



Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities

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Meeting Minutes

DATE: Thursday, June 11, 2026

TIME: 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

LOCATION: Santa Cruz County Building, Fifth Floor – Coastlines Conference Room
701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

PRESENT: John Daugherty (1st District), Leigh Kearns (2nd District), Tymothie Hale (2nd District), Becky Taylor (3rd District), Brenda Gutierrez Baeza (4th District Co-Chair), Jessica Liddy Hayford (4th District), David Molina (5th District Co-Chair), Mitali Weiglein (5th District)

EXCUSED: Richard Gubash (3rd District)

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Kaite McGrew (Commissions Manager)

GUESTS: Robert Ratner (Director, Housing for Health) and 1 member of the public were present.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Meeting convened at 12:45 PM.

2. Agenda Review

3. Approve May 14, 2026 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as written

Motion/Second: Taylor/Hale

Motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Comment

5. New/Continuing Business/Action Items:

5.1. Presentation: Housing and the Disabilities Community

Ratner provided an overview of the current status of housing for people with disabilities and discussed the four priorities identified in the Housing for Healthy Santa Cruz 2024–2027 Plan: building a coalition, preventing homelessness, increasing connections to supportive services, and increasing housing affordability. He identified several ongoing gaps and areas of focus, including improving awareness of accessible and affordable housing opportunities among people with disabilities; addressing health issues that affect housing stability; integrating housing and supportive services; advocating for access to public benefits; developing communitywide mapping and marketing of accessible housing units; establishing site-based partnerships for in-home supportive services; expanding integrated health services; and incorporating universal design parameters. Ratner noted that work is underway in these areas, with varying levels of progress. Commission discussed the intersectionality of access to healthcare and healthcare information, particularly the overlap between access to mental healthcare and homelessness.

5.2. Consider Community Life Art Wall Exhibit Proposal

Motion authorizing Liddy Hayford to work with Community Life to install an exhibit for Disability Pride Month

Motion/Second: Daugherty/Gutierrez Baeza

Motion passed unanimously.

5.3. Consider Medi-Cal Asset Limit Advocacy Letter

Motion approving the letter as written.

Motion/Second: Daugherty/Hale

Motion passed unanimously.

5.4. CalABLE Savings Program Overview

Gutierrez Baeza provided an overview of the CalABLE Savings Program, a tax-advantaged savings program designed to help people with disabilities save and pay for qualified disability-related expenses. She highlighted the program's positive impact in helping individuals build financial resources while maintaining greater flexibility and independence. Qualified expenses must benefit the individual with a disability. Gutierrez Baeza also explained that eligibility documentation varies depending on the individual's disability, with multiple forms of documentation available to establish eligibility.

6. Commission Priority Reports:

6.1. Accessibility Awareness Report: No Report

6.2. Accessible Recreation Report

Gutierrez Baeza provided an update on the status of Mobi Mats and accessibility improvements at local beaches. County Parks has indicated that it does not want to pursue Mobi Mats at this time. Discussions regarding Mobi Mats at Capitola Beach are ongoing with the City of Capitola. Gutierrez Baeza also reported that County Park Friends has established a partnership relationship with City of Capitola on the Treasure Cove project. They have members on the Board and have requested assistance with developing grant applications. Hale noted that the picnic areas at Natural Bridges State Beach are not wheelchair accessible, including the outdoor grill area.

6.3. Affordable Accessible Housing Report: None

6.4. Affordable Accessible Transportation Report:

Daugherty reported that he contacted METRO's Disability Outreach Coordinator to request a walkthrough of METRO's accessibility training process. The training may include reserving rooms at public libraries and providing lesson plans and other materials. Daugherty will follow up and provide additional information.

Gubash left the meeting.

7. Ad Hoc Legislative Priorities Subcommittee Report: No Report

8. Correspondence: None

9. Staff Report: None

10. Announcements/Emerging Matters

Molina shared that the most recent IHSS Advisory Commission meeting was canceled for lack of agenda items. Gutierrez Baeza was newly appointed.

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kaite McGrew, *Commissions Manager*