

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

July 18, 2011

MINUTES

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

Members Present: Janet Evans, Sarah Goldstein, Richard McGann, James C. Noschese, Katherine D. Seelman, John Tague, Joe Wasserman

Members Absent: Aurelia Carter-Scott, Paul O'Hanlon, Chairperson, Linda Dickerson, Liz Healey, Milton Henderson, Jeff Parker

Others Present: Adolphine Birescik, Dennis Briggs, Judy Baricella, Stephanie Boczar, Darcy Cleaver, Dianne Gallagher, Bingbing Hou, Charles Morrison, Richard Meritzer, Teresa Nellans, Aaron Steinteld, Cathy Singletin, Shirley Weiru Shi, Quaishawn Whitlock

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Seelman at 1:00 PM.

ACTION ITEMS

Review and approval of June Minutes

Before the motion moved, Mr. Noschese and Mr. McGann corrected mistakes on June minutes. Ms. Shirley Shi will send revised version to all Task Force members later.

Review and approval of financial report

The new budget for the coming year hasn't come yet. The amount of new budget is still unknown.

Mr. Tague talked about the old budget in 2010 and 2011. The fund which funds the Task Force was cut 35 percent. Last year, Task Force had 10 meetings. If they had 12 meetings in a year, the budget would be \$9,370 which includes \$719 for 5000 brochures. 5000 is too many for him and need discussing in the meeting.

Mr. Noschese suggested putting the information on the website to save the printing cost.

Mr. Meritzer, however, thought it was a good outreach tool based on the response he got from the college and public meetings when he distributed them.

Mr. Wasserman asked if there is a big difference between big numbers and smaller numbers. Ms. Bingbing Hou responded that the more amount of the orders, the cheaper price it will be.

Dr. Seelman said if they could have the breaking point, which would be good.

Ms. Goldstein supported 5000 brochures because the more brochures, the cheaper. She thought having a breaking point number is wise. She pointed that sometimes, people with disabilities don't have computer access.

Ms. Evans said maybe we could cut down the number of brochures to 3,000. She asked how long 5,000 brochures last.

Mr. Meritzer responded that the original run of the 5,000 brochures last for about five years. He distributed them fairly regularly.

Dr. Seelman suggested Task Force members provide a guideline for Mr. Meritzer to move ahead at the lowest possible cost. Most of Task Force members agreed on that. She also added that she would amend Mr. Noschese and Mr. Wasserman's recommendation into the guideline.

Mr. Meritzer will find out the original digital copy or digitalize the hard copy.

Another issue Mr. Tague raised is the last year's budget. Some money was saved on strategic planning retreat. CART was used only twice and Task Force changed providers of CART, which saved \$260 a meeting. There is a lot of savings existed. Task Force has \$255 remaining.

Ms. Baricella was working on a training project and spent some of Task Force money. The project is a series of trainings around the County on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities. Ms. Baricella bought 150 emergency kits from Red Cross for distribution. She will bring one copy to the meeting if it comes.

DISCUSSION

Bus Shelter Accessibility

Last meeting, there is a discussion about bus shelter accessibility. Therefore, Mr. Meritzer invited Ms. Darcy Cleaver from Port Authority to Task Force meeting to discuss the issue with the community and Task Force members. The discussion will be focused on the old port authority bus shelters, not the bus shelters under the new City contract. Because the contract is in the progress of issuing and they will be ensured to be accessible. Mr. Meritzer will also work on that. Thus, the only concern and discussion of this meeting will be focused on the old shelters.

Ms. Darcy gave a brief overview of Port Authority bus shelters. First of all, Port Authority has approximately 225 bus shelters that are located throughout service area, including bus shelters throughout the County and the City of Pittsburgh. Another organization does have a new contract with the City of Pittsburgh. They have 450 bus shelters allocated throughout the City which doubled what Port Authority has. Port Authority has several styles of bus shelters. Shelters installed after ADA must be ADA accessible. She received an email from Mr. Meritzer about one location which is Beechwood and Doulgas. She found it doesn't belong to Port Authority.

The first question is about how many times the glass is replaced if it is knocked out. The response is if it is vandalized more than twice in any one-year period, they have the option to remove it with no notice to the property owner. But certainly they don't stick to that rule. They recognize these facilities an amenity to the riders, so they try to go above and beyond to attempt to leave them there. In certain location, they put pack the glass until the vandals leave out of their system after a short period of time.

The bus shelters are very limited. They are currently moving shelters around from location to location. Port Authority doesn't do any site work to property because they don't own it. What they provide is the structure and the bus shelter. If the property owner or requester is willing to prepare the site for the shelter, typically, port authority will monitor the stop to assure the location warrants a bus shelter and after that, they agree to put it there. Then, the requester plans for the concrete pad to be installed and any other necessary site work. After that, Port Authority would install the bus shelter and maintain the bus shelter. To place a bus shelter, Port Authority needs an agreement signed by the property owner giving user mission to do that.

Dr. Seelman said Task Force might talk about how to communicate with Port Authority and how the various communities that represented around the table could work together later to solve the safety or other problem of people with disabilities. Traditionally, after finishing the first remarks and then Task Force and Port Authority could think about how they could work together to coordinate some activities.

Mr. Noscheses suggested putting Braille on the bus stop sign to accommodate people with vision impairment. For this issue, Port Authority responded that they had an automatic announcer installed in each bus; saying, for example, "61D" and it will help blind people know what the bus is. However, for deaf blind people, it doesn't work very well. However, Port Authority provides certain packets that contain all of bus numbers and letters on them. Therefore, if someone holds it up, the bus operator will know which bus they are waiting for.

Dr. Seelman advised to put this information on ADA web page to the public. Mr. Meritzer will work on that and Ms. Darcy will give him a list of things available and put him in touch of the person that takes care of ADA issue.

It is not easy to put Braille on the stop sign because Port Authority doesn't own them so that the signs have to be seven feet off the ground.

In addition, Mr. McGann expressed sometimes, bus don't wait for deaf, deaf-blind people and passed by. He said in Seattle, people with vision impairment will be put a label on their arms so that the bus drivers will know they are blind and be able to stop for them.

Mr. Meritzer asked if the Braille could be put on the pole. It could be read vertically as Mr. Wasserman responded. However, the concern of the vandalism remains a big difficulty for this solution.

For blind people, Mr. Wasserman said, they will call the center to be informed the bus location and number in advance. From his point of view, the idea of Braille is not practical.

Mr. McGann commented in some bus stops, especially in downtown, there are multiple buses stopped there. It is very hard to tell which is which. Additionally, for the blind people from other communities who aren't familiar with the system, Braille might a great benefit. Mr. Wassermann still doesn't think it is practical because they don't go looking at 16 poles on every corner trying to find the next sign.

Mr. Tague was confused on the one on Douglas and Beachwood. Mr. Meritzer will check with the mayor's office and see how that happened. They will definitely get this corrected when the new contract goes into effect.

Mr. Noscheses asked if awnings could be provided for protection in bus stops. However, Port Authority doesn't have any type of awning or anything that can be attached to their existing four different types of bus shelters.

Ms. Baricella commented that County could also put the useful information mentioned above on their website. She asked if Mr. Meritzer could forward the information to her when he got them. She also commented a bus shelter that she could not use.

Dr. Seelman introduced Mr. Aaron Steinteld, from Carnegie Mellon who is co-director of the research center on accessible public transportation in Pittsburgh.

Mr. Steinteld introduced that the advertisement could be owned by the City, or franchise bid by outside of the City. If a bus shelter has advertising outside the City limits, that will probably managed by the local municipality. The other thing he mentioned is the software includes the ability to identify a problem with a picture or text and send it to their system. Tiramisu, their center works with Port Authority to pass by the information they collected to them. They are also willing to work with the City shelters.

Mr. Steinteld also introduced that the project is to figure out how people would want to report problems.

Mr. Meritzer made a rundown of the discussion and follow-ups. There are two bus shelters that have been identified that are City bus shelters. He will follow up with

Mayor's office. Port Authority will give him the information to put on the web page. He will forward it to Ms. Baricella when he gets it. They are going to schedule a presentation from Mr. Steinteld on the Tiramisu System.

PRESENTATION

AccessiblePGH Television Spot

Mr. Meritzer introduced the Accessible PGH that Ms. Lucy Spruill raised the idea of publicizing the progress of the City. Prior to that, Ms. Danielle Langle suggested making a television show on the City Cable Show. Mr. Meritzer did first 5-minute show with Dr. Seelman talking about the Hospital Compliance Manual and it was captioned and interpreted this month. The second television show was scheduled on this Thursday.

The first show was presented in the meeting. The television show is arranged to put on the website and on the Pittsburgh Cable.

Mr. Michael Mackenzie was in charge of the captioning and interpreting for the show. He owned distinct deposition services. They work with HDS services and make this come true. He said they have a team that will go to "Post-Gazette", KDKA to do something exactly like that on the website, with the news stories and everything like that.

Dr. Seelman concerned about the website accessibility. She commented that website should be accessible to voice output to people who are blind, people with sensory across disability and work across disability.

Mr. Noschese commented that show is both captioned and interpreted, which is distracting sometimes.

Ms. Evans said it was very well done. The interpreting and captioning allow her to read which is very well.

Mr. McGann commented that at WPXI, TV, a long time ago, they had an interpreter in the corner for church services for deaf Catholics. Hard of hearing people complained they couldn't understand the sign language and there was no captioning. WPXI rules that they only provide one, which is regarded as kind of like discrimination. It is very important to have both.

Mr. Wasserman wanted one show on traffic topic. Ms. Bingbing Hou is working on the traffic accessibility and once it finished, there will be a show on that.

Ms. Nellans commented the interpreter is clean.

Mr. Wasserman asked how widespread this hospital manual would become. The response is it is been distributed fairly widely. He suggested further distribution, such as some national association of hospitals.

DISCUSSION

Merger of T-Mobile and AT&T

Ms. Shirley Shi explained the hand-outs and her reports on AT&T and T-Mobile merger.

Dr. Seelman said there is a national level disability coalition that covers these issues. It is C.O.A.T. It is included in the handouts of the meeting. She talked to the head and it seems to her that is the best route. If Task Force wants to continue this topic, she could drop her note if any questions.

Mr. Wasserman was interested in that the TTY problem will get solved so the different kinds of equipment can communicate with on another.

Ms. Nellans was interested in the merger if they can accomplish some technological solutions for people with disabilities, especially those with hearing loss, For example, several people who lost their hearing later in life, they have been getting the android or iphones, and trying to use the new program which provides captioning of phone calls. She thought it was not affordable for most of people, though it works well. She hoped the new technology could reduce the cost of things like this.

Mr. Tague wondered if C.O.A.T supported this merger. No one knows. But the reasons that C.O.A.T does or does not take positions are very complex, Dr. Seelman said. Besides, FCC listed all the pleadings and opposition from the public on their website.

STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Meritzer reported that his Hospital Compliance project intern is gone for personal reasons. Ms. Shirley Shi will finish her summer internship in ADA office soon and will transfer to Transportation Group of Department of City Planning. High School Student interns will leave before the next meeting. The good news is Mr. Elijah Hughes will continue to another term, doing building accessibility. He has number of applicants in the fall. Ms. Bingbing Hou will stay for a little longer.

Since last meeting, Mr. Meritzer reported, they have done a couple of building surveys. They have met with ACHIEVEA and UPMC to start the discussion about the next hospital compliance manual for the intellectually and developmentally disabled. They are starting the work on that.

Ms. Shirley Shi has been attending all of the special events committee meeting and making sure the events are accessible as they can be.

Mr. Meritzer will go out to do a roll through of downtown for accessibility for the 2011 Wheelchair Games. They are going to all the places of games to make sure there are not any barriers.

Mr. Meritzer is going to interview all the interns for the fall term in next week.

They have been an increasing number of issues about trees and sidewalks that are making the sidewalks too narrow. They are meeting with Forestry, Public Works and a variety of other staff people in the City to figure out how to make sure that sidewalks remain accessible when the trees grow too big.

Mr. Meritzer urged everyone to attend Wheelchair Games and schedules were sent out yesterday.

Ms. Shirley Shi reported on there will be two guests in next Task Force meeting concerning Airport Project. One is Pittsburgh International Airport ADA coordinator and another is from Homeland Security. About Accessible PGH, the next two shows are in the process of determining the topic and guest. Basically, one show will be on Discrimination in Housing because of disability. Another show is about the police's training of how to communicate with people with disabilities.

Ms. Bingbing Hou reported that the Beach View Lion's Club support audible traffic signal project and she will set up a meeting as soon as possible.

Mr. Dennis Briggs reported on Comprehensive Plan. There is an event where they have to go to set up different booths. It's a competition of who has the best brunch type of thing. They have been coming up for different ideas. There is African-American Arts Group coming up. He will ask his brother's group and see if they can do it.

Mr. Quaishawn Whitlock reported on building surveys. He went out to a couple buildings throughout the South Side. Some of the senior centers and other buildings are not accessible at all.

Dr. Seelman asked if this has been introduced to the head of area agency on aging. She suggested they should do it.

Mr. Meritzer went over the last strategic planning committee meeting. The committee will start to put the redacted minutes on the website so that they will be publicly viewed. Secondly, they put up the ideas of next two shows of Accessible PGH. One show will be on Discrimination in Housing because of disability. Another show is about the police's training of how to communicate with people with disability. The next meeting will be in three months.

Mr. Wasserman asked if the City's 10 percent fund is still included in addition to Lion's club's funding. Mr. Meritzer said they hope it will be included in the ten percent a year so that they will reach their goal in ten years. While the City agreed in principle to do ten percent each year, they still have to find the funding each year so that it will be easier to reach their goal.

Mr. Noschese commented about training in police department of how to communication with people with disabilities. He thought it was very important and has ever written a letter to the chief of police to explain the situation and needs of people with disabilities.

VOX POP

Ms. Dianne Gallagher from Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services talked about the police training. There were two short training, Devin from OVR and some other people worked together with it. They did the interpretation of it. They did it already two times.

Ms. Nellans raised two items. One is about hearing loops, a universal assistive listening system that are popular in Europe and England and will work for probably over the next ten years. She wanted 10 minutes to present it in next Task Force Meeting. Secondly, she commented that the workshop about accessibility to public art is costly and nobody is involved to inform them the accessibility system in Pittsburgh Public Art.

Mr. Meritzer will contact FISA to give them this feedback.

Mr. McGann commented about the visible disability and invisible disability. Usually, people with deaf or hard of hearing are hard to be identified.

Ms. Baricella asked about the big plan in Market Square. Mr. Meritzer responded that he was not involved in until the plan is complete. He tried to fix the problem during the construction but it still remains a lot of problems. Ms. Baricella also asked the update of sandwich boards on the sidewalks. Mr. Meritzer said the sandwich boards are not legal anywhere. However, the City is not about to remove them. The position he is taking is that if they are in the way, they should be removed. Therefore he has actually physically moved a number of them. The Council and Mayor are both know about it. Somebody has to produce some legislation.

Mr. Noschese raised the time limitation of parking meter for people with disabilities. He thought one hour is not enough for them. Ms. Baricella responded to it and said if someone has a handicapped plate, and he will get an hour extra at a meter without paying.

Mr. McGann said he tried to call 311 to inform them about a problem with a car parking in a handicapped spot.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING

DATE: August 15, 2011
TIME: 1:00 P.M.
LOCATION: Large Conference Room
200 Ross Street