

# **Commission for Accessibility**

## **Meeting Agenda**

**Monday, May 6 2024 5:00PM  
Via Zoom**

**In Attendance:** Maureen Culhane, Michael Londrigan, Tony Phillips, Debbie Prieger, Don Ciota

### **5:00 PM. Call to Order**

#### **Public Comment**

The Commission welcomed Debbie Prieger as a guest, who has expressed an interest in possibly joining. A life-long residence whose family owned the West Lane Inn and West Lane Restaurant, Debbie is now offers bookkeeping services.

Michael informed the Commission he has written to the landlord of 80 Grove Street regarding the absence of a handicapped parking space at this facility. He will keep us informed of the response to his letter.

#### **Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, an introduction, international awareness recognition under U.S. Law in a multi-jurisdictional context.**

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) is an acquired multifactorial syndrome characterized by a recurrent set of debilitating symptoms. The symptoms of this controversial disorder are reported to be induced by environmental chemicals at doses far below those usually harmful to most persons. They involve a large spectrum of organ systems and typically disappear when the environmental chemicals are removed. The

underlying causes of the syndrome, whether biological or psychologic, are not fully understood.

MCS is recognized under federal law. The *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)* recognizes MCS as a disability entitling those with chemical sensitivities to reasonable accommodation under *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. People with MCS are also recognized as disabled under *Title VIII of the Fair Housing Act of 1988 (FHA)*. Under FHA, MCS is recognized as a disability if it substantially limits one or more major life activities. Courts have ruled that discrimination against individuals with MCS can be considered a violation of the FHA if it involves denying them reasonable accommodations or modifications necessary to enjoy housing, or if it involves treating them unfairly in housing transactions due to their disability.

The *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* does not contain a list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA has a general definition of disability that each person must meet. Therefore, some people with MCS will have a disability and some will not. A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

According to the National Library of Medicine (NIH), the following countries in addition to the U.S. have conducted research on MCS: Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Korea, Japan, France, Italy.

Despite the unorthodox complaint patterns and complex interplay between biological and psychological elements of the involved patients, the patients clearly are suffering from the symptoms of MCS regardless of their cause. Controversy remains regarding whether many MCS-related symptoms preceded or follow purported chemical exposures. The acceptance of MCS as a clinical entity by a wide range of governmental agencies can only facilitate a better understanding of the factors responsible for the symptoms, regardless of the causes.

**5:50 Adjourn**

**Meeting Dates for 2024:**

June 10

July (none)

October 7

August (none)

November 18

September 9

Minutes prepared by Don Ciota, Chairman.