

**CITY OF PITTSBURGH/ALLEGHENY COUNTY  
TASK FORCE ON DISABILITIES**

**February 24, 2003**

**MINUTES**

**Location:**                   **First Floor Conference Room  
200 Ross Street  
Pittsburgh, PA**

**Members Present:**       **John Tague, Chairperson, Paul O’Hanlon, Co-chair, Bill Chrisner,  
Liz Healey**

**Members Absent:**       **Ruth Walter Brenyo, Aurelia Carter, Al Condeluci, Linda  
Dickerson, Milton Henderson, Rich McGann, Jeff Parker, Penny  
Perlman, Kate Seelman**

**Others Present:**         **Chuck Keenan, Katie Debruin (SEIU), Raymond Mercalde**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Tague at 1:10 PM.

**Introductions:**

All members introduced themselves and briefly explained their occupations and interests.

**Approval of Amended Minutes from January 27, 2003 Meeting:**

Mr. Keenan noted that the Minutes from last month’s meeting were amended and those amended Minutes were included in the packet. He briefly went over the proposed changes offered earlier. Mr. Keenan also noted that he had received no other comments or revisions to the Minutes when he sent them out with the meeting reminder last week and asked if anyone had corrections at this time. No further changes were offered.

Ms. Healey moved that THE AMENDED MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 27, 2003 MEETING BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED. Mr. Chrisner seconded the motion. The motion to APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED WAS APPROVED unanimously.

**Financial Report:**

Mr. Keenan briefly gave a report on money spent to date on the Visitability Conference that was given to him verbally by Mr. Parker. He noted that Mr. Parker has received two invoices associated with the Visitability Conference, one for \$375 for buttons that were handed out to participants and \$1000 for a deposit to hold the room for the conference. Mr. Parker anticipated further invoices to come in, but as of the report, he had not received any others.

Mr. O’Hanlon reported that he anticipated the total cost for the Sheraton Hotel, including room rental, meals, and equipment, to be approximately \$6883. He also noted that the Task Force had already paid a deposit of \$1000 prior to the event, so he expected a bill for \$5883 to be coming soon.

### **Sub-Committees Report (Design):**

Mr. Tague informed the Task Force members of the upcoming meeting with the Steelers concerning the North Shore Amphitheater later this afternoon. Mr. Keenan also noted that the Steelers are scheduled to appear before the City's Planning Commission on February 25, 2003 for their final approval of the design of the amphitheater. Ms. Healey asked what recourse the Task Force may have if the amphitheater gets built without the recommendations that it is offering. Mr. Keenan suggested that the Task Force try to get the necessary design features incorporated at the meeting later today and that, if these recommendations are not adequately addressed, the Task Force should be prepared to testify at the Planning Commission hearing in opposition to the development.

The members further discussed features that they felt were necessary to properly serve people with disabilities who may use the amphitheater, including available seating at all price ranges and levels, properly designed restrooms, accessible stage areas and concession stands, captioning on video displays, Braille signage, and employee training on the ADA.

### **Sub-Committees Report (Executive):**

Mr. Tague reported that the Executive Committee had met earlier today, where they discussed a strategic planning process that they hope to begin in the next few months. Ms. Healey gave a brief overview of the process that was outlined in the earlier meeting. She noted that the goal of the strategic planning process will be to identify the issues that will have the greatest impact on the lives of people with disabilities over the next two to three years, with an emphasis on determining the unique role that the Task Force has in the region. She noted that the Task Force needs to build a constituency and establish new connections, possibly through the university, mental health, and mental retardation communities. Ms. Healey noted that the Executive Committee outlined the following process to try to accomplish these goals.

- Solicit input from current members at the next Task Force meeting on issues important to them and their clients (facilitated by a consultant)
- Solicit input from community leaders via a public hearing to be held in March or April
- Hold a third meeting of invited guests and Task Force members in late April to determine issues of importance to be facilitated by the chosen consultant
- Hold a final meeting of Task Force members only to synthesize information from the above meetings tentatively scheduled for May 2003.

Ms. Healey then made a motion to APPROVE THE BROAD OUTLINE OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS THAT WAS JUST GIVEN AND TO APPROACH JEAN BRINKLEY ABOUT FACILITATING TWO OF THOSE MEETINGS. Mr. Chrisner seconded the motion. The motion to approve the above process and to hire a facilitator WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

### **Disability Agenda Report:**

Mr. Tague noted that no members of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services were present for the meeting, but that a report of their activities was included in the agenda packet. Mr. O'Hanlon noted that the funding of an ombudsman position to help people with disabilities purchase homes was included in the written report, but that this funding may now be in jeopardy.

He stated that this year's state budget did not include any money for new initiatives, including the approved PHFA funding for this position, due to the projected budget deficit. Still, Mr. O'Hanlon noted that ACTION-Housing, the organization that agreed to house the ombudsman position, helped an individual with a disability close on a home, even though nobody occupies the position responsible for this.

### **Service Employees International Union Report**

Ms. Debruin presented a report to the Task Force on some of the activities that the SEIU hopes to undertake with the cooperation of people and organizations in the disability community. She noted that the upcoming state budget for the Office of Social Programs will have serious consequences for people with disabilities and their attendants. Her organization is committed to keeping these budget cuts from negatively impacting the workers who serve people with disabilities. Mr. Tague added that the Office of Social Programs has proposed a cut in the wage rates paid to attendant care workers and asked if there was a role for the Task Force to play in trying to stop this proposal from taking effect. Ms. Healey noted that the role of the Task Force is to advise local governments on issues that affect people with disabilities and perhaps this should also included the state government as well.

Ms. Debruin also informed the Task Force of the upcoming Labor/Business Roundtable to be held at the Convention Center on March 13, 2003. She noted that this roundtable will be a part of activities associated with Covering the Uninsured Week, which runs from March 10 to March 16, 2003.

### **Visitability Update:**

Mr. O'Hanlon reported on the events from the February 10, 2003 Visitability Conference at the Sheraton Inn Station Square. The conference was well attended and included a number of government officials, including members of City Council and the City administration. Also, Mr. O'Hanlon reminded members of a second Public Hearing scheduled for Thursday, February 28, 2003 at 11:00 AM in Council Chambers. He urged as many members of the Task Force to attend as possible.

### **ADA Coordinator Update:**

Mr. O'Hanlon asked Mr. Keenan to address the inadequacy of snow removal during some of the recent storms, noting that oftentimes curb ramps were not clear of snow. He noted that snow had been cleared from the streets and sidewalks and then piled at the curb ramp, rather than at the edges of the sidewalks. Mr. Keenan said that he would contact the appropriate City Departments to make sure that the City has an adequate policy to ensure the availability of curb ramps during heavy snowstorms.

### **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15.

### **THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING:**

DATE: March 24, 2003  
TIME: 1:00 P.M.  
LOCATION: First Floor Conference Room  
200 Ross Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**FUTURE MEETING DATES:**

April 21, 2003

May 19, 2003

June 16, 2003