

**CITY OF FRESNO**  
**DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
City Hall, Second Floor – City Council Chambers

**APPROVED - MINUTES OF THE APRIL 19, 2011 MEETING**

DAC Commission Members Present: Rachelle Taylor (Chair), Dorothy Young, Robert Hand, Mary Beth Randall, Carlos Duarte (*ex officio*)

DAC Commission Members Absent: Michelle Bronson, Jenelle Pitt

Staff Present: Elizabeth Kunz, DAC Secretary

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**Call to Order**

Call to order and self introductions were made.

**Approval of Minutes of March 15, 2011**

Member Young made a motion to approve the minutes of March 15, 2011. The motion was seconded by Member Randall and passed.

**Member Reports and Comments**

Member Duarte noted it was autism awareness month and provided some information about autism and the challenges faced by families living with this diagnosis. Member Duarte also provided a handout on autism, which was distributed to the DAC and public.

**Unscheduled Communication**

Mr. Ethan Kirk addressed the DAC and identified himself as the Field Representative of Congressman Jeff Deham. He indicated the Congressman was aware of the DAC, and indicated that the Congressman was there to help with issues at the Federal level.

**Presentation: Kayla's Voice: Empowering People with Autism**

Ms. Kayla Takeuchi, and her mother, Ms. Nadine Takeuchi, gave a presentation on how Kayla learned to "type to talk," using facilitated

communication (FC) as a nonverbal person with autism. The presentation included a selection from the film “Kayla’s Voice: Empowering People with Autism.”

Member Young thanked Kayla for sharing her inspiring story and stated that a “touch to talk” application is currently available on the iPhone.

Chair Taylor asked Kayla her favorite subjects in school. Kalya responded that she loved all her classes but her favorite was Child Development at the Willow International Center.

Member Hand asked Kayla if she was part of a nonprofit organization promoting this service [FC]. Kayla indicated that she was just doing what she could to help her silent brothers and sisters.

Member Duarte thanked Kayla for her work. Member Randall stated that it was nice to see someone from her age group fighting to have their own needs met.

### **Presentation: Lewis Eaton Trail – River West Project**

Ms. Melinda Marks Mehlhoff, Executive Director of the San Joaquin River Conservancy provided a map of the proposed expansion of the Lewis Eaton Trail. She indicated that the Conservancy had contracted with the City of Fresno to do the environmental assessment and introduced Mr. Mark Johnson, who is managing that portion of the project. Ms. Mehlhoff state the project was at its very initial stages, and then would enter the formal California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) application process. Ms. Mehlhoff indicated the trail would be very flat at the bottom, and they would like to meet accessibility requirements. The portion of the trail between Spano Park, near Palm and Nees, however, is steep and would be accessed by stair.

Member Duarte asked about the origin of the project. Ms. Mehlhoff stated that the project was part of the San Joaquin River Conservancy Master Plan. The San Joaquin River Conservancy decided how Parkway bonds are spent, and is separate from the nonprofit organization the San Joaquin Parkway Trust. The land was purchased in 2005 and planning stated in 2007.

Member Hand asked if there are existing paths in the area, or if this will be a completely new trail. Mr. Johnson replied that currently there are dirt trails which may or may not be open to public access and the yellow trail is a trail that serves the subdivision. The southern end of the trail would be accessed by stair.

Member Hand asked if the rest of the trail would be paved and have slopes that would be accessible to people with disabilities. The presenters indicated that the area from Spano Park was steep, but other areas should be relatively flat. Discussion ensued as to parking, and the planned inclusion of a single parking lot for the one mile paved trail. Member Hand asked if the project were to include additional parking, where it might be placed. Ms. Mehlhoff responded that they had considered another location near the pond, but the neighbors objected to the placement of an additional parking lot.

Member Young observed that only having one restroom available on the mile trail could be problematic for some users. Chair Taylor agreed, indicating that restroom availability was very important for people with disabilities such as hers.

Chair Taylor asked how long the process for constructing the trail would take. Ms. Mehlhoff stated that they are in the very beginning of the process, deciding what would be considered for the CEQA evaluation. They have funding for the construction of the trail, but are trying to get funding for maintenance of the trail.

Member Hand suggested creating two loops which would allow users the choice of a shorter or longer route. Ms. Mehlhoff indicated that design was originally suggested but received negative responses from the nearby homeowners. There was discussion about the concerns expressed by the homeowners, including increased fire danger, adverse impacts to the viewshed, and increased traffic and parking in their neighborhood. Ms. Mehlhoff described some of the community groups supporting the project, and future plans for the area.

The presenters asked the DAC members to feel free to contact them with comments or suggestions for the project.

## **Presentation: Limb Loss Awareness Month**

Ms. Liz Zemke gave a brief presentation on the first Limb Loss Awareness Month, and the April 16, 2011 event hosted to commemorate the month by the Central California Amputee Education Group, the Prosthetists of the Central Valley and San Joaquin Rehabilitation Hospital. Ms. Zemke presented information on the number of individuals with limb loss, and the need for education, especially diabetes awareness, since approximately 60% of amputations are preventable or “post pone- able.” She provided information to the DAC on an upcoming event for upper-extremity amputation management.

Member Duarte thanked Ms. Zemke for her presentation and referenced current improvements “bionic” technology for prostheses and leg braces. Discussion ensued as to the improved mobility made possible by computerized knees and other devices.

Chair Taylor asked about current efforts to prevent limb loss. Ms. Zemke said that they work with amputees to protect their remaining limbs. Ms. Zemke described the clinics held locally that serve to educate amputees from a variety of disciplines.

## **Presentation: “Look Me in the Eye” Campaign**

Member Duarte gave an update on the progress made on the recommendations put forward by the previous Task Force on this issue. He indicated that he would still like to secure funding for media spots to increase awareness of importance of looking people with disabilities in the eye. In the mean time, however, he is recommending the adoption of a proclamation before City on this theme in October of 2011 which is recognized as People with Disabilities month.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business to bring before the Commission, Chair Taylor adjourned the meeting at 10:59 am.