January 27, 2006

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

Dear Members of the Board:

Attached is the 2005 Annual Report of the Commission on Disabilities. I recommend that the Board accept and file this report and direct the Chair to thank the members of the Commission for their efforts on behalf of the County.

Sincerely,

MARK W. STONE, Chair
Board of Supervisors

MWS:ted
Attachment

cc: Commission on Disabilities

01165A6
January 23, 2006

Chair Mark Stone  
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Chairperson Stone:

On behalf of the Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities, I am submitting the 2005 Annual Report of Activities for your review.

I would also like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to serve the Board of Supervisors and persons with disabilities in Santa Cruz County.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Smith  
Commission Coordinator

cc: Claire Schwartz, EEO Officer
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 Noon until 1:30 P.M. at 1400 Emeline Street, Room 206 with the exception of the following months: August and December when the Commission did not meet. 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 and/or Vice-Chair who are elected every January facilitates commission meetings. This year the Chair was Charles Stone (2nd District) and the Vice-Chair was Joseph Quigg (5th District). The Commission members, as of December 31, 2005 are:

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<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Commissioners</th>
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<tr>
<td>1st District</td>
<td>Robert McGaw, vacant</td>
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<td>2nd District</td>
<td>vacant, Charles Stone</td>
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<td>3rd District</td>
<td>Michael Bush, Jessie Schecter</td>
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<td>4th District</td>
<td>Jeanette Cosentino, vacant</td>
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<td>5th District</td>
<td>Joseph Quigg, Peter Heylin</td>
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The following Commissioners either completed their terms, resigned, or were replaced in the last year: Chris Lewis and Erik Edmonds.

IV. Commission Staff
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. Andrea Smith served as the Commission Coordinator for the year 2005.

V. Attendance

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X= present  A= excused absence  dash (-)=not on commission  L= Leave of absence  
The Commission did not officially meet in September due to lack of a quorum.

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 equal access for persons with disabilities in our County. Toward that end, the Commission influences public policy by advising and working with the Board of Supervisors and the County on issues impacting persons with disabilities and their families, educating and informing its constituencies, and increasing opportunities for persons with disabilities to reach their maximum potential in independence, human development, productivity, and self-sufficiency.

Due to extensive turnover on the Commission this year, the Commission deferred addressing new projects outlined in their 5-year Strategic Plan and concentrated on existing activities, urgent issues as they arose, and recruitment of potential Commissioners.

Summary of Objectives
The Commission on Disabilities’ objective is to be the eyes, ears, voice, and conscience in insuring equal access to persons with disabilities of Santa Cruz County. We will advise the Board of Supervisors and serve persons with disabilities in our community in the following ways:

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

3) Educate and promote awareness on disability issues and rights.

4) Provide referrals and initiate collaborations, bringing together needs and resources to inspire community action.

5) Take an active role in advancing Local, State, and Federal Legislation that insures and maintains equity and access for all people with disabilities.

Below are brief descriptions of the Commission’s activities in support of the objectives identified above:

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

   **Activities in support of this objective include:**
   - Mailed out Commission Information Packets to community members who expressed interest in serving on the Commission. The packets included past Annual Reports of Commission Activities and a FAQ sheet to address concerns most often expressed by new Commissioners.
   - Revised the Commission webpage to incorporate more information regarding the Commission’s projects.
   - Maintained the Commission Bulletin Board outside of the Commission Office.
   - Distributed Commission materials at the Annual Job Fair in October at the Cocoanue Grove in Santa Cruz.

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**

   **Activities in support of this objective include:**
   - This last year a Commission representative continued to serve on the IHSS (In-Home Support Services) Advisory Committee. The Committee oversees County In-Home Support Services, monitors contracts, and initiates community participation and education on IHSS issues.
   - The Commission continued to support and recommend County policies and projects that promote access. Some of those projects included:

   **Healthcare Advocacy**
   - In 1998, two “watch dog” positions were created stemming from the Commission’s investigation of the Central Coast Alliance on Health (CCAH, formerly SCCHO). These positions, the Members Advocate Position (MAP) and the Disabilities Liaison Position were created to remedy problems with service delivery to CCAH members. The Members Advocate Position serves as an objective party to assist persons with disabilities when confronted with problems obtaining services through CCAH. The Disabilities Liaison position works in-house to assist members with disabilities with any health care issue that may arise.
In 2005, the MAP position housed at California Legal Rural Assistance was eliminated due to inactivity. Clients expressed a preference for contacting CCAH directly for problem resolution rather than a third party. Funding for the MAP position was diverted into the Wheelchair Awareness Program.

This coming year the Commission will hold a seat on the CCAH Advisory Committee.

Accessible Parking Enforcement

In 2000, with the support of the Commission, the Sheriffs Department formed the County’s first volunteer parking enforcement team to address increasing accessible parking violations. The Santa Cruz Team was to be modeled after a program in Fremont that has been operating for years, however the Santa Cruz citizen patrol would perform additional services such as vacation watch and vehicle abatement adjunct to their parking enforcement duties.

Unfortunately since its inception, the program has faced some setbacks. The most detrimental to the success of the program has been the inability to secure liability insurance for volunteers to issue citations to violators. In lieu of citations, volunteers are allowed to issue courtesy notices, however, the effectiveness of this method is unknown.

The Commission continued to communicate with the Volunteer Coordinator for the Sheriffs Department regarding liability insurance and the program activities. The Commission also recommended to the Board this year that priority be given to removing barriers to the success of this program be removed which prompted a new conversation with representatives from the Sheriffs Department – Todd Liberty and Shea Johnson. The Commission learned that the policy now under a new Sheriff prohibited volunteers from issuing citations of any kind.

Based on this new information the Commission recommended some other ways volunteers could assist the Sheriffs Department in addressing those who abuse disability parking spaces including photographing violators to be ticketed later by an officer. The Commission also continues to explore ways that other communities’ support enforcing accessible parking requirements.

On a final note – the Commission experienced great sadness over the passing of Lt. Joseph Hemingway. Joe had always been extremely supportive of the Commission’s work and we viewed him as an ally in creating equal access for persons with disabilities in our community. Joe played an integral in creating the Volunteer Accessible Parking Enforcement Team. His commitment to the project and his great sense of humor helped to ease tension in working through the tedious details. We miss him and his influence in championing for equal access for persons with disabilities in our community.

The Commission also continues to distribute a wallet-size information card, developed by the Commission, on who to call to report accessible parking violators.

Transportation and Para-Transit Services

The Coordinator participated on behalf of the Commission in the 5310 Funding review process for Para transit services.

1 A recent article (attached) reported that the Fremont Volunteer Parking Enforcement Team generated $175,000 and more in revenue for the city.
IHSS (In-Home Support Services) and Medicare

- Through participation on the IHSS Advisory Committee, the Commission monitored proposed cuts to IHSS services, Medi-Cal re-design, and Medicare modernization. Commissioners participated in various rallies, actions, and media events to oppose cuts and revisions that would reduce or compromise services to consumers.

Voting

- One of the Commissioners participated in a survey of polling places mandated by the State Attorney General. The locations were evaluated for accessibility for both workers and voters. One of the Commissioners also served as a consultant to the Election Department to remedy access issues.
- In response to the lawsuit brought by the California Attorney General – the Commission issued a letter support the County and the Election Department's commitment to providing voting access to our residents.

3. Provide referrals and initiate collaborations, bringing together needs and resources to inspire community action.

Activities in support of this objective include:

- On September 15, 2003, Santa Cruz lost Terry Brickley, an extraordinary citizen committed to expanding access, broadening awareness, and improving the quality of life for all persons in our community with and without disabilities. Before the Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted, Terry Brickley lobbied for elevators in buildings, accessible transportation, and "curb cuts" to allow sidewalk access for those with mobility impairments. He also pioneered the push for accessible parking spaces in downtown Santa Cruz, and accessible public buildings and bathrooms throughout the County. Terry was also instrumental in the formation of the County Commission on Disabilities, which influences public policy as it relates to persons with disabilities in the County.

In his own words, Terry's goal was always "to assist change, and it didn't make a difference if it's on a political level, at a city council meeting or on a personal level, counseling a couple. There will always be barriers, whether in architecture or attitude."

In an effort to continue Mr. Brickley's vision to "assist change", the Commission collaborated with the Cabrillo College Foundation to establish the Terry Brickley Educational Enhancement Scholarship. In May 2005, the second annual $500 scholarship was awarded to student Geoff Middlekauff to assist in his education at Cabrillo College.

4. Educate and promote awareness on disability issues and rights

Activities in support of this objective include:

- In support of promoting employment for persons with disabilities and disability awareness, the Commission tended a table at the County's Access Job Fair at the Coconut Grove. The event was well attended and provided opportunities to network with other services offering support to persons with disabilities trying to get into the job market. The Commission disbursed Commission brochures and Access to County Employment brochures.
This year several Commissioners participated in a Speakers Bureau and at several events regarding disability issues.

5. **Take an active role in advancing Local, State, and Federal Legislation that insures and maintains equity and access for all people with disabilities.**

Activities in support of this objective include:

- In August, Commissioners participated in the Universal Design Conference organized by local Occupational Therapist, Jeanette Cosentino. The Conference featured speakers such as Edward Steinfeld, Arch. D and Professor of Architecture and Director IDEA Center at the State University of New York in Buffalo.
  
  The mission of the Conference as stated on the Conference website is:

  **Accessible design solves access problems and is a subset of Universal Design. Universal Design integrates accessible (and other good) design into the social fabric creating conditions where persons with disabilities (PWD's) do not need to be treated as outside the norm; "special."**

  **As important as the practicalities of the event planning are, we are keen to take advantage of the lead-up as an opportunity for community education, networking, and goodwill-building around Universal Design. Some very powerful networks and collaborations are going to be built in this process.**

- The Commission lobbied the State Architect to consider revisions to the State Building Code that prevent more economical elevators from being installed in homes and as secondary elevators in multi-unit buildings.

**Guest speakers welcomed by the COD in 2005:**
Alexa Routson, community member  
Barri Boone, Care Provider  
Gail Pellerin, Elections Department  
Isleen Glatt, Central Coast Alliance on Health  
Jeanette Cosentino, community member  
Jeffery Roth, Housing Choices Coalition  
Jennifer Hutchinson, County Planning Department  
John Daugherty, Santa Cruz Metro  
Lily Kephart, community member  
Manuel Diaz, County Personnel  
Michael Bradshaw, Central Coast Center for Independent Living  
Ron Routson, community member  
Sam Finkelstein, Housing Choices Coalition  
Thom Onan, Central Coast Center for Independent Living  
Tim Ahearn, President SEIU Homecare Providers Chapter
VII. Future Goals and Recommendations
- Continue working with the Sheriffs department to address Accessible Parking violators.
- Continue to explore ways to comprehensively address ADA non-compliance in the private sector.
- Continue to support Inclusive Home Design at the County level.
- Continue to serve as a referral and information resource for the community.
- Sponsor an evening at the Reel Work Labor Film Festival highlighting disability in the workforce.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

Andrea Smith
Commission Coordinator

Approved by the Commission on Disabilities on 1/12/2006