

OBSERVER REPORT FORM

Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities

Date: March 31, 2021

Name of Observer: Lydia Zepeda

Meeting called to order at: 3:15 pm

Present: James Williams, Kristy Willet, Luke Byram, Krystal Monteros (Chair), Lukas Barfield, Aimee Sidhu, Tony Hestor, Richard Smaby, Todd Holloway.

Others present: Lucas Smiraldo (TACOD Liaison), Members of public: Jamie Stout, Haley Edick, Bree Boyce, Dean Sydnor

TACD was asked to endorse a letter from Tacoma Pierce County Coalition on Homelessness to the Public Health department regarding Temporary Care Center Policies and Procedures on the homeless who do not have a safe place to isolate or quarantine. The current Temporary Care Center is a repurposed hotel with 120 rooms. There is a strong need for non-congregate shelter because of Covid-19. The prohibitions against mental health conditions, criminal backgrounds, or smoking are discriminatory, limiting use of the facility. The hotel is adequately funded and staffed but rooms are empty because of these conditions. The letter calls for removing these conditions which never apply to normal hotels.

- Holloway: Tacoma Emergency Management will be reimbursed by FEMA category B funding for homeless. That funding comes with strings attached, FEMA can deny reimbursement to State if there is evidence of discrimination. The health department should be aware that their policies risk forgoing reimbursement from FEMA.

Concerns were raised about the tone of the letter by one of the Commissioners.

- Hestor: What is the benefit or cost of tone?
- Holloway: We could ask Garrett (the author of the letter) for edits
- Monteros: Sometimes you need to have an aggressive tone to get things done.
- Holloway: The rights of those with disabilities are violated all the time, but we need to work with the health department in future. However, if we point out the risk management issues, we are actually do them a favor. We can tell the health department we are sending you a letter so you can avoid a letter from FEMA saying you will not be reimbursed.
- Sidhu: We could write our own letter that is diplomatic and reference this letter.
- Willet: If we are talking about asking for edits, we cannot endorse it until we see it, but if we write our own letter we control the tone.
- Smiraldo: Holloway and Byram are you willing to draft a letter?
- Holloway: Yes. It won't be a long letter, but it will point out the risk management issue as a strong reason not to violate people's rights.

- Smiraldo: Can you get this done by early next week?
- Holloway: Yes.
- Smiraldo called for any dissent bringing the letter to the next meeting, a week from next Friday, April 9. Hearing none, they proceeded to the next topic.

A statement in support of Asian American and Pacific Islander community to send to press on behalf of the commission written by Commissioner Byram.

- Hestor: I have not had a chance to read it with my reader, the file needs to be Word.
 - Smiraldo: Any objections to delaying vote this until our next meeting?
 - Barfield: I would like to add the sentence “Additionally we oppose the over policing of Asian communities as a result of the racist ‘War on Drugs.’” Insert at end of the third ask.
- The Commission did not disagree with adding the sentence or waiting to vote on the letter at the next meeting, April 9.

Public comment:

- Bree: I agree with everything.
- David: I am Pierce County of the Blind and would like to be on your email.
- Hayley: I would be interested in being a Commissioner, I want more information.

Further Business:

- Holloway: Vaccination rides are available.
- Byram: Garrett emailed me, should I invite him to our next meeting?
- Smiraldo: yes
- Caldwell: I agree, we should write our own letter and reference Garrett’s letter. I would like to work with you Holloway on the draft.
Holloway: absolutely
- Smiraldo: Can we get a working draft to vote on by next Wednesday to vote on at our next Friday?
- Holloway: Yes.

Adjournment at 4:02 pm