

**City of Pittsburgh/Allegheny County
Task Force on Disabilities
June 18, 2012
Minutes**

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

Members Present: Janet Evans, Milton Henderson, Richard McGann, James C. Noschese,
Katherine D. Seelman Chairperson, John Tague, Joe Wasserman

Members Absent: Aurelia Carter-Scott, Linda Dickerson, Sarah Goldstein, Liz Healey,
Paul O'Hanlon, Jeff Parker

Others Present: Shirley Abriolay, Lester Bennett, Anthony Boule, Isaiah Cofield, Amir Davis, Joe Elliot, Diane Gallagher, John Heinzl, Larry Hockenberry,
Chuck Keenan, Donald Kovacic, Richard Meritzer, Charles Morrison,
Keith Partyka, Robin Smith, Mahogany Thaxton, Amaris Whitaker

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

ACTION ITEMS

Review and approval of May Minutes

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

Review and approval of financial report

Mr. Tague did not have the opportunity to email the other members of the Task Force the financial report, so he just gave a verbal report. He said that the question last meeting was would there be enough funds to have an annual meeting, and the determination was made after a conversation with Mr. O'Hanlon that if they encumber the funds they have remaining for the July meeting and they would move forward with a July meeting. He stated that the financial report showed that they have a little over \$700 remaining and that would be enough for another meeting in July. He called Ms. Gallagher at Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and asked if they could send a bill for the June and the July meeting, and the plan is to pay them in advance. He added that what has not be determined is the form the meeting in July will take, but it will be the annual meeting. He suggested that one thing Ms. Carter-Scott brought up was an opportunity for

a public input on what the Task Force could be doing, so that may be a part of the July meeting. He also said that the reason there was money left over was because sometimes they did not always use the money budgeted for accommodations for the meetings. Ms. Seelman asked again if there would be enough money for interpreters and CART for a July meeting, and Mr. Tague responded yes.

Ms. Evans made a motion to approve the report which was seconded by Mr. Wasserman and then agreed to.

PRESENTATION

Pay by License Plate Meters - Anthony Boule

Mr. Boule was at the last meeting to give a brief presentation on the new meters for the City, and this meeting he gave a more descriptive and thorough presentation of the new meters. He began by saying the City and the Parking Authority were engaged to bring new pay by license plate meters to the City. He handed out brochures at the meeting and also sent out a press releases. He said the meters will start to appear on the streets in late July and August, but by September 1 all of the meters will be up. He stated that this was a new concept, there are pay and display meters in the lots on Southside, Northside, and East End and the difference will be you will not have to take the receipt back to your car to put it on the dashboard. He said all you have to do is put in your license plate number in and any license plate works, then you select how much time you will need and then you can pay by coin or card.

Ms. Seelman commended this idea but commented that there may be a problem for some people regarding the pressure needed to work the meters. She said some people may not be able to put enough pressure on the keypads to put in their license plate. Mr. Boule said he would be happy doing a demonstration with some people to see if there needed to be something changed with the keypads. Mr. Boule and the ADA office are going to work on a demonstration for the meter with the help of Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh. Ms. Seelman suggested that the demonstration be held at the assistive technology laboratory at Bakery Square.

Mr. Tague asked if the meters are too high for a person in a wheelchair. He wanted to know if the display was low enough so that a person in a wheelchair can see it. Mr. Boule responded that the height of the meters were ADA compliant. Mr. Hockenberry asked what about people that are Deaf and speak ASL, would they be able to read the display. Mr. Boule replied that he was not sure, but he would bring Mr. Hockenberry's concern to the next Parking Authority meeting.

PRESENTATION

Three Rivers Arts Festival - Janet Evans

The Three Rivers Arts Festival was this past week and Ms. Evans attended and gave a brief presentation on the accessibility of the festival. Ms. Evans said she had worked with the festival since 2008 in an effort to make it accessible. She said that finally after four years of working with them, she found the whole festival accessible to herself. She did have a concern though, and that was she was not sure how accessible the festival was to people with other disabilities, such as visual or hearing. She added that if the festival was not accessible to people with a visual or

hearing disability, they need to speak up for themselves and make it accessible for them. Mr. McGann asked if there were interpreters set up at the festival. Ms. Evans responded that she was not sure. Mr. Meritzer said that if someone needs an interpreter for an event, they should contact him at least three days in advance of the event.

PRESENTATION

Best Buddies - Mahogany Thaxton

Ms. Thaxton came from Best Buddies to give a presentation on the organization. She said that Best Buddies is a non-profit organization and their goal is to enhance the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships and integrated employment. She added that in Western Pennsylvania, Best Buddies has chapters in high schools and in colleges. She explained the way the program works is that they structure it around the academic year and the matches are made in the fall. Both individuals in the pair would commit to the program for the academic year. Best Buddies staff works with chapters by providing continual support. Best Buddies have different events over the year to help and support the one-to-one friendships. The events are funded with the help of chapter fundraisers, sales of Best Buddie merchandise, university and community support, special events, private and corporate donations, and Best Buddie grants. She also briefly explained what a community champion is and how you could become one. A community champion is a recognized and respected leader who has made a commitment to Best Buddies, social inclusion, and has a sincere interest in people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in his or her community. The role of a community champion may include fundraising, acting as a spokesperson to increase the visibility of Best Buddies, convening and leveraging partners and advocating sponsorship of the Best Buddies friendship programs and events.

She described some of the events that Best Buddies holds during the year, and what other things they try to promote. They promote ending the use of the “R” word (Retarded) in everyday language and to bring a newfound respect to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They have small and large fundraisers during the year such as the Champion of the Year and the Friendship walk. Their main goal is inclusion and really to make the Best Buddies program obsolete. If people have friendships without having to use the program, they will not be needed anymore.

She also explained that they offered help. If the partners had trouble communicating with each other. Best Buddies offered classes and training to help the partners communicate better. Mr. McGann commented that he had taught at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Blind and offered his assistance to Ms. Thaxton and the program in whatever he could do. Mr. Hockenberry asked if Best Buddies worked with the Children’s Hospital. Ms. Thaxton answered that Best Buddies does work with Children’s Hospital as well as many other organizations.

Ms. Thaxton thanked the Task Force for giving her the opportunity to speak at the meeting and the chance to spread the word about the program.

DISCUSSION

Voter Legislation - Katherine D. Seelman

Ms. Seelman commented that a new voting legislation had passed requiring identification to be present when a citizen goes to vote. She added that only certain types of identifications are allowed such as a driver's license, or a State ID. She said that this creates a voting barrier with the people who do not have a type of identification, they will not be able to vote or they have to acquire a type of identification that is allowed when you vote. She suggested that maybe for the next meeting, there should be a speaker to talk about this new legislation and answer the Task Force's questions.

UPDATE

Transit - John Tague & Janet Evans

Mr. Tague and Ms. Evans recently went to Harrisburg to discuss the cuts in transit, especially in ACCESS, and they updated the Task Force.

Ms. Evans reported that she had visited a few Representatives to speak with them. She had noticed that some offices of the Representatives were accessible, but others were not accessible. She commented that this should be fixed and a Representative's office should be accessible in case of a meeting with someone who is disabled.

Mr. Tague reported that he had talked to some Representatives in Harrisburg to come up with solutions for the transit cuts. Mr. Bennett asked if even though they are saying they are coming up with solutions, are they really coming up with solutions or is just an excuse to give them more time. Mr. Tague replied that he believed they were coming up with solutions with a good faith effort. Mr. Tague also commented that he is trying to get Allegheny County in the state program. He said right now Allegheny County is not in the program. If Allegheny County were to get in the program, then the County would receive lottery money which would be able to fund ACCESS.

STAFF REPORTS

Strategic Planning Committee - Keith Partyka

Mr. Partyka unfortunately had to leave early and could not give his report. Mr. Mertizer passed out the Strategic Planning Committee minutes from the May meeting to the Task Force. He reminded the Task Force that this was just a draft and once the minutes were finalized he will send them out electronically. Mr. Meritzer thanked Mr. Partyka for typing up the minutes of the meeting.

Sidewalk Barriers - John Heinzl

Mr. Heinzl displayed a map of Pittsburgh showing where there were only streets with sidewalks and streets with no sidewalks. Mr. Heinzl is working on a part of MovePGH to help improve the

sidewalks in the City and possibly put in sidewalks where there are no sidewalks or only one sidewalk on a street.

Historic Review - Amaris Whitaker

Ms. Whitaker had a general discussion about the One-Step packet. She was also going to a Historic Preservation Committee meeting to present the packet. She asked the audience and the Task Force to attend the meeting so that the disabled community can say that the project is needed. She added that the Historic Preservation Committee meeting is on July 11, at 1:00 PM in the first floor conference room of the Civic Building.

Vox Pop

There was no additional comments from the audience.

Ms. Seelman adjourned the meeting at 2:50 PM.

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING

Date:	July 16, 2012
Time:	1:00 PM
Location:	First Floor Conference Room Civic Building, 200 Ross Street Pittsburgh