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**County of Santa Cruz  
Commission on Disabilities  
2010 Annual Report**

**I. Roles of the Commission**

The Commission on Disabilities is an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors on issues concerning persons with disabilities. The Commission was established to:

- (a) Review existing County policies that affect persons with disabilities and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding proposed changes;
- (b) Review Sections 503 and 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulations and advise the Board of Supervisors on any actions necessary to bring the county into compliance with the federal requirements and to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities;
- (c) Review the provision of access for persons with disabilities to public places within the County and recommend improvements where needed;
- (d) Review the County's Affirmative Action Plan and policies and recommend to the Board of Supervisors and Affirmative Action Commission any revisions which may be necessary to eliminate employment discrimination against persons with disabilities;
- (e) Review the County's Personnel rules and job descriptions and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and to the Civil Service Commission, as necessary, to assure that any unnecessary barriers to employment opportunities for persons with disabilities are removed;
- (f) Advise the Board of Supervisors on any other appropriate programs and actions which would increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- (g) Evaluate services provided to persons with disabilities in the County and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors based on their conclusions;
- (h) Review requests by persons with disabilities or organizations for County assistance and advise the Board of Supervisors;
- (i) Investigate citizen complaints related to concerns of persons with disabilities and make appropriate recommendations for action to the Board of Supervisors;
- (j) Review Federal and State Legislation of interest to persons with disabilities and advise the Board of Supervisors of their recommendations; and
- (k) Exercise other responsibilities related to the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities in the County.

**II. Meetings Dates, Time, and Location**

The Commission met the second Thursday of each month from 12:30 until 1:30 P.M. at 1080 Emeline Street Building D and the Regional Transportation Commission offices located at 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz. The commission did schedule meetings in July or in December. In March, a meeting was cancelled due to a conflict with a Coastal Commission meeting on accessible trails. In August, the Commission held its annual retreat. The mailing address is 701 Ocean Street, Room 30, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

**III. Commission Structure**

The Commission on Disabilities is comprised of ten members representing five districts. The Board of Supervisors appoints two Commissioners for each district. The Chair or Vice-Chair who are elected every January to facilitate commission meetings. This year the Chair was



Peter Heylin (5<sup>th</sup> District) and the Vice-Chair was Charles Stone ( 2<sup>nd</sup> District). The Commission members, as of December 31, 2009 are:

District	Commissioners
1 <sup>st</sup> District	Robert McGaw, John Daugherty
2 <sup>nd</sup> District	Thomas Crain, Charles Stone
3 <sup>rd</sup> District	Deborah Lane, Joseph Quigg
4 <sup>th</sup> District	Jeanette Cosentino, Vacant
5 <sup>th</sup> District	Peter Heylin, Vacant

The Commissioner(s) that completed their terms, resigned, or were replaced in the last year was Paula Tanner.

The Commission is supported by a ten hour per week staff person – the Commission Coordinator. The Coordinator takes minutes, prepares correspondence, and represents the Commission in some of the Commission activities. Mary Thuerwachter staffed this position during 2010.

## V. Attendance

Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Charles Stone	X	X	o	X	X	E	o	X	X	X	E	o
Jeanette Cosentino	X	X	o	X	X	X	o	X	A	X	X	o
Joseph Quigg	E	X	o	X	A	-	o	X	A	X	X	o
Peter Heylin	X	X	o	X	X	X	o	X	X	E	X	o
Robert McGaw	E	X	o	X	X	X	o	X	X	X	X	o
Tom Crain	X	X	o	X	X	E	o	X	X	A	A	o
John Daugherty	X	X	o	X	X	X	o	X	X	X	X	o
Deborah Lane	X	X	o	E	X	X	o	X	X	X	E	o
Jerry MacAllister	A	A	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

X= present    A=absence    E=Excused Absence    - =Not seated on commission

The Commission did not vote on Commission business at meetings in the following months: June, November- due to lack of a quorum. The Commission strictly adhered to a requirement of six members present to achieve a quorum. There were no meetings in July and December. In August, the commission held a planning retreat in lieu of a regular meeting to review projects for placement on the September agenda. The scheduled March meeting was cancelled due to conflict with the Commission presentation to the California Coastal Commission on the Arana Gulch master plan.



## **VI. Annual Goals and Accomplishments**

The Commissions' activities and priorities are determined by the Commission mandate, and emerging needs as expressed by the community and identified by Commissioners. Our Mission Statement is as follows:

*The Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities is a pro-active advisory board that serves to insure that children and adults with disabilities have opportunities to reach their maximum potential in independence, human development, productivity and self-sufficiency as well as to insure equity and access within the community.*

### **Summary of Objectives**

The Commission on Disabilities' objective is to be the eyes, ears, voice, and conscience in assuring equal access to persons with disabilities of Santa Cruz County and to advise the Board of Supervisors and serve persons with disabilities in our community in the following ways:

1. Provide an accessible, inclusive forum for persons with disabilities to express community concerns.
2. Identify and address visible and invisible barriers for persons with disabilities that disrupt the ability to exercise the right to live full and productive lives.
3. Encourage community action through education, referral, collaboration and integration of resource utilization to remove barriers for persons with disabilities that disrupt the ability to live full and productive lives.
4. Influence public policy by advising and working with the Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors and the County to affect Local, State, and Federal legislation to optimize the functional potential of those persons with disabilities in the County of Santa Cruz.

#### **Objective 1 -Provide an accessible, inclusive, and appropriate place for persons with disabilities to express community concerns.**

- Meetings are open for citizens to express individual concerns. Meeting time is allocated for presentation on topics relating to persons with disabilities. The following made presentations to the Commission:
  - Doug Patrick – Elderly and Disabled Task Force
  - Rama Khalsa – Director, Santa Cruz County Department of Health Services re closure of Dominican Behavioral Unit
  - Charles Dixon – Two Wheeled Coalition regarding Arana Gulch Master Plan
  - Jean Brocklebank – Friends of Arana Gulch
  - Barbara Flynn, Quality Improvement Director, Central California Alliance for Health
  - Mary Lou Goeke & Robert Hallbauer – United Way re 2-1-1
- The Commission Coordinator is available as a contact and information and referral resource between meetings. During the past year, the coordinator evaluated problems of community members and made approximately 50 referrals to



community resources for persons with disabilities. Some of those inquiries led to issues of a systemic nature being brought to the attention of the commission, such as the accessibility of the UCSC Performing Arts Center.

- The Commission bulletin board is maintained outside of Commission office, which provides information and events of interest to Persons with Disabilities.

**Objective 2 - Identify and address visible and invisible barriers preventing children and adults with disabilities from exercising their rights to live a full and productive life**

- Accessible home design – The Commission worked with the Santa Cruz County Planning Department to educate the public on accessible design issues that should be considered when building or remodeling to assure access to persons with disabilities. In addition to improving accessibility to persons with disabilities, Accessible Design provides a way for our aging population to remain in their homes to the end of their lives. Brochures are available both on the Commission ([www.scccod.net](http://www.scccod.net)) and Planning Department website and in the lobby. All local jurisdictions agreed to provide brochures to the public.
- Arana Gulch Accessible Trail – The Commission took extensive testimony on the pros and cons of creating an ADA accessible trail at Arana Gulch. The Commission recommended that the County convey its support to the Coastal Commission. The Board of Supervisors approved this recommendation. Commissioners testified at the public hearing before the Coastal Commission. The Commission is monitoring the reconsideration of the rejection of the Arana Gulch Master Plan.
- Accessible Parking Enforcement - Parking information cards are distributed throughout the community to alert people to the penalties for illegal parking in handicapped spots and tell persons how to report instances of illegal parking.
- Brookdale Post Office – Investigation of a complaint regarding the removal of a green parking zone in front of Post Office. Remaining parking is currently across the street and up a steep unpaved slope. The Commission is working with Public Works and the Post Office to develop ideas for accessible parking for persons with disabilities.
- Public Works - Meeting on accessibility issues including pedestrian access, sidewalks and parking. Discussion of handling of resident complaints regarding pedestrian safety issues.
- OnCare - Responded to a complaint about lack of disabled parking for oncology offices at Dominican. Disabled parking space and valet parking are now available.
- Simpkins Swim Center - Worked on obtaining assistive devices for persons with disabilities that could not use fixed wheelchair.



- Soquel Cemetery - Investigated removal of access road at cemetery for a person with a disability.
- New Logo - Created for the commission to increase awareness of disability issues and visibility of the work of the commission.
- Junction Park - Investigated a complaint of lack of accessibility of beach. Discussions with Parks and Recreation are continuing.
- Dominican Health Behavioral Unit - Investigated impact on closure– received report from Director Rama Khalsa about plans for services.
- Pedestrian Access Workshop - Cosponsored a workshop on regulatory requirements for sidewalks and pedestrian access.
- KUDOS AWARD – Solicited Community nominations for services that are friendly and provide easy access for persons with disabilities. Will publicize recognition of Disability Friendly Local Services to raise public awareness regarding access issues.

**Objective 3 - Encourage community action through education, referral, collaboration and integration of resource utilization to remove barriers for persons with disabilities that disrupt the ability to live full and productive lives.**

- Regional Transportation Commission - liaison Commission member
- IHSS and Long-Term Care – liaison Commission member
- Central Coast Alliance for Health – liaison Commission member
- Provided Parking Enforcement Cards for Day on the Beach for persons with disabilities sponsored by Shared Adventures
- Office of Emergency Services – liaison Commission member
- National FEMA referral list for disaster support – Commission member

**Objective 4 - Influence public policy by advising and working with the Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors and the County to affect Local, State, and Federal legislation to optimize the functional potential of those persons with disabilities in the County of Santa Cruz.**

- The Commission surveyed local residents regarding their safety in the home. An alarming number had no plans for what to do in an emergency and many had wound care/healing issues. The Survey was submitted to the Board of Supervisors separately from this report.
- The Commission provided information to the Board of Supervisors on the accessible paths planned for Arana Gulch. The Board gave its support to the Arana Gulch Master Plan. Commissioner testified regarding the importance and benefit accessible trails would have for the community.



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- Accessible home design collaboration on brochure used throughout Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties to educate the community on planning issues to assist persons with disabilities and aging in place.
  - Citizen initiated accessible parking violation notification cards were widely distributed throughout the community.

## **VII. Future Goals and Recommendations**

1. Create newsletter and survey for Persons with Disabilities
2. Develop Business Signs Promoting Accessibility
3. KUDOS AWARD - Recognition of Accessible Businesses, Organizations and Agencies
3. Accessible Building Design issues
4. Blue Zone enforcement
5. Public policy and education of the public regarding the needs of persons with disabilities
6. Inter-commission communication and cooperation

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Thuerwachter  
Commission Coordinator

Approved by the Commission on Disabilities on 1/13/2011