

Daniel A. Micari, Commissioner, Chairperson
Barbara Bajurny, Commissioner
Andrew Collins, Commissioner, Secretary
Gloria Ewings, Commissioner
Ruth Ann Graime, Commissioner
Joseph Krolikowski, Commissioner
Jacqueline Olsen, City Council Liaison
Diane Salmoiraghi, Commissioner



**Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Bristol, CT 06010**

**Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2024**

7:00 PM – City Hall, 3rd Floor Meeting Room 3-1 and Virtual Format

Our Mission

To promote inclusion and improve the quality of life for people in Bristol with a disability, by providing a network of partnerships with local resources that foster self-sufficiency, dignity, and respect.

Reasonable Accommodation Statement

The Bristol Commission for Persons with Disabilities is committed to equal access to, and participation in, all meetings and Commission-sponsored programs and events. Individuals who require an accommodation in order to fully participate, including physical access, communication assistance, or other special need, should contact Daniel A. Micari at damicari@yahoo.com, at least seven business days prior to the scheduled meeting, program, or event.

Present: Micari, Bajurny, Collins, Ewings, Graime, Krolikowski, Olsen, Salmoiraghi

Absent: None

Call to order: 7:07 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: April 10, 2024 (Krolikowski/Ewings, passed)

Presentation: Scott Heth, Executive Director of the Environmental Learning Centers of Connecticut
Topic: Harry C. Barnes Memorial Nature Center - Programs, Updates and Nature Trail News

Mr. Heth focused his presentation on the new Wallace Barnes Accessible Nature Trail that was recently completed at the Harry C. Barnes Memorial Nature Center. He described various aspects of it noting that it is about one mile long, with a boardwalk made of recycled materials and sections made of stone dust/gravel,

and that the entire route is at less than a 5% grade. It was specifically designed to accommodate people with various abilities including those using a wheelchair or a walker.

The trail had its grand opening on May 5, 2024. Mr. Heth stated that most of the funding was provided by the City of Bristol with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Mr. Heth showed a promotional video, made as part of a fundraising campaign prior to the trail's completion, that further explained the purpose and goals of the project. He stated that phase II of the project is complete, and the next step is various outreach efforts, establishing programs, and organizing guided hikes.

Mr. Heth then fielded questions from commissioners and audience members. He elaborated on more aspects of the trail noting that the trail will be free to use for the public, but a fee will be charged for groups. He described the construction of the trail stating that the contractor was Kencore and was made with durable materials. There are no current plans to make it accessible during the winter as plowing or salting the area could cause damage. Rollerblades and bicycles are not permitted on the trail.

New/Current Business

*Currently, no speaker is confirmed for the June 12, 2024, meeting, though City Council Liaison Olsen stated that Sen. Henri Martin was interested in attending. The Commission will not be meeting in July or August.

*Regarding Substitute House Bill No. 5241 – *An Act Establishing a Bureau Coordinating Services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind Persons*, the language from this legislation was incorporated as part of section 65 of House Bill No. 5523 – *An Act Concerning Allocations of Federal American Rescue Plan Act Funds and Provisions Related to General Government, Human Services, Education and the Biennium Ending June 30, 2025*. At the time of the meeting, this bill had passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate and is likely to be signed by the governor. Commissioner Bajurny emphasized the importance of this bill. The Commission will continue to be updated regarding the establishment of the Bureau of Services for Persons Who Are Deaf, Deafblind or Hard of Hearing.

*Commissioner Graime asked Chairman Micari to update the Commission in the future on issues that are brought to his attention by those seeking assistance with disabilities issues.

*Commissioner Krolikowski reiterated the importance of assembling a pamphlet to distribute at events with information on disabilities services.

*Chairman Micari stated that the Commission will have a booth at the upcoming Rockwell Park Festival on August 17, 2024. The Commission will also plan on having a booth on two dates during the farmers' market with exact dates still pending. Commissioner Bajurny suggested that the Commission should have a booth at the Mum Festival.

*Commissioner Bajurny stated that she has been pushing the Mayor's Office to enable captions on live Facebook videos for the deaf and hard of hearing. Recent videos have been including captions.

*Commissioner Salmoiraghi suggested that the Commission should help direct people to sign language classes and events.

Old Business

*Chairman Bajurny led the Commission in demonstrating how to sing "Happy Birthday to You" in ASL.

Correspondence

*Chairman Micari stated that he sent a message to Christina Benvenuto, of Bristol Health, thanking her for her presentation at the April 10, 2024, meeting.

*Chairman Micari stated that he sent a message to Nancy Plasczynski and Andy Adams, of Bristol Health, for their presence at the April 10, 2024, meeting.

*Chairman Micari stated that he sent a message to Leslie Warren, of CoSignCT, and Luisa Gasco-Soboleski, President of the Connecticut Association of the Deaf, thanking them for their presentations at the April 10, 2024, meeting.

*Commissioner Micari also contacted Margaret Banker, Director (GHTD), to acknowledge the positive actions of the Paratranist driver, and followed up with a written acknowledgment of the driver's diligent actions, in support of this man's transportation situation. Ms. Banker thanked Commissioner Micari and assured him that this commendation would be forwarded to GHTD Administration.

Public Participation

None

Motion to adjourn: Krolikowski/Ewings, passed **Meeting adjourned:** 8:14 PM

Next meeting: June 12, 2024, at 7:00 PM
City Hall, 3rd floor meeting room 3-1

Presenter: Sen. Henri Martin
Topic: Legislative update

Submitted by,
Andrew Collins, Secretary