

Culver CITY

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 8, 2020
TO: DR. JAY SHERY, CHAIR
HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE DISABILITY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE
THROUGH: ARMANDO ABREGO, INTERIM DIRECTOR, PARKS,
RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
FROM: JILL THOMSEN, PARKS, RECREATION, COMMUNITY
SERVICES SUPERVISOR
SUBJECT: CITY EMPLOYEE Q & A RE: DISCUSSION OF EMERGENCY
PLAN, TECHNOLOGY, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

ACCESSIBILITY Q&A—ANSWERS FROM JEREMY GREEN, CITY CLERK

1. How does the City ensure the members of the Culver City community can participate in virtual meetings hosted by the City?

Since every person is different, my office provides individual assistance with the help of IT, if needed. The agendas and emails state that if someone needs assistance, they are welcome to contact the city clerk's office and we provide a phone number and an email address for them to contact us. Because of COVID-19, our meetings are held entirely differently for everybody, with new systems to navigate. There is a huge learning curve. We are providing individual help to our constituents for every meeting to ensure they can attend.

That being said, we always welcome assistance to increase awareness of any ideas/service that might help make attending a meeting a more equitable experience and look to the DAC for ideas.

2. If someone was Deaf or hard of hearing for instance, how could they participate in a Council meeting? Do they request an interpreter, is there live captioning, etc.?

For those who are Deaf who sign: We have access to sign-language interpreters, given enough notice and assuming they are available, who can be on a meeting webex screen. A TTY Service might work if we could figure that out. We do not provide live-captioning. My research has shown it to be cost-prohibitive and I haven't come across cities that do it. I think the recordings could be transcribed but also at great cost. Google Docs has a dictation tool built in called Voice Typing. I believe that can be used for a

recording by anyone who needs it, although it might not be entirely accurate and I'm not sure if IT could do it globally.

For those who are low hearing/deaf but do not sign: My understanding is that there is a device that can be used with a telephone to enable/increase hearing capability that an individual may already have. In that case, for webex meetings, they should be directed to have the system call them on the phone so that they can benefit from the assistance they already have. Also we are now starting to add video to the live meetings so those who read lips are able to see members/staff when they are speaking.

For those who have low vision: I believe all of the websites now are set up to allow readers to be used to guide to the meeting. I am not sure what options there are once joined. But there are ways to join just by phone.

For those who speak Spanish: we do have interpreters and could figure out a way to assist. For example have the person watch the webex without audio and have the interpreter call into the person requiring assistance.

E-Comments are a great way to provide comment and participate in the meeting, as are chat or Q&A for those who are deaf or have low hearing. As you know, City Council and other Commissions Boards Committee meetings are not the same as community meetings. During community meetings there is a dialogue back and forth between the members or staff and the public. City Council meetings provide public comment (for each item on the agenda and for items not on the agenda) as a way for the public to state their opinion(s) on the subject matters (and non-agenda items) being considered by the members. And, with agendas available to read in advance, there is ample time to submit a comment.

3. Whatever the answers to the above may be, are these widely known to the public and if not how can they be publicized?

Regarding publicizing the options, what does the DAC recommend? We would love to hear ideas.

MEETING IT / TECHNOLOGY Q&A—ANSWERS FROM MICHELE WILLIAMS, IT DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

1. If someone was Deaf or hard of hearing for instance, how could they participate in a Council meeting? Do they request an interpreter, is there live captioning, etc.?

We have discussed this question with Cisco (Webex vendor). They have a closed caption product. We are in the midst of getting it activated for a 90 day

free trial. The only limitation to this is that it is currently only available on the “Meetings” platform and not the “Events” platform. So, we typically use “Events” for our public meetings but we have used “Meetings” for some community meetings. I think it would be a great benefit to utilize the closed caption product for the DAC meetings as a trial.

2. Are there options for platforms or due to City requirements and security it has to WebEx?

I would rather not get into a debate about which products are easier to use because at the end of the day what I know to be true is that people (me included) like what they are “used” to. Yes, Zoom has received a lot of accolades as they have effectively reached and satisfied the “home/casual” user. In regards to “Webex is the least accessible”, I would like to get a better understanding of this comment. Is this someone’s opinion (certainly could be based on their personal experience) or is there some official accessibility review that was conducted that I could be provided. We have been working with the Webex representatives and they are more than willing to do whatever we need to ensure that the platform the City uses is fully accessible to ALL of our users. And to fully answer the question, Yes, the City has standardized on the Webex platform for public meetings.

Also, below are some links that provide additional information on the closed caption module (Webex Assistant).

Video that gives high level overview of the feature (1 min 42 sec):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25diJ36ND48>

Video that goes into more detail, more like a demo (3 min 32 sec):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mu9R-GLbXHY>

EMERGENCY PLAN Q&A—ANSWERS FROM CHRISTINE PARRA, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COORDINATOR

1. What is the City’s disaster services plan with regards to City Of Culver City residents who are disabled?

The City of Culver City’s Emergency Operations Plan is an all-inclusive plan.

2. Where is the database of disabled residents of Culver City that used to exist?

In 2013 the City partnered with the County of Los Angeles to participate in their SNAP (Special Needs Awareness Planning) Voluntary Registry program that allowed registrant information to be made readily available to emergency personnel to help find people who may need additional assistance in an

emergency. A few years later however, the program was discontinued and the registry information was not made available to cities.

3. If the database no longer exists what steps is disaster services doing to create a new one? If there aren't why does the City not feel it is needed?

The registry is useful to first responders as an additional tool to identify, locate and assist people with disabilities or health conditions during a natural or man-made disaster. The problem we ran into was trying to maintain the list that is why we opted to partner with the County on SNAP because they had the resources to maintain the voluntary list.

EMERGENCY PLAN Q.A.—ANSWERS FROM DANIEL DOBBS, EMS CAPTAIN, CULVER CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

1. What is the mechanism whereby disabled members of the Culver City community can identify themselves (formerly Life Alert, Smart 911)?

There are no programs in place to accommodate disabled public members currently. Smart 911 was removed when the city switch to a new dispatch service, South Bay Regional Public Communication Authority (SBRPCA) in April 2017.

2. If the mechanism no longer exists what steps is disaster services doing to create a new one? If there aren't why does the City not feel it is needed?

SBRPCA has plans to introduce a similar plan like Smart 911 in the near future. Currently, that feature is being rolled out for fire department use/testing first.