

**City of Pittsburgh/Allegheny County
Task Force on Disabilities
April 16, 2012
Minutes**

- Location:** First Floor Conference Room
Civic Building, 200 Ross Street
Pittsburgh, PA
- Members Present:** Aurelia Carter-Scott, Janet Evans, Milton Henderson,
Richard McGann, Paul O’Hanlon
Chairperson, James C. Nochese, Katherine D. Seelman,
John Tague, Joe Wasserman
- Members Absent:** Linda Dickerson, Sarah Goldstein, Liz Healey, Jeff Parker
- Others Present:** Shirley Abriolay, Jonathan Bacon, Lester Bennett, Joe
Elliot, Larry Hockenberry, Chuck Keenan, James Kindler,
Donald Kovacic, Richard Meritzer, Kathleen Mikolay,
Keith Partyka, Avis Rainey, Robin Smith, Mary Ester Van
Shura, Marynel
Vazquez, Amaris Whitaker

The meeting was called to order by Mr. O’Hanlon at 1:05 PM.

ACTION ITEMS

Review and Approval of March Minutes

Mr. Wasserman made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded and then was agreed to.

Review and Approval of Financial Report

Mr. Tague emailed the financial report to the other members. He mentioned that CART for March had been billed and paid, but he did not have the bill for interpreters for March. He added that CART will not be needed for April, but interpretive services will be used and it looks like the Task Force will be fine meeting their obligations for the April, May and June meetings. Mr. Noschese motioned to accept the report as it is and it was seconded. Mr. O’Hanlon asked since there was not CART in November that there should not be a bill and Mr. Tague answered yes there will be no bill. Mr. O’Hanlon stated that there is a \$2400 balance for the April, May & June meetings. The financial report was then approved.

Mr. Tague said he will not know how much money the Task Force will have next year because the State does not have a budget for next year and will not until June 30th. He has received nothing on it, but he knows the HSDF funding looks like it will be block granted with seven programs and the grant will be cut 20%. Mr. Noschese asked if they only needed \$6500 to cover the 2012-2013 meetings and Mr. Tague answered that even with two less meetings \$6500 should be enough to cover these meetings. Mr. Noschese inquired if they were going to continue having ten meetings a year. Mr. Tague responded that he could not answer that question right now because he does not know how much money in the budget there would be. Mr. Noschese suggested that it was better to request \$10,000 and have extra and cut out. Mr. Tague said that the Task Force is told how much money they would receive even if they requested more. Mr. McGann inquired about scheduling a meeting with County Executive Fitzgerald and help him understand the Task Force's points and goals. Mr. O'Hanlon said the Task Force is working in the dark because they do not know what the allocation of funds to the County will be and they are in a wait and see position. He added that the County is able to look at what the Task Force does and the County decides how much money to allocate.

Ms. Van Shura commented that she meets with Mr. Tague and Ms. Barricella to see what funding is available and she thinks the Task Force should wait and let Mr. Tague and Ms. Barricella interface and go from there. Ms. Carter-Scott commented that she thought the Task Force should be more proactive with this issue and what are the other things they can do to be an effective group. Ms. Van Shura agreed that they have worked well together in the past and perhaps she can ask Ms. Barricella to come to the May meeting.

Mr. Henderson agreed that the Task Force should request \$10,000 dollars. Mr. O'Hanlon suggested that this discussion should be postponed and pick up the topic in the May meeting. Mr. Tague added that the Task Force should think of the budget ahead of time to make sure they can be effective.

DISCUSSION

Makeup of the Task Force

Mr. Meritzer said that Ms. Van Shura asked for this be discussed first ahead of the presentation on the agenda since she had to leave. Mr. Meritzer copied the files of the Task Force appointment and sent the files out by email. What the files meant that initially the Task Force members were appointed by the Mayor and the County Executive, and then of those Task Force members remaining are Mr. O'Hanlon, Ms. Dickerson, and Mr. McGann who was appointed jointly by the Task Force members. In 2002, the Task Force started having a bunch of joint appointments and a bulk of the Task Force now is made up of joint appointments. Mr. Meritzer found out that he was doing the appointments wrong, and in 2006, went back to separate appointments for Mayor and County Executive. On the current Task Force there are three people that have been appointed by the Mayor, three people that have been appointed by the County Executive, six people that have been appointed by both the Mayor and the County Executive all of whom live in the City so they can be appointed by either, and Mr. McGann who was jointly appointed by the Task Force members. Mr. Meritzer believed that Mr. Noschese and Mr.

Wasserman were still technically within their terms and Mr. Wasserman asked how long a term was and Mr. Meritzer replied that a term was four years. However there has been no action from the Task Force to update any of the appointments because everyone was satisfied. Mr. O'Hanlon stated the Task Force knows Ms. Healey wants to be replaced. Ms. Dickerson has also asked to be replaced. Mr. O'Hanlon asked Ms. Carter-Scott if she wanted to be replaced. Ms. Carter-Scott clarified that she was looking to be replaced in the past, but at this time she is not looking to be replaced. They would also ask Mr. Parker if he was interested in continuing to serve.

Mr. O'Hanlon said that there are at least two, possibly three replacements that the Task Force will need to look for. Ms. Dickerson fell into the County appointment category and Ms. Healey fell in the joint appointment by the Mayor and the County Executive. Mr. Meritzer thought it would be easy to give one appointment to the Mayor and one appointment to the County Executive and start to establish the balance again. Mr. O'Hanlon stated the original design of the Task Force was to have 13 members, six appointed by the City and six appointed by the County and one appointed jointly by the Task Force members that being Mr. McGann. One City and one County appointment would be fine. Ms. Seelman added that there was a nominating committee at one time, and asked if Mr. Meritzer what the process was. Mr. Meritzer explained that when he had been apart of the committee the process was they determined what groups from the disability community needed to be filled to keep the cross disability of the Task Force intact, and an email was sent out to everyone in that group saying that the Task Force was in the process of looking for new members, a brief description of what the Task Force does and what sort of individuals they were looking for. Resumes were sent to him and he sent them to Ms. Healey, who was chair of the committee and other committee members. The committee then reviewed the resumes and gave a recommendation to the Task Force which was then agreed on and sent to the Mayor or the County Executive. Ms. Seelman offered to be the co-chair of the selection committee if the Task Force desires and added that the past selection committees worked well and the only problems was everyone's compressed schedule.

Ms. Evans asked since her four years were up, did she have to re-apply or not do anything. Mr. O'Hanlon responded that they were only looking to fill the two replacements now and that she should just wait. Mr. Noschese stated that a problem was that the current members of the committee are in their 50's or older and there are no young people involved because the meetings are during time when younger people worked. He wished that the meetings would be moved to an evening time slot so the Task Force could recruit younger members. Mr. Seelman commented that the University of Pittsburgh is in the process of developing its first students with disabilities advocacy organization. She is the advisor and suggested that the organization could be a recruitment resource. She added that in addition to age, the Task Force has to balance out the disability groups and that some weight in the selection criteria could be given to age and disability group.

Mr. Meritzer asked if Mr. Parker is a question should someone contact him to ask if he would like to be replaced. Ms. Evans offered to speak with Mr. Parker. Mr. O'Hanlon

said that it would be fine, and if Mr. Parker was going to be replaced that appointment could go to the County to help the balance between City and County appointments. Mr. McGann asked if there were going to be subcommittees as well. Mr. O'Hanlon responded that no they are just looking at Task Force membership. Mr. McGann wanted to be sure because there are other subcommittees. Mr. O'Hanlon said there was an existing committee dealing with convention center and the airport, and Mr. Meritzer added there is a committee on housing but they are waiting from North Hills to get back to them. Mr. O'Hanlon reiterated that they are not looking at committees or their structures but only Task Force membership.

Ms. Seelman asked if there was an agreement that the criteria that should be weighted more in the selection process in geography, age, and disability distribution. Mr. O'Hanlon answered that he thought leadership experience in the disability community should also be included. Ms. Seelman added that the committee has not recognized younger people and asked Mr. Meritzer since he has developed a program with a pool of community leaders, if there was a way to find out where they are going and what they are doing. Mr. Meritzer said yes there is a way and that he keeps in touch with all of his past interns. Ms. Seelman requested that current and former interns and the University of Pittsburgh's disability honor society should be looked at. Ms. Carter-Scott commented that the Task Force should look what they have developed already and what they need to add on to. She also added that the Task Force continues to ensure the Task Force is diverse, not only with disability but with race and ethnicity and it needs to continue to reflect the various cultures within Allegheny County and Pittsburgh. Ms. Seelman said that she would add that as a part of the criteria. Ms. Seelman read back that the criteria for the selection committee would be geography, age, disability distribution, leadership and advocacy, and race and ethnicity. Mr. Bennett asked if gender could be added to the list of criteria. Mr. O'Hanlon said that it does not necessarily have to be a part of the criteria, but the selection committee should be attentive to gender.

Ms. Evans inquired when she talks to Mr. Parker about if he is going to resign, does he need a letter or just her report. Mr. O'Hanlon answered that at this time the Task Force is only looking to see if Mr. Parker would like to get replaced so that they would know how many slots are available for the interview process.

Ms. Seelman stated there is a high disability rate for individuals over 60 and that percentage increases as age increases. She added there has never been anyone from the aging community on the Task Force and that it should be something that they keep an eye on. Mr. Tague said that one of the challenging thing is there is only 13 members and a number of them are in that aging community. Mr. Wasserman asked Mr. O'Hanlon if this issue called from the area agency on aging to speak on this issue and what plans they have set up to meet the needs the increasing number of disabled. Mr. O'Hanlon said that was an interesting issue and they should keep that in mind during this interview process.

Mr. O'Hanlon asked since Ms. Seelman volunteered to co-chair the committee, who she would like to co-chair with. Ms. Seelman said it did not matter to her who co-chaired with her but she would like to know who is going to be on the committee and added that

everything done by computer. Mr. O'Hanlon suggested last meeting that the Executive Committee would be on the selection committee and Ms. Seelman was fine with that. Ms. Carter-Scott agreed that it was fine as long as everyone else was informed of the decisions. Mr. O'Hanlon inquired about the timeline for this getting done and Mr. Meritzer responded that this could be done by mid-Summer.

PRESENTATION

Social Costs of Barriers – Jonathan Bacon

Mr. Bacon presented slideshow on PowerPoint. Mr. Meritzer gave background information on Mr. Bacon's presentation. Mr. Bacon came to Mr. Meritzer at the end of last year saying that he wanted to his doctoral paper on architectural issues, and asked if Mr. Meritzer knew of any architectural issues he could focus on. Mr. Meritzer suggested the social costs of barriers and Mr. Bacon loved the idea. They had been meeting for almost every two weeks, and it is close to the time Mr. Bacon has to present his paper. The presentation has four parts, but he was only going to do two parts today so the Task Force and other people in attendance can give him comments on style and presentation to make it better. Mr. Meritzer was very excited about the presentation because he is planning to use the work to further promote accessible housing.

Mr. Bacon thanked the Task Force for giving him the opportunity to present his paper in front of them. The title of the paper is the social implications of barriers for people living with physical disabilities. The problem that his thesis was addressing was those living with disability commonly deal with loneliness he has found out through research and interviews, and loneliness is more common among people with physical disabilities than those living without physical disabilities. The physical design of cities is one factor leading to greater isolation, specifically barriers such as steps, narrow doors, and heavy doors. The hypothesis of the paper is that urban design can be coupled with universal design to overcome this problem.

He next showed an outline of his presentation which was: the theoretical framework of his thesis, the effects of barriers, the positive effects of universal design, the benefits of universal design for businesses, a methodology of a mini-design component he did within Pittsburgh, a site description, a description of the redesign, the benefits of the redesign, his conclusion, and a slide of references.

There were three main theories he used for his paper. One of the theories was social capital and he pulled from Putnam and Lynn. Lynn describes social capital as resources embedded in social networks. Social capital can provide social connection and can also lead to other forms of capital. The second theory was the social effects of physical disabilities. Some of the social effects were lower levels of social acceptance for those living with physical disabilities, and also pointed to the built environment as factors for those negative effects. The third theory that was used was universal design. Universal design is an inclusionary method of designing buildings and homes, and it takes into consideration the needs of a large range of people from those living with physical disabilities, the elderly, children, parents with young children.

His next slide was the effects of barriers; the barriers inhibit access into buildings and reduce mobility inside of buildings. Barriers also lead to loss of social capital because sometimes barriers prevent someone who is physically disabled from entering a building. There are also negative emotional effects of barriers, studies have shown that increased rate of depression, and it sends a message of inferiority. The last negative effect of barriers is that it can limit sources of employment, not only will people need to look for jobs there they are qualified for but also to look for jobs within buildings that can accommodate them and that puts restrictions on the job pool. The costly modifications of barriers are also another effect and one source said that the 10 years after the ADA was established, the employment rate for those living with physical disabilities dropped 3.5 times greater than those living without physical disabilities.

The next slide was the positive effects of universal design. Universal design can remove the negative effects of barriers. It can allow the access to social capital and it can remove separate entrances and sends the message of equality. Another positive effect is that it is effortless in use. The third positive effect is that it allows size and space for approach and use.

The next slide was about the benefits of universal design specifically for businesses. Looking at the census data that 18% of residents of Pittsburgh with some mobility issue, and it also showed the median income of residents living with a physical disability is just over \$18,000 while those living without a physical disability are \$28,000. There is still a buying power for those living with physical disability. Another benefit for businesses is that they can proactively prepare for the future. There are a rising percentage of people living with physical disabilities as age rises and Pittsburgh is an aging city and nationwide obesity rates are rising so there are a number of reasons for businesses to put in universal design to prepare for the future. There is also a tax benefits that can be accrued because of redesigning buildings to make it more accessible. The last benefit of universal design for businesses is that it shows they are thinking of the customers first.

The next slide was the miniature design component of his thesis. The purpose of this component was to provide a short example of urban design and universal design working to overcome physical barriers. The site that was chosen was East Ohio Street in Deutschtown, Pittsburgh. There is a small corner with businesses there, and there are a few examples of physical barriers leading into those businesses.

The methodology he used for the mini-design component was first he conducted interviews and surveys of residents of Pittsburgh. He asked residents' personal experience living with a physical disability, what kind of barriers provided the most challenge to them, and where Pittsburgh had the most barriers and a redesign of this type would be most effective. Through the interviews and surveys a majority of residents pointed to the North Shore. Mr. Bacon took a site visit to the North Shore and took several photos and talked to several business owners and that is how he decided on that site. Lastly, he did a redesign of the site and looked at the barriers installed leading into businesses and developed sketches that removed those barriers from the buildings.

The next slide was a description of the redesign. The first barrier that was overcome was to install a ramp leading into businesses on the corner. They are short, little ramps that go over the step in front of a building and it has a tactile surface to provide sensory clues to gradient changes. The redesign also calls for lighter wider doors for installation, through the interviews some people pointed to heavier and narrow doors that were difficult barriers. The redesign also brought the doors forward so they are easier to see and open, also signage and lighting were added to improve visibility and way finding. Historical elements were reincorporated; one business on the corner did not have windows above the first floor unlike the rest of the businesses. The redesign installed more windows to bring out the historical elements of the area. Lighting was added to provide a safer sidewalk, and plants were added to incorporate nature into the sidewalk. Mr. Bacon said the sidewalk improved when he was there, the sidewalk was composed of brick and crumbling. He also noticed that the crosswalk had very short timing for crossing, and it is recommended that the cross walk timing be redone.

The next slide was the benefits of the redesign. Businesses can be more accessible with the removal of the barriers leading into their businesses. Residents living with physical disabilities can maneuver around with greater ease on the city block. Lighting and visual clues will also aid those living with visual disabilities. The history of the area can be brought out by redesigning some of these buildings. Lastly, the emotional and social needs of residents can be better met through providing equal access into these small businesses.

The next slide was his conclusion. He concluded through the research he has done and the interviews he has conducted show that barriers effectively reduced social capital of those living with physical disabilities. They also limit employment opportunities and reduce the number of customers in a business. Urban design coupled with universal design can create a better environment that is more accessible for all people.

Mr. Wasserman asked if Mr. Bacon had been in touch with Eric Anderson at Carnegie Mellon University who teaches classes in universal design. Mr. Bacon replied that he had not been in touch with Mr. Anderson. Mr. Wasserman also suggested maybe a follow-up to his doctoral thesis could be the attitudinal barriers that the “public” has with regard to disabled individuals. He added that he felt sometimes the attitudinal barriers are more difficult to overcome than the physical barriers.

Mr. Noschese said that he noticed that the Deaf and Hard of Hearing were left out of the presentation. He said that there are still barriers for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing community, for example they cannot hear the public announcement system and there is no captioning and universal design does not have that. There is also no captioning for televisions in public places and not all televisions are capable of captioning and sometimes nobody knows how to turn the captioning on. There is also no captioning in the theaters.

Mr. McGann agreed with Mr. Bacon when he said that people in wheelchairs feel isolated. Mr. McGann said that is true with the Deaf-Blind community also, he wants to

get out more but needs someone to lead him to go shopping and he depends on his family and SSP helps and guides him out. He added it would be good if college students were eager to volunteer to help with people that do not have a car and ACCESS has limited space availability. He added that people do not have cars because the insurance becomes a liability. Mr. Bacon said Mr. McGann raised a good point about cars, his thesis was 80 pages and this 15 minute presentation could not include everything that was in the thesis. But he said he went into that issue a little bit on how designing sidewalks as well as transportation systems can effectively provide better access to the City by including those elements and making them better. He also went back to Mr. Noschese's comments he knew that in the early stages of the thesis he would have to put it into a small box so that it was manageable, so he decided to work with just people with physical disabilities rather than all disabilities in general. He also stated that in the redesign he tried to include elements for people with auditory disabilities by adding signage, providing more lighting, and tactile clues. Mr. Noschese told a story that he tried entering a business one time and there was a doorbell and after you pressed the doorbell the person inside spoke with you through an intercom. He said he did not know what was going on and it was a pretty significant barrier for him. He had to wait for about 15 minutes for someone to come so they could speak into the intercom for him and it was a big problem for him.

Ms. Seelman asked Mr. Bacon what was his background. Mr. Bacon replied that he had a Bachelors Degree in science and civil engineering from Geneva College in Beaver Falls and now he was getting a urban study Masters from Eastern University. Ms. Seelman commented that it was difficult to explain the different categories for people with disabilities and she suggested that he should put in the limitations section of his thesis that he put emphasis on those with mobility disabilities and less of an emphasis on cognitive and sensory disabilities. She also suggested referring to the "elderly" as "older adults." She stated that universal design is an international phenomenon and they are conferences held all over the world about it. The father of universal design was Ron Mace of the State University of North Carolina. She said that the World Health Organization and the World Bank just issued their first world report on disability and for the first time ever there was a chapter called "Enabling Environments" and there was a great deal of discussion how to approach a new concept from the point of disability and what to do with information in print and similar technology. She suggested that Mr. Bacon may find it very interesting. Mr. Steinfeld, who is an architect in Buffalo, did the physical environment and Ms. Seelman did the ICT and the more interesting part was how they struggled with the concept of environment and they found there was more ICT in the built environments. She added that RESNA did a lot of universal design work.

Ms. Evans asked Mr. Bacon if he had been down to the Waterfront and he replied that he had been. Ms. Evans added that she had watched the stores in the Waterfront being built and once in a while she is able to talk with the manager about some of the problems and she wished him good luck of his endeavors.

Mr. O'Hanlon noticed that for the redesign one solution was a ramp leading up to the door and that can be tricky if you're on a slope and have to open the door. And the preference is to have a flat surface for the ramp. He said that a flat surface can be

achieved is to change the height of the whole sidewalk. He had wondered if that was the most cost effective way and inquired if Mr. Bacon had thought about that solution. He added that a few years ago they were looking at residential visitability issues in Pittsburgh and one of the things he noticed is that Pittsburgh has a high side and a low side, on the high side each house has a flight of stairs that lead down to a sidewalk but there is no sidewalk up to the level of the houses and no one has looked at sidewalk issues. Mr. O'Hanlon inquired if through Mr. Bacon's research he had seen anyone look at these issues. Mr. Bacon responded that he had not found many sources specific to the issues Mr. O'Hanlon was talking about but he did find research on the importance of sidewalks and the solution of the ramp is a good alternative. He added that the redesign project was tricky because in the area he had picked it seemed like every other business had one step leading into it and changing the sidewalk would not have been a good alternative.

Mr. Bennett asked if bathroom access was featured in the thesis. Mr. Bacon answered that he mentioned it a little bit, but the main focus was the exterior. Mr. Bennett also asked if he had taken his thesis to business owners and said this would be the cost of universal design. Mr. Bacon replied that he is considering going back to the redesign site and showing what he has done, but now he was only concerned with finishing his thesis.

Mr. Kindler asked Mr. Bacon if he addressed the social stigma as a barrier and people are indifferent to doing it. Mr. Bacon responded that he did not exactly address that, but he mentioned that through making businesses more accessible you can provide a greater amount of places that people can congregate in one area and that can start to break down the stigmas. He added that ignorance was a cause of the social stigmas.

Mr. Hockenberry added one final comment that the health department goes into a restaurant to make sure that they meet the standards and he is wondering if there is anyone that goes around for the Deaf community to check the accessibility of a business. Mr. Meritzer answered that the only inspection local government does is for compliance for state design guidelines and those are mostly architectural barriers. He added that there is not a lot of compliance for other barriers and while there covered by the ADA, there is no system to check the compliance. Ms. Barricella and Mr. Meritzer do check accessibility if it is requested but most of the time building inspectors are concerned with mobility issues and signage, they are trying to get other issues addressed but it will take a long time and hopefully with the one-step project and the visitability tax credit will help. They are moving forward step by step.

Mr. McGann commented that closed captioning on a television is under the FCC and they have to approve to have captioning in buildings. Mr. Noschese suggested that it was time to start building homes with a code requirement for homes, and then there would not have to be a search to look for accessible housing. Mr. Meritzer said that his predecessor, Mr. Keenan did some work on that and there are a bunch of issues. One issue is topography and a lot of the lots in the City cannot be made full or even partially accessible. The process was very overwhelming. The other issue is there is not a lot of new housing being built and the most of the new housing are mostly accessible. To set a requirement to make new housing accessible would be difficult because of topography and would

encourage people just to renovate because it is easier than a new house. Mr. O'Hanlon said that the only inspection is before a business opens up and the rest of the inspections are reactive. He asked how they could create a more proactive process. Mr. McGann added that it was important for the City and the County to review the sidewalks and also if the grass is too high.

STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Meritzer said his assistants were working very hard on their projects and then turned it over to Ms. Mikolay to discuss the Duquesne Nursing Project.

Ms. Mikolay said that the Duquesne nurses have been working with a group on the Southside in a train the trainer program and teaching the community leaders to go out and identify the barriers that people in the community may find and finding solutions to overcome those barriers. She added that the nurses were looking to go into another community in Lawrenceville and possibly Bloomfield. Mr. O'Hanlon asked what kind of barriers they were looking to identify. Ms. Mikolay replied accessibility barriers and what would hold them back from going out in the community. Mr. Meritzer added earlier this year the students worked with a number of disabled individuals and went out with them and looked at barriers. They collected and photographed all these barriers and now they are teaching the community leaders what these barriers are.

Ms. Whitaker reminded the community she had been meeting with different architectural firms and having them come on board with the one-step packet. In the packet they want firms to do the project for pro bono work or at a heavily discounted price, and do the architectural drawings in order for them to be approved. Right now they have met with four out of the five firms and they have received a lot of positive interest, but they were also concerns that created hesitancy. Some of the concerns were the need of having a streamline process, reducing the amount of time it takes in order to receive the approval, being able to approve the final draft, and generating criteria for approval. She said they are going to have a one-step meeting with various department heads in order to address these concerns. The firms also suggested adding contractors to the packet who would work at discounted rates and they are looking to go to the Law Department to see in that is a feasible option and what would have to be done to add to the packet. She commented that she is meeting next with Tai+Lee Architects, who previously assisted with visitability.

Mr. O'Hanlon asked what the Law Department would be asked about adding people to the packet. Mr. Meritzer replied that one of his concerns was the more types of businesses that are included in the packet, the more likely they are going to miss firms in the City and ask why they were not included. He added that they selected the architectural firms that he had worked with before and if they did not include a certain firm it was because they had not worked with him before, but since he not worked with cement or railing providers before so he had no defense. He wants to make sure they are not doing anything that makes the City liable. Mr. O'Hanlon asked what the criterion was for contractors or railing providers to be added to the packet. Mr. Meritzer responded that

they have to be registered and they also have to discount their work. Mr. O'Hanlon further asked if this was going to be online or in print. Mr. Meritzer replied that it was going to be online and there are also printed copies. He added Ms. Whitaker is coming on full-time in the summer and they are going to go meet with business groups and there are solid commitments from Councilman Kraus and Councilwoman Rudiak and the idea is to get the word out about this project and updates will be available online. Mr. O'Hanlon suggested that the key is setting up the process that a contractor can trigger to be included on the list and they would want to promote contractors on how to get in. Mr. Noschese said that many contractors and business owners want to do business with the City or the County, but in order for them to do business with the City or the County they should employ disabled people. He thinks that the marketing is very poor the way it is going right now and he thinks they should contract with private companies that employed disabled people. That could be one of the criteria for selecting contractors. Mr. O'Hanlon agreed that it was a good idea and that should be looked at.

Mr. Meritzer was also working with a paralegal to look at code amendments and he also is working with a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh who is writing scripts for AccessiblePGH. They have received funding from the City and they are going out to contract to tape more versions. Now they are working with Mr. Wasserman on two scripts: one is about Navpal which is a directional finding programs on smartphones that get you through buildings and streets, the other script is about Blind-Americans Equality Day which was formerly known as White Cane Day. He added in writing the script the graduate student noticed that the day was on a Task Force meeting day. He and Mr. Wasserman corresponded and they want to reserve that meeting to deal with issues for Blind-Americans and possibly get a high profile speaker at the meeting.

OTHER COMMENTS

Ms. Vazquez discussed her project that was being done at Carnegie Mellon University and asked if anyone knew someone who would like to participate in her study. She had been working on assistive photography for visually impaired people. The idea came when the laboratory formulated data and it showed that people with disabilities like to take pictures. They asked if a system could be set up to help visually impaired people take pictures. They have set up a simulated bus stop inside their laboratory and they are asking people to use their system and try to take pictures and see if the method developed can help them with this task. The camera gives information to the person taking the picture of what they are looking at. She added that if anyone would like to participate to give her their contact information and if not to spread the word about the project. The participants come to Carnegie Mellon and are compensated \$25 and all they have to do is use an iPhone to take pictures. Mr. Meritzer asked if Ms. Vazquez could send him the flier digitally and he would send it out and Ms. Vazquez replied she would.

Mr. Bennett announced that on May 18th the Three Rivers Center for Independent Living is having their annual legislative breakfast and there were fliers in the back of the room.

Mr. O'Hanlon made a motion that the meeting be adjourned, Ms. Evans seconded that motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING

DATE: May 21, 2012

TIME: 1:00 PM.

LOCATION: First Floor Conference Room
Civic Building, 200 Ross Street
Pittsburgh