

Lafayette City-Parish President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities

Monday, February 11, 2008
Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Harold Arceneaux; Jim Richard; Richard Phelps; Peggy Stelly

Excused: Paul Fontana

Guests in Attendance: Nadine Dunbar Gills; Michele Bienvenu; Donna Andrus

Staff Present: Ben Berthelot

1. Jim Richard called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests.
2. The January meeting minutes were approved.
3. Jim Richard introduced Michele Bienvenu, who was present to speak about Haven Hills. Michele's daughter is a special needs child and she has often wondered what would happen to her daughter once school was out, because she wants her daughter to have a full life, not just a job. Michele introduced Donna Andrews, whose daughter has autism. Michele's dream is to open Haven Hills, a nurturing, safe environment with a trained loving staff that will encourage individuals with functional disabilities to accomplish all they can, with dignity and pride in themselves as they grow socially, emotionally and spiritually. The mission of Haven Hills is an alternative employment opportunity for adults with functional disabilities that also provides recreational and social activities with the opportunity to make friends and experience a full and abundant life. Michele is interested in partnering with Lafayette Consolidated Government in the early stages of Haven Hills to possibly use a recreational center. She hopes to one day have a 100-acre facility. Michele informed the committee that she met with CAO Dee Stanley last week and asked the committee to help spread the word about Haven Hills. More information is available at www.havenhills.net. Ben Berthelot informed the committee that he would have the link to Haven Hills placed on the LCG Website under the President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities tab.
4. Jim Richard introduced Nadine Dunbar, Transportation Officer from the Governor's Disability United We Ride Division. Nadine informed the committee that she works with communities across Louisiana as a facilitator to address needs in the transportation area as it concerns the elderly and disabled. Committee member Peggy Stelly invited Nadine to the meeting. Her office does not have funds available but she puts communities in touch with the right resources and grant opportunities. Peggy Stelly hoped that Nadine would be able to work with the committee on its initiative to explore the possibility of expanding paratransit bus service to the outlying municipalities in Lafayette Parish. Nadine was invited to the Council of Governments Meeting on February 27, 2008, where Peggy and Jim Richard will be making a presentation to the area mayors.
5. There was no correspondence to report.

6. **Old Business:** Ben Berthelot informed Peggy Stelly and Jim Richard that the COG meeting had been confirmed for February 27, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. in the Council Briefing Room
7. **New Business:** There was no new business.
8. Michele Bienvenu, Donna Andrews and Deborah Aymond asked to be added to the committee's email list.
9. The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.
10. The next meeting of the President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities is scheduled for Monday, March 10, 2008 from 11:30-12:30 in the Council Briefing Room on the first floor of Lafayette City Hall.