

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

**June 16, 2009**

**MINUTES**

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

**Members Present:** Katherine D. Seelman, Co-chair, Janet Evans, James C. Noschese

**Members Absent:** Jeff Parker, Chairperson, Co-chair, Aurelia Carter, Sarah Goldstein, Rich McGann, Paul O'Hanlon, John Tague, Linda Dickerson, Liz Healey, Milton Henderson,

**Others Present:** Richard Meritzer, Larry Hockenberry – Pa Prison society, Colbert – interpreter, Asia Pruden –ACHS, Angela Kowalski – CHC, Slyvia Denys – BOLD, Danielle Kilchenstein, Jamila Dees – intern, Cassidy Drilling – intern, Brian Church – intern, Mr. Wassermann Wassermann

The meeting was called to order by Katherine D. Seelman at 1:13 PM.

**Introductions:**

All members and guests introduced themselves.

**Action Item**

Review & approval of financial report next meeting.

**Staff Reports**

Introduction and update from Cassidy Drilling on funding for the Braille embosser and wheel chair Transport vehicle. She announced that she is still working on finding funding for both of the projects. The funding for the wheel chair transport vehicle proposal is pending approval. Also, she is still looking for a sponsor organization to represent Pittsburgh, but the proposal is already written.

Brain Church gave an update on Accessible Traffic Signals. He said, soon the list of auditable traffic signals will be posted on the City of Pittsburgh website, so people can make sure that all the streets that need to be on the list are included and also so people can make comments.

Jamila Dees gave an update on the Task Force Resource List that was being put together and also gave an up date on the Hospital Compliance Manual project. She said that the Task Force Resource List is almost done and if any one had any information to add to the information that is all ready there, to please let her know. Also, she announced that the hospital compliance manual is almost done.

## **Report**

Mr. Meritzer gave information on UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Mr. Meritzer said there were many task force members that attended the event. The conference was about the U.S. and the U.N. human rights for people with disabilities. The conference was for three days and Mr. Meritzer got to give a presentation there.

## **Discussion**

Ms. Evans said she went to the art festival over the weekend and was very pleased. She committed that every thing at the festival was very accessible. It was very easy for her to have complete access to every thing she wanted to do even though she was in a wheel chair.

Another issue that was brought up was about how majority of the events that are hosted at Point Park University do have interpreters, to help provide accommodation to people who are deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing. Even though they should have interpreters available, the city doesn't have the authority to make them provide that accommodation. We only have control over public places. If there is a public event that is going on, then we can give host of the event a list of requirements they have to meet in order to host there event. As of right now, even though there are laws that require events to provide certain accommodations, there isn't any thing we can do to make people abided by this laws.

Mr. Noschese brought up a question about people bicycling on the side walk. He wanted to know is it legal for people to ride their bikes on the side walk? Mr. Meritzer said that, it is legal for people to ride their bikes on the side walk as long as it is not in a commercial zone. Mr. Noschese want to know if we are able to get three police officers for Oakland to do bike patrol to make sure people do not ride there bikes on the sidewalk. Mr. Meritzer said, that there is already police that patrol that area.

## **Vox Pop**

Mr. Wassermann brought up an issue on crossing the street in Oakland. He said that even though there are audible traffic signals, it is still hard for people to cross the street. He said that the traffic signals do not allow enough time for people to cross the street and also that, even though all the lights are red, people still tend to go through the intersection making it very hard for blind consumers to cross the street. Also, the reason why Pittsburgh can't take the initiative to change all traffic lights to audible traffic lights is that, the Access Board has not come up with a standard light that will be used for all audible lights, so just in case the standard changes, they don't want to take action just yet to change all of the traffic lights to audible traffic lights. They want to do the job right the first time. Right now they are only changing the lights at intersections that people are complaining about and making them audible traffic lights. Mr. Noschese asked Mr. Wassermann, do blind consumers have faith in audible traffic signals? Mr. Wassermann said, yes. He just wishes that drivers would pay more attention to the audible traffic signal, especially when they see the audible light is signaling that people can cross the street. Every time a blind consumer crosses the street they are taking a chance on being run over by a car. Mr. Wassermann and Sylvia want to see if the city could put in the paper an article on how drivers should stop when an audible traffic signal is alerting people that they can cross the street also they think that Penn Dot should put this information in their driver books and test. Mr. Noschese thinks that there should be cameras installed in the traffic lights so the police can see what is going on at the intersections where there are audible traffic signals, to reassure that people are stopping at the intersections and people are not being hurt. Mr. Meritzer suggested that they call the Mayor's office about the problem that they are having.

Also the idea of having interpreters wear an ID when they go to events was brought up. They want to know if there was a way that interpreters could wear ID's at events to make it easier for consumers who are hard of hearing, blind-deaf, deaf to spot them out of a crowd.

## **Announcements:**

Kenny wood picnic is coming up  
Disability awareness day

## **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 PM.

**THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING:** DATE: July 20, 2009  
TIME: 1:00 P.M.

**LOCATION: First Floor Conference  
Room**

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