA 95811.

Staff Member Groce reviewed the meeting protocols.

Roll Call

Staff Member Groce called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

Commissioners Present:

Chris Downey, Chair
Brian Holloway, Vice Chair
Drake Dillard
Dr. Souraya Sue ElHessen*
Scott Lillibridge

Staff Present:

April Dawson-Rawlings, Executive Director
Stephanie Groce, Data and Research Analyst
Phil McPhaul, Operations Manager
Abigail Ridge, Administrative and Legislative Analyst
Presley Strother, Marketing and Outreach Analyst

Other Commissioners Present:

Jacqueline Jackson*
Dr. Luciana Profaca*
Hector Ramirez*

*Participated remotely.

Also Present:

No members of the public addressed the Committee.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes (October 11, 2023) – Action

Motion: Vice Chair Holloway moved to approve the October 11, 2023 California Commission on Disability Access Executive Meeting Minutes as presented. Commissioner Dr. ElHessen seconded. Motion carried 4 yes, 0 no, and 1 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted “Yes”: Commissioners Dillard, ElHessen, and Lillibridge, and Vice Chair Holloway.

**California Commission on Disability Access
Executive Committee
March 6, 2024, Teleconference Meeting Minutes**

The following Commissioner abstained: Chair Downey.

3. Comments from the Public on Issues Not on This Agenda – Discussion

No members of the public addressed the Committee.

4. Executive Director Report & Financial Report – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings presented her report:

Program Highlights

The CCDA partnered with the city of San Jose to conduct a webinar for small businesses and the disability community on accessibility in December. 33 individuals were in attendance and were evenly split between members of the business and disability communities. The webinar included a training component by a Certified Access Specialist (CASP), a Q&A session, and a discussion between representatives from the local Silicon Valley Independent Living Center, a customer with a disability, and several local business association representatives who discussed challenges and opportunities for access for individuals with disabilities for businesses in the Silicon Valley Region.

Commissioner Vacancies

Immediate Past Chair Leemhuis termed out on January 1, 2024. He will be honored for his years of service on the Commission at a future meeting.

Commissioner Leon-Vazquez also termed out on January 1, 2024. She can continue serving until her appointing authority decides on her reappointment. Staff reached out to the appointing authority regarding next steps.

Reappointments

Chair Downey and Commissioner Lillibridge were reappointed by the Governor to new three-year terms. Their Senate confirmations are moving through the process.

Staffing Updates

Interviews are being conducted the week of March 5th for the open Office Tech position.

The SSA/AGPA open position is in the final review stages with the Department of General Services (DGS) Office of Human Resources and is expected to be published shortly.

Financial Highlights

The High-Frequency Litigant (HFL) Fund allocation is now \$608,000, up from \$152,000 a year ago. These funds must be encumbered by the end of the fiscal year, which is June 30, 2026.

CCDA management continues to meet with the DGS Budget team monthly.

The DGS is finalizing the 2nd quarter financials, which will be presented at a future Commission meeting.

**California Commission on Disability Access
Executive Committee
March 6, 2024, Teleconference Meeting Minutes**

Tracking sheets related to CCDA contracts and expenditures have been updated. Staff has received training on pulling the CCDA financials from the DGS dashboard.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings reviewed her list of conferences and meetings attended since the last Committee meeting.

Discussion

Commissioner Dr. ElHessen asked if the HFL Fund can be used for education and outreach literature and information, such as for making and translating Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) videos into other languages.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated they can be. She stated she will provide an update at the next Education and Outreach Committee meeting on this topic.

Commissioner Lillibridge asked when the HFL Fund began.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated it has been a couple of years.

Commissioner Lillibridge asked if the Fund can be tracked to allow the CCDA to budget it as an income source.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated her preference to treat it like another line item in the budget. She has been talking with the DGS budget team on how to better track it.

Commissioner Lillibridge suggested including a conservative amount in the budget to assist in the planning process on how to spend the funding if and when it becomes available.

Commissioner Dillard asked if the scope of the HFL Fund is well-defined.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated she was told by DGS Accounting and Budgets that the definition is to be used to increase disability access.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. CCDA Strategic Plan – Presentation and Action

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated this is the final year of the CCDA's five-year strategic plan. She proposed forming a Subcommittee made up of stakeholders to help inform the strategic plan and hiring a consultant to help work with management to guide the Commission through the strategic planning process.

Discussion

Commissioner Dillard stated his understanding that the strategic plan would come back to the Executive Committee to discuss and make recommendations. He agreed with hiring a consultant to oversee the process.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated she will present this proposal at the March full Commission meeting. She stated she will provide a clearer plan at the next

**California Commission on Disability Access
Executive Committee
March 6, 2024, Teleconference Meeting Minutes**

Executive Committee meeting. She cautioned that completing too many steps prior to hiring the consultant makes a project less successful.

Commissioner Lillibridge asked about the procurement process for a consultant.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated it involves writing a clear scope of work and submitting it to the DGS Contracts Unit. The process takes four to seven months to secure a contract.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Motion: Vice Chair Holloway moved that the Executive Committee recommends that the full Commission approve the strategic plan as proposed, including hiring a consultant, and authorizes the Executive Director to consider who should be on the stakeholder group and how often they should meet as part of the strategic planning process in anticipation of full Commission support. Commissioner Lillibridge seconded. Motion carried 5 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted “Yes”: Commissioners Dillard, ElHessen, and Lillibridge, Vice Chair Holloway, and Chair Downey.

6. Bylaws – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the Bylaws give the Executive Committee the authority to make recommended changes every two years. The last update was at the end of 2021. The Executive Committee and the DGS legal team offered suggested changes to the Bylaws at the latter part of 2023 and those have been incorporated. The revised draft is currently under review by the DGS legal team. The final draft will be presented to the Executive Committee for approval at a future Committee meeting.

Discussion

Commissioner Dr. ElHessen asked if the Bylaws will be presented to the full Commission for approval.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the Bylaws state the Executive Committee is the body that reviews and updates the Bylaws; however, the full Commission will be given the opportunity to review and make comments and suggestions on the updated Bylaws prior to finalization.

Commissioner Dr. ElHessen asked how new Bylaws are generated to keep up with technological advances.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the Executive Committee updates the Bylaws every two years to keep them current. The Executive Committee offered updates at the October Committee meeting that have now been incorporated and will

**California Commission on Disability Access
Executive Committee
March 6, 2024, Teleconference Meeting Minutes**

have another opportunity to comment on a third draft of the Bylaws at the next Committee meeting.

Commissioner Ramirez stated the strategic planning process is one of the processes that need to be updated within the Bylaws. One of the best practices for Commissions is the need to utilize the full Board membership in the development of strategic goals and strategic planning as part of the equity work to promote inclusion, equity, diversity, and accessibility. They stated the need to ensure that the strategic plan is built from the bottom up, is inclusive of individuals with disabilities, and has diverse participation from the beginning.

Commissioner Ramirez agreed with Commissioner Dr. ElHessen about the need to update the Bylaws to reflect the work being advanced, particularly at the state level with regards to equity.

Public Comment

No public comment.

7. Listening Forums – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated she previously presented the plan to hold a minimum of three to four regional Listening Forums throughout the state each year for the next three years as part of an initiative to engage municipal governments and the business and disability communities to converse, offer trainings to the business community on accessibility, and discuss ways to further the CCDA's mission to have a presence at a regional level.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the first Listening Forum was held on August 30th in the city of San Jose and a follow-up webinar was held in San Jose in December. The next Listening Forum will be held on April 11th in Salinas in Monterey County from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Monterey County Civil Rights Office, the Monterey County Commission on Disability, and the partners at the CDPA will be hosting a forum similar in format to the San Jose forum. The panel will include a representative from the Division of the State Architect (DSA) and a local CASp. The panel will engage with participants in a Q&A session about access for small business owners and a training will be provided on the basics of access compliance for businesses, given by the CASp. ASL, captioning, and language translation will be provided.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated staff has had conversations with Monterey County on hosting separate forums for the more rural parts of the county. Staff will also follow-up with some of the Indigenous communities in Monterey County to ensure that they have the opportunity to attend a forum.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated information on the upcoming Listening Forums will be posted on the CCDA website and social media channels.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the city of Sunnyvale attended the San Jose Listening Forum and asked the CCDA to provide a presentation. A breakfast-and-

**California Commission on Disability Access
Executive Committee
March 6, 2024, Teleconference Meeting Minutes**

learn webinar will be held for the city of Sunnyvale on April 17th or 18th, following the Salinas Listening Forum. The CCDA is partnering with the Pacific ADA Center to conduct this mini-Listening Forum focused on the training side, targeted for small business owners in the city of Sunnyvale.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated Greater Los Angeles and Sacramento Listening Forums are being planned. Dates are yet to be determined. Staff has reached out to several strategic partners in both those regions and planning meetings will begin this month.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the CCDA will continue doing its data-driven work by continuing to tie the communities it reaches out to the data found in the CCDA Annual Report to the Legislature under the Top Ten Alleged Disability Access Violations. Programming and outreach are tied to the top ten areas where trends of disability access litigation are seen.

Discussion

Chair Downey asked if the inclusion of Indigenous communities is informed by the data collection.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the Civil Rights Office mentioned that business owners of certain Indigenous communities are not always heard in Monterey County and that those communities are more successfully engaged when they are specifically reached out to. Also, Indigenous communities in Salinas did trend on the data. The plan is to hold in-person forums on a smaller scale in their communities.

Public Comment

No public comment.

8. Social Media Pilot – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated a six-month social media pilot has been launched in partnership with the DGS. Commissioners had expressed a strong desire to pursue the ability to have CCDA social media channels. The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) at the DGS agreed to give the CCDA Facebook and YouTube channels. 90 followers must be maintained on Facebook and the CCDA must post a minimum of three times a week with most of those posts having some kind of fully accessible visual or video. The DGS will use the data from the pilot to determine if the CCDA will be given the ability to have its own user name and password for those channels and will use the CCDA pilot as a guide for how other commissions and programs within the DGS may be allowed to have social media accounts in the future.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated part of why a social media platform is important is the CCDA was limited to posting information on its website through the DGS handle. Having a social media presence allows the CCDA to include the DGS while having its own brand identity so the business and disability communities, governments, and stakeholders can see what the CCDA is and what it does.

**California Commission on Disability Access
Executive Committee
March 6, 2024, Teleconference Meeting Minutes**

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the plan is for the Facebook posts to showcase CCDA materials and events in multiple languages.

Discussion

Commissioner Dr. ElHessen stated this is an exciting achievement. She asked about the process for Commissioners to post information about events or trainings.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated Commissioners can send their information to her for review. She will then send it to Staff Member Strother, the Outreach Coordinator, who will submit a draft through a service portal to be approved by the OPA, who will then post it on the CCDA social media page. The CCDA has been posting daily since the beginning of the pilot on March 1st.

Chair Downey stated it is important that the CCDA take advantage of this exciting opportunity. He asked how long it takes to get information approved.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated OPA approval usually happens within minutes.

Commissioner Ramirez suggested obtaining content guidelines from the OPA so they can be incorporated into the decision-making process. Social media communication is one of the new elements being incorporated into the agency bylaws.

Commissioner Ramirez suggested securing the same name or brand even if not using them to maintain ownership of that brand.

Public Comment

No public comment.

9. Accessible Parking Campaign (APC) Toolkit – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated AB 2917 required the CCDA to create a toolkit to educate businesses about the importance of accessible parking and exterior paths of travel and to track alleged disability access website violations. In response, the CCDA launched the APC and convened stakeholder groups for business owners and operators and for the construction industry that met for the better part of a year to create two toolkits on APC. Both toolkits have been reviewed by the DSA and the DGS Real Estate Services Division (RESD), and the construction toolkit was also reviewed by California Building Officials (CALBO) and the Contractors State License Board (CSLB).

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated, when the construction toolkit is finalized, it will be released in partnership with the CSLB. CALBO took one final look at the construction toolkit and provided additional suggestions for minor edits to some drawings. Those suggestions have been incorporated.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated minor changes were made to the business owner toolkit, including suggestions from CALBO that were also part of the construction toolkit. Both toolkits are being finalized and will be presented at the March Commission meeting for review and approval.

**California Commission on Disability Access
Executive Committee
March 6, 2024, Teleconference Meeting Minutes**

There was no Committee Member discussion or public comment.

10. Annual Report – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the Annual Report is approximately six months ahead of schedule as compared to last year in submitting the 2023 Annual Report draft to approval bodies prior to submission to the Legislature. She suggested that staff present the report and how the top-ten data is determined at a future meeting.

There was no Committee Member discussion or public comment.

11. Full Commission Meeting – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the upcoming full Commission meeting will take place on March 20th from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Sacramento and virtually on Zoom. She shared highlights from the agenda.

There was no Committee Member discussion or public comment.

12. Future Agenda Items – Discussion

Commissioner Dr. ElHessen suggested a discussion on emergency evacuation procedures to support businesses and community to help educate on how to address issues for small businesses in regards to an emergency.

Commissioner Ramirez suggested a discussion on the U.S. Access Board, which is coming to Los Angeles in April for the upcoming U.S. Olympics and Paralympics games. They suggested discussing this topic to prepare local businesses providing accessibility to individuals who will be attending. They suggested partnering with the Access Board in a broader opportunity to highlight disability in the state of California.

13. Adjourn

Chair Downey thanked everyone for their participation and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Lillibridge moved to adjourn the March 6, 2024, California Commission on Disability Access Executive Committee meeting. Vice Chair Holloway seconded. Motion carried 5 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted “Yes”: Commissioners Dillard, ElHessen, and Lillibridge, Vice Chair Holloway, and Chair Downey.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m.