

City of Pittsburgh/Allegheny County
Task Force on Disability
Monday October 20th, 2014
Meeting Minutes

Members in Attendance: Dr. Kate Seelman, John Tague, Jeff Parker, Rich McGann, Milton Henderson, Sarah Goldstein, Karen Warman, Joe Wasserman, J. James C. Noschese.

Task Force Members Absent: Paul O'Hanlon, Janet Evans, Liz Healy, Aurelia Carter-Scott

Also in Attendance: Dillon McManus, Kevin Progar, Patrick Magrane, Matt Walkers, Sylvia San, Mai Nguyen, Sarah Kinter, Michelle Sipple, Kathy Hillman, Amber Baylor, Tracy Cummins, Sarah Pelk, Jessica Machcs, Donald Kuziak, Randy Whiter, Shirley Abreola, Joy Dore, Larry Hockenbarry, Sally Snyder, Judy Bariccella, Richard Meritzer

Welcome

Action Items:

Review and Approval of Treasurer Reports

Review and Approval of July Minutes:

Kate Seelman: Next are the minutes.

- We don't have a form to vote on it but we can vote on other pieces of interest
- Is there any input to the minutes, I sent my input in . Are there any other corrections for the minutes?

Extremely minor add another N to my name.

Ms. Seelman: Alright Milton is not here yet, is Patrick here?

Mr. Meritzer : Where's Patrick

Mr. McManus: He's in the restroom?

Ms. Seelman : Kevin?

Mr. Meritzer: Kevin's not here either.

Ms. Seelman: Okay, Dillon. Why don't you go?

Mr. McManus: Alright.

Snow Angels Updates:

Mr. McManus: How is everyone doing? Again, my name is Dillon McManus, ADA Compliance Intern, MSW Student at the University of Pittsburgh and I'm going to give you some Snow Angels updates.

- They have received removal requests already this year and are very excited to get this program going.

Ms. Seelman: Could you give us some background on what Snow Angels is?

Mr. McManus: Yes. The Snow Angels Project is through the United Way and is for the elderly and people with disabilities and gets volunteers to shovel snow that may be in front of their houses.

- So volunteer recruitment is about to begin. There is a press release about to go out of the mayor's office and the goal is to have a corps of about 200 by Dec. 1st.
- The Mayor's community affairs office will distribute information on the need for volunteers at outreach events and public meetings.
- Currently there is a draft of the website alleghenysnowangels.org if anyone wants to look at it. That is where individuals go once launched if anyone is in need of service and volunteers could gather any info they need.
- Funding is from the United Way in the amount of \$5,000. They may be able to generate more with the help of United Way Partnerships. AlleghenyLink has committed to securing additional funding for the next fiscal year 15-16. The goal is to seek a multi-year grant to sustain the program long term.
- Residents interested in receiving snow shoveling assistance should call the United Way at 412-307-0071.
- To register as a volunteer with the Allegheny Snow Angels program and help ensure that our city's elderly and disabled are cared for this winter, call 412-863-5939 or 2-1-1, visit <http://alleghenysnowangels.org/>, or email manager@alleghenysnowangels.org.

Ms. Seelman: Thank you for the report. Does anyone have any questions?

Ms. Goldstein: Is there anything going on to Advertise?

Mr. McManus: Presently it is in the making to aim towards volunteer recruitment and people interested. To my knowledge they will be taking to social media through twitter and facebook and I know that the program itself will be doing the same thing and going to Universities to recruit new volunteers.

Ms. Seelman: Are there any websites where volunteers can sign up?

Mr. McManus: So the sign up for volunteers isn't available just yet, it's still in development and that will be available through the City's website and the programs website alleghenysnowangels.org.

Ms. Seelman: Any other questions?

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- So we'll keep an eye on this and thank you.

Mr. McManus: Thank you, I appreciate it.

Ms. Seelman: We'll probably be asking for updates as the weather changes.

Microphone loop/feedback

Career Links Building Updates:

Ms. Seelman: Milton you're on as soon as you're ready.

Mr. Henderson: Alright.

Ms. Seelman: Milton is going to report on the Career Links building update. A lot of concern about the accessibility of it. Concern is that 34% of people with disabilities are employed in inaccessible facilities to employment services are not very useful to the disability community.

Mr. Henderson: How's everybody doing?

"People talking over each other"

Ms. Seelman: So tell us about Career Links

Mr. Henderson: Okay Career Links. The meeting was for two reasons. 1 to find out why the move and 2 the accessibility issue of it.

- Me and Chris made the meeting, about 6 of us were invited and the meeting was delayed. We had several questions about workforce investment, Career Links and other parties involved and wanted to ask about the new location.
- Everybody knows Career links was on 6th street it is now on Wood Commons and what I found out was – I asked who made the decision to move Career Links and it was told to me it was solely the Mayors decision.
- He found out they were selling the building so he contacted the contractors so he moved quickly and his decision was "we're moving down to Wood Street Commons."
- It's good to know that John and Kate have a relationship with the mayor now

Mr Tauge: I don't have a relationship with the mayor

- Paul and Kate do.

Mr. Henderson: Oh! Well I guess Paul and Kate can talk to the mayor about that now.

Ms. Goldstein: How long has Career Links been there?

Mr. Henderson: Years and Years.

Ms. Seelman: Which mayor was it.

Ms. Goldstein: Yeah I think it was Ravenstahl that did it.

Mr. Henderson: I think it's the one we have right now in office. I didn't actually confirm that but this mayor has been in awhile now.

Mr. Tauge: You should confirm that if we're saying something in public.

Ms. Goldstein: I think it moved before Peduto.

Mr. Henderson: I don't know which mayor but I'll find out.

Mr. Henderson: Secondly, John's concern with Career Links was would it move

- The answer was no
- OVR? Has the lease for 2022. So until 2022 there will be no movement of the OVR.

Ms. Goldstein: OVR is where?

Mr. Henderson: 531 Penn Ave.

- There is a 7 year lease on Career links. It will be on Wood Street

Mr. McGann: My question is for Carolyn, do they have enough support then for the people that have disabilities? Or are they looking for people that need jobs? Because I had noticed a lot of deaf and hard of hearing individuals are without jobs at this moment and it seems like business is getting behind and the people with disabilities aren't able to get jobs which I think is the goal and that would be so people who have disabilities are able to get a job isn't that the goal of Career Links and OVR?

Mr. Henderson: Yes, but this meeting wasn't on employment this was on accessibility to access the building.

Mr. Noschese: you're right we only discussed the accessibility to that building.

Mr. McGann: Alright, thank you.

- Do the deaf even know where to go? Do they know there has been a move?

Mr. Henderson: When we got that message from Judy I didn't know that the movement actually happened so how far the word spread I'm not sure.

- I just know the Task Force didn't know and a lot of other people didn't know. I don't know who doesn't know.

Ms. Seelman: Richard there is a question about if there is a link to Career Links on the website.

Mr. Meritzer: I don't know, I will check.

- I can also certainly go to social media

Mr. Henderson: It was ironic that the lift they put on the front of 301 Wood Street was not working, they were repairing it. That was very exciting and we questioned that. They said it would be up and running by the end of the day.

Ms. Warman: I know someone who lives on Wood Street and he had told me they put in that new lift and remodeled the whole thing.

Mr. Henderson. Yes, that why our main concern was accessibility

Ms. Warman: The guard there who does the door and everything...

Mr. Henderson: Yes that was another concern both on the Wood Street and 4th Ave. Side.

- I questioned would someone have to sit there until someone saw them to get into the building? Could there be a bell or something to get someone's attention. That's something they hadn't thought about. They said they would work on having something to accommodate that like a light or a buzzer or something to let someone know you are there. That was an issue, we're going to follow up with that.

Mr. Noschese: Just from my observations there those who are involved with the Career Links building are not very familiar with the ADA. They're somewhat behind so giving them a list of things to do was eye opening to them. So I feel like that's something they're not really trained for, they're not aware of the building accommodations to make. So I think there was a movement there without having any mention of ways to meet the ADA. They definitely were taking notes, they've got a lot of things that they want to do to improve accessibility. Right now, from what I saw, the accessibility is not quite up to standards but I'd say it's at 50%. There are some things I'd say are great but there are others that are pretty behind. That's my update for that.

Mr. Parker? : I think about a month or so ago there was a question about some permits on issues or usage. And secondly, is or is there not a distinction between the people who operate this building and the people who operate Career Links. It seems to me that those involved with Career Links, no matter who they are, should have an idea of what the ADA is.

Mr. Henderson: That's one of the reasons we were there.

Mr. Parker: But they're different from the people who operate the building are they not?

Mr. Henderson: I'd image they are. They're leasing the space and the building so when it comes to the fiscal operation, I guess that would be a different person, but we were there to find out what was compliant or what needed to be brought compliant to help people with disabilities out on all levels. The person who was running the building was trying to find out who was going to make it right for persons accessing the building and I think we made progress.

Mr. Meritzer: Just a clarification – It sounds like Careerlinks is a government activity which would make it a title two operation so this is covered by both title two and title three since the building is owned privately for public purposes. So under title three the owner is responsible for making it accessible but under title two the program is required to make it accessible because title two transfers that responsibility to the government agency. So both the building owner and Careerlinks are responsible for making it accessible.

Ms. Seelman: Thank you very much for clarifying legal jurisdictions. I want to go on, let's keep this discussion going.

Mr. Tauge: Just a clarification that was mentioned about the dual responsibilities that exist, my question goes to – we think we know why, but we're still not sure about the reasons why they moved there and why the mayor would have them move there. My question is Careerlinks itself accessible?

Mr. Henderson: I was able to get in and move around but there are some things that I don't know about because I don't see what Joe and some other people see with their impairments. I can move around in a chair and get to different teletypes and do different things but when it comes to someone else I can't speak to their impairment. Chris?

Mr. Nochese: One thing that was a barrier or something I noticed was that from the time that we were there from 8 to 5 that seemed to be fine but after 5 O'clock the door becomes locked and you have to press a specific button and talk into a speaker to get someone to unlock the door obviously for me that's not going to work and the location of the person hearing the speaker is out of sight so that's another issue with accessibility. It should be a 24/7 building so you can get in and out but it's not. That's an issue I saw just getting into the building.

Mr. McGann: I have a question for clarification. Who funds and is responsible for setting up Careerlinks?

Mr. Henderson: It's probably federal dollars.

Mr. Meritzer: I'm not exactly sure but if it's OVR it's state.

Ms. Seelman: It would be federal money funded through the state.

Mr. Progar: Careerlinks is definitely administered by the state. I don't know about the nature of the funding but the administration is the state.

Ms. Seelman: Speaking now as someone who use to work in the agencies the money originates at the federal level and comes to the states in the form of a grant. It's often supplemented by the states but one way or another there is an agreement between the federal and state on how it will be used. So it's definitely as Richard said, title two. I think that's enough for that part of the agenda unless there are any other questions.

- Let's move this into an action item, Richard – as ADA Coordinator this building is in your jurisdiction. What do you suggest as a course of action?

Mr. Meritzer: I'm thinking that Sylvia and I can do an ADA audit. We're doing that for city buildings anyway and have the forms set up. We can make time, make arrangements, go down and do accessibility audit for the building. That includes things like braille and other things that make the building more accessible.

Ms. Seelman: Could you take a person with a disability with you?

Mr. Meritzer: I would be delighted to if anyone wants to go with me.

Ms. Seelman: Does anyone else have any questions? I think this is definitely an action item.

Mr. Henderson: My recommendation is to follow up with Eric and see what he has done and what he can and can't do if he's getting opposition from somebody then we need to move forward but if people are working with him within the building then I don't see that we need to push .

Ms. Seelman: The follow through on Richard to do an audit then we can come back and depending on what we find we can take action. One of the things I'd be concerned about is having someone who is using it there but you can certainly find out if there is some way to communicate with someone.

Mr. Meritzer: We've had a number of situations including an election polling place where there was someone needed to open the door and what we recommended was portable bells. You can stick them on the door, they require no wiring, and you can set them for how long you want them to ring. That's an easy solution for one's needs.

Ms. Seelman: Portable Bells won't work for someone who is deaf.

Mr. Meritzer: No, no. It's supposed to be for the person who is going to let them in. They hear the bell ringing and know that someone is waiting and they can go and help them.

Ms. Seelman: So why don't we start on this. How long do you think it could be done?

Mr. Meritzer: Sylvia, we could set something up for this month, right?

Ms. Sun: Yes.

Mr. Meritzer: Anyone who wants to go with me let me know and we'll get you out some dates.

Mr. Henderson: So are you going to contact Eric or someone and let them know?

Mr. Meritzer: We'll make arrangements to be there, yes.

Mr. Henderson: They spoke very openly about getting done what needed to be done, I don't want them to be blindsided.

Mr. Meritzer: I will want someone from Careerlinks and building management to be there because its dual responsibility.

Ms. Seelman: I think it's great that both would be involved, the task force really wants to work with people.

Mr. Henderson: I think the best way to do this would be to contact Eric and say "We got a report from the task force and we would like to meet with you to do an ADA audit."

Ms. Abreola: I would be willing to go with you on the audit.

Ms. Goldstein: Like Chris said, this could be their chance to learn more about the ADA and compliance and come more completely into compliance and know what to look for.

Ms. Seelman: Richard is that something you could do?

Mr. Meritzer: Absolutely. I feel like every time I go out I do some training because I can educate the person going around with me. But I'll be glad to be available to them.

Ms. Seelman: questions?

Mr. McGann: For example: Communication needs to be improved, if a person with a mental disability showed up they need to be accommodated. If the city hired someone to check accessibility and improve it communication would be a lot better.

Mr. Nochese: I don't think that there is a building permit required, Careerlinks moved into that area and found all of these different issues and that's the problem we're running into now. In the future how can we prevent that from happening? How can we stop a company from moving into a building that is not compliant?

Ms. Seelman: Prevention is a great idea if we could do it. Everybody strives for it but I think we need to get some feedback first then we can branch into education.

Mr. Henderson: One last thing. I did ask for all parties to be at the table so that we would be involved in anything dealing with accessibility and they agreed that if there was something wrong they would reach out and let us know.

Transition Plan Discussion:

Ms. Seelman. Alright, that closes it today and we look forward to a report from the ADA Coordinator. We'll go onto the Transition Plan discussion, Patrick?

Mr. Magrane: Hello. For all of those who don't remember from the last task force meeting my name is Patrick Magrane, I'm Richard's ADA Policy Intern. Over the last month I have been working on an important project that deals with making the different departments across our city government more accessible. We call it the Transition Plan and it includes a couple of internal markers such as code reviews, facility reviews etc. but the most important thing we do with the Transition Plan, in about 2 years, it to find accommodation issues and deficiencies across the departments of the city. There are 14 departments that we are looking to work closer with. The main tool we use to do this is called the Department questionnaire - there are copies in the back and were included in an email to the task force. It is a tool that we distribute to the departments to get them to think about not just what they do currently for accommodation and accessibility but what is getting overlooked and needs to be addressed. We have about 5 responses so we have started going door to door to get them as email can be unreliable. We sit down and go through it word for word - not trying to prompt yes or no answers but real consideration about what they do now, what they need to do and what resources are available to help them do so. When we sit down and analyze the responses we can begin to see systemic issues within the city, not just isolated issues in a specific department. Over the next year or two, we will identify accommodation deficiencies that are glaring. So far the websites are lacking in their accommodation explanations. Another example is staff training - making them aware of what they can do to accommodate. As we have been meeting - I would estimate by the next meeting we would have all of the responses. After we determine where the major deficiencies are we can assign responsibility to them to facilitate accommodations. We go from identification - analyzing - implementation which means finding money to implement which is a huge barrier to implementation. With that I will open it up to Questions?

Mr. Meritzer: If I may add: Another key component of this is input from the disability community. I sent out an email about 3 weeks ago requesting feedback and so far we have gotten feedback from no one so we really need the task force members to go back to the community and get input - either structurally or programmatically - we need to know about any concerns. If the community is not involved with the transition plan it is not a legitimate transition plan. While we're finding out what the departments don't know, which is turning out to be a lot, we need to know from the community about the big things but also the small things. The first thing we found out when we initially started doing the facility surveys was that none of the restrooms in senior centers have accessible signage. They were horrified and immediately went out and bought accessible restroom signage to put up. It's those things that we don't catch all the time, there may be things that you know that we don't know so please get back to us.

Mr. Tauge: Could we develop some sort of survey and send it out to the disability community.

Mr. Magrane: It would definitely be a good idea to generate a survey to compliment the information from the questionnaires that gets distributed to the various departments.

Mr. Tauge: It could be something that maybe goes out monthly, and it could be simple. We don't want it too complicated.

Mr. Meritzer: No, we don't want to too complicated but we want to get real information so I think yes and no answers aren't good.

Ms. Seelman: Let's hold up on that a moment. Are you a social science student?

Mr. Magrane: I am a political science and economics student.

Ms. Seelman: have you ever developed surveys?

Mr. Magrane: I have helped develop a few, in general I have.

Ms. Warman: Are there a variety of issues addressed in this? Like mental health facilities?

Mr. Magrane: Yes, things like learning disabilities are addressed as well. We broach mental health too yes?

Mr. Meritzer: As a matter of fact the questionnaire to the departments asks in emerging situations - people with learning disabilities – their terminology, not ours – and people with cognitive disabilities in emerging situations. They said “well we assign someone to work with another person in an emerging situation” which was the perfect answer.

Ms. Goldstein: I think this covers disabilities in the sense that it covers if the person can work. If the person is in recovery from a mental disorder they many have other impairments that need help. If they're in recovery this document covers those areas.

Ms. Seelman: We'll take a look at it and provide some feedback?

Mr. Magrane: Yes, that would be very helpful!

Ms. Seelman: Would members of the council go through this and provide some feedback? If you have anything to add...

Mr. McGann: Can I add something? Would be only be able to send things within the city or the surrounding counties as well? The reason I'm asking is, for example, a water company could be owned by the city but could be sent out to Mt. Lebanon so there is some confusion as to who the responsibility falls under.

Ms. Seelman: I'm going to defer to Richard to see where this jurisdiction applies.

Mr. Meritzer: Well actually the county is doing their transition plan at the same time. Judy and I have been in communication about this and sharing information. So if we send out a questionnaire and it turns out the borough of Mt. Lebanon isn't providing X and Y then we can certainly send that information to Judy. While I am only concerned with city programs, I'm sure Judy would be delighted to

know for the country programs. So send it out and if need be we will redirect it to the right person and be heard.

Ms. Warman: What if it started to go beyond the city and county? What if it went state or U.S. wide?

Ms. Seelman: Right now I think our scope is really only contained here for the city-county task force. If those kinds of questions start to get directed we'll bring it to the task force and talk about it.

- Will everyone here on the task force agree to read the questionnaire and provide feedback?

Crowd question:

Ms. Kinter: will this questionnaire be sent to boards authorities and commissions as well or just departments?

Mr. Meritzer: Technically authorities are independent single-purpose governments within a multi-purpose agency so technically authorities do have their own responsibility. We have not yet engaged authorities, I want to get to the city departments first then we may go into the authorities.

Ms. Kinter: Okay, so from the Commission on Human Relations we'd be delighted to engage.

Mr. Meritzer: We sent it to the commission didn't we?

Ms. Kinter: I haven't received anything before as far as an official commission initiative; this is the first copy I have.

Mr. Magrane: We did indeed send it.

Mr. Meritzer: I would check around to try and find it as it seems we did send it.

Ms. Kinter: Okay, we'll have to check. When is this due?

Mr. Magrane: There is not set "due date" it's really an ongoing process.

Ms. Kinter: Okay. Who created the survey?

Mr. Meritzer: It was Joe, a former intern. He did a best practices search and found the information for the questions.

Ms. Kinter: Okay, and could be provide feedback on the survey questions?

Mr. Meritzer: Absolutely. As a matter of fact when we're going out to meet directors we're getting their feedback as well.

Ms. Kinter: Okay, great.

Mr. Meritzer: This is by definition an interactive process.

Ms. Kinter: And when you spoke to INP did you speak to Eric McGaza the webmaster?

Mr. Magrane: Actually we just had the meeting today, we talked to Stacey Hill who mentioned she would be bringing him in.

Ms. Kinter: He operates the City Information Management System which houses the city websites, He has been a great resources about adapting accessibility standards to the websites so I would use him if you need to get information out.

- Where is the data being stored? I'm concerned about its longevity because it is something that is important for everyone else to look at as well. Would it be updated every year? What's the plan?

Mr. Meritzer: Actually the federal government only requires us to do it once, although I was at a conference and they said the regulations have changed and we should look at it again. This is really just a starting point to bring more accessibility into the city. All of the questionnaires will be in hard copy and in digital file and once the spreadsheet is done we will develop a draft to send out to the departments again saying "this is what we found, what do you think?" Hard and digital copies will be available. And this is a very strange ADA rule, we are required to do this but not required to let anyone know we did this. We are only required to keep it on file should anyone ask for it. So we're taking it a step further and making it known that we are doing this.

Ms. Seelman: Thank you, any other questions or concerns?

Ms. Goldstein: I have a question as to why behavioral health is not in the survey. I was wondering if it's because of insurance and HIPPA violations? Is it because in the workforce it's kept separate? A lot of people don't disclose that at work.

Mr. Meritzer: I suspect because it's an oversight, a lot of times we don't know how to handle that. Technically within the ADA you aren't able to ask about disabilities you can only ask about accommodations and accommodations for mental health issues tend to be a little different. But that doesn't mean we can't include it. It only means that, because this came out of a best practices thing, I don't think anyone has been able to grapple with it. If you could give us some advice, it would be a great body of knowledge for us.

Ms. Goldstein: I have some people in the training department I can put you in contact with.

Ms. Seelman: A point that John brought up, when you start making recommendations you might want to send it out to CEO's, which is what we usually do and make a list of 10 or 8 representative organizations and we could make recommendations.

Mr. McGann: With more than 15 employees you have to follow the ADA, with less you don't always have too – how can something like that be addressed?

Mr. Meritzer: This is title 2, not title 3, so the number of employees is irrelevant. Also since the city is counted as the employer there are far more than 15. Secondly, I know many of the individuals in the departments and they are very willing to work with me to solve problems. So far all of the responses

have been honest and if they have had questions we have worked with them to address problems. Two of the biggest problems that have come up are staff training and more communication, both of which we will be pursuing. For example on thing that we may address as a result of the tradition plan is to find a way for the city to offer training in American Sign Language.

Ms. Seelman: So let's get back to the question about outreach to the community.

Mr. Tauge: I think it'd be a good idea to select a few organizations to address this with and provide feedback to, just to add to your point.

Mr. Meritzer: Real quick – Patrick has to leave.

Mr. Magrane: Indeed I do. I look forward to seeing what kind of feedback you guys come up with. Thank you.

Ms. Seelman: I want to move on the survey a bit more. I want to look back on the Commission on Human Rights and view this as an opportunity and resource to see where we are now and how we can gauge this around 2020, not an easy task by any means but likely well worth the look. Is there anything else that needs to be addressed? Any questions?

Mr. Meritzer: We will take in the feedback on the surveys, make an amended questionnaire if necessary, develop one for the community and Matthew and I will look into how to appropriately database it.

Ms. Seelman: If everyone could take a copy in the back or access it electronically that would be great so we can give Richard feedback on it.

Ms. Warman: I may have an issue; I may need to ask my sister to borrow her computer.

Mr. Meritzer: If anyone has any issues just please let me know and I can get that out to you – anytime anyone does not have access to something please let me know.

Presentation by the Health Literacy Coalition:

Ms. Seelman: Anything else on this? We're going to close it out and we're looking for Kevin?

Mr. Meritzer: Kevin asked to speak today, he is the administrator of the Health Literacy Coalition, and we have been active participants since its inception. Its health literacy month and we wanted to give you an update on it and why it's important.

Mr. Progar: Thank you all for letting me speak today. I'm going to start by going over a little about what health literacy is, why there is a coalition in Pittsburgh and we'll try to move quickly so we can talk about who I am a bit and branch into how we can approach different folks about how we can better address accessibility issues.

- So starting with health literacy the definition is: the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand the basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions. It's long and wordy, we're trying to break that down. – Can

people talk about health? Can they talk about it with people like families, friends doctors can they understand what it means to their life? What does using a respirator mean? Can they take action on it? And there is a lot of emphasis on that last part. Health Literacy has been a field for about 20 years but only gained national recognition on 2010 there was a national action plan introduced by the CDC , they had seven goals and we're using that as a model for what we're trying to do – work with the broadest group of people in order to meet those goals. The group met in 2010, the meeting was held by the Univ. of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics coming out of that is when the group formed as an idea.. They got together in 2011 to talk about getting funding and data in place in order to grasp the extent of health literacy barriers and challenges here in Pittsburgh. In 2012 it lead to a survey being done through Highmark funding and administered by the University of Pittsburgh and I will share the findings in a moment. Since then we've put together what an action plan looks like and what some goals should be. At this point we're going forward and seeing who we need to engage with, and that's the reason why I'm here. - is there anyone with a question I may be able to answer?

Ms. Warman: I did a class, a proactive patient class, and there was a checklist and it sounds similar to what you were talking about. I know there are things in place like screen readers for the blind but for deaf and blind I'm not sure.

Mr. Progar: So the task force has a guideline for those who are deaf, blind and hard of hearing and we're looking to synthesize that into a more usable format so as they are developed, how do we make them more usable and accessible, that's a good point.

Ms. Warman: It seems difficult when something like deaf-blind is put together unless there is some kind of interpreter.

Mr. Progar: Absolutely. We're working on things like that, especially in emergency rooms so that the staff can make the accommodations quickly and effectively.

Ms. Dore: One of my personal friends is blind and advocates for the community. It is often helpful if you ask if they have a preferred accommodation because as she said, not all blind people have precisely the same issue, some might not be able to read braille, some might prefer something else. It is always helpful to ask and Kevin, thank you for what you're doing.

Mr. Progar: In short, you're totally right, and we're trying to work with staff to I.D. multiple accommodations and when we tested it was with JAWS and MBDA which are screen reading soft wares, thank you for the comment.

Mr. McGann: Thank you for your work. I do want to make you aware of the fact that Freedom Fantastic in Florida are developing a braille reader a system where it would plug into JAWS and MAGIC I and would plug into a screen reader as well and would also work with WINDOW I so there are new screen reading technologies being developed. Although it does conflict with those who can't hear so you would have to stick with braille.

Mr. Progar: Thank you for the input, we are trying to be as conscious as we can be but sometimes it's a matter of having technology catch up, but we do need to make insurers and providers aware of what individuals preferences are so that they can meet them. Does anyone else have any questions?

Mr. Nochese: I'm wondering if you have already gone to www.healthbridges.org – have you looked at that?

Mr. Progar: Yes, and Amy Hart who helped develop that is on our advisory group and we do link to the accommodation card offered by them and through our website as well so hopefully we get more providers to use that as an access point to get those accommodations.

Mr. Nochese: That is something you'll have to work on as far as different topics. So once you set something like that up you need someone signing the information, making sure it's captioned and someone with a voice so that the blind have access to the information so that they can adequately use the information, thank you so much.

Mr. Progar: Yes, thank you so much. I think the best thing to do would be to follow up sending around the web address and also working with the ADA office to get a survey to set priorities if that is something that we need to look into and I'm also willing just to come down to say hello.

Ms. Seelman: Yes that would be great. One thing that some people find unbelievable is that people don't access the web and the outreach to them is the most difficult, statistically people with disabilities who use the web to gain information is lower than the mainstream population.

Mr. Progar: Yes, the digital divide is something we try to address but it's something that we are finding to be increasingly difficult.

Ms. Seelman: Someone your age is more apt to use it since you've had it awhile, much longer than some of us!

Mr. Progar: Yes we are very understanding of that and trying to do the best we can, it's more of a resource issue than anything else.

Ms. Seelman: A lot of things like medical records will be on the web and Richard was just telling me about the messages he was getting from the hospitals but automated messages are not useful to the deaf-blind and there are new problems coming up as the new technology gets more sophisticated. Anyway I'm glad you came, health literacy is a very important thing to talk about, anyone else have any questions?

Ms. Dore: I just want to mention additional resources – the Hearing Loss Association which is like healthbridges and there is a downtown branch. They meet twice a month.

Mr. Progar: Oh, thank you!

Mr. Hockenbarry: Hello, my name is Larry Hockenbarry. My deaf friend, Donnata Webb, was in the hospital at Forbes Regional. They did not provide interpreters or video relay interpreters – I went to visit

her and all they were providing was an ipad in her room and VRS services as the only means of communication. I asked if she could use the video phone to make calls and they said there was no authorization for her to make phone calls, but she had not had an interpreter for almost 2 and a half weeks. Last Thursday she was transferred to a mental health institute as a patient and she did not know why. They refused to inform us what was going on due to their MH policy, they do not give out information from that floor. So I was trying to explain to her boyfriend what was going on and he said he hadn't heard from her the whole time she was in that unit – for an entire weekend. Then they had an administrative meeting and demanded that they have an actual interpreter. The VRS was not good enough and they said sure. At OVH, Gerald Penna told me that Allegheny Health Network is behind in times and have not had anyone train them in ADA standards. So I wanted to bring that to the task force as a concern from the community, thank you.

Mr. Progar: Yes, thank you. First off, I'm sorry to hear about your friend's situation and unfortunately that is a common story I've heard. We are working to help train hospitals and when it comes to setting the agenda on what is being trained and communicated we are definitely looking to hear about things like this and addressing primary concerns and moving them forward.

Ms. Seelman: Are there any other comments?

Ms. Dore: Unfortunately, I had a similar experience a year ago. I had to ask to be transferred to St. Claire's Hospital because they kept telling me that I couldn't have any captioning or interpreters during surgery.

Mr. Progar: Yes and it is against the law and we're working to bring them at least compliant with the law but looking to go beyond that as well.

Ms. Seelman: Sarah, has that come into your world at all?

Ms. Goldstein: The only thing I know about Community Care is that we pay for interpreters which I don't think other insurers do, but with us we do pay for interpreters if you pay a premium for insurance.

Ms. Seelman: Okay well thank you very much for coming by.

Mr. Progar: Thank you all.

Vox Pop:

Ms. Seelman: Is there anyone else from your office Richard who needs to give a report?

Mr. Meritzer: I don't think there is anyone else or anyone who has been on longer than a week who hasn't had to give a report.

Ms. Seelman: I think we can move on. Is there any movement on the nominee to the task force?

Mr. Meritzer: I have not heard back yet from the mayor's office. I have sent a letter and am awaiting response, I will follow up as well.

Ms. Seelman: Great. Sally do you have any words of wisdom you want to throw out there?

Ms. Snyder: Go Royals at this point. The key to what we're going to be coming on to is the 25th anniversary of the ADA which is significant. There is a group that is meeting is November 10th at 3:00pm out at CLASS to really blow the doors off of that. The other piece is to get ready for open enrollment which starts November 15th and our crew will be all over that. I always make the push for Healthy Together which is out of the mayor's office which is around the 2000 children in the city who do not have healthcare insurance and anything you can do to help get the word out on that would be wonderful. Enrollment is Nov 15- February 15 for the Affordable Care Act. So those are my words of wisdom. Go Steelers.

Ms. Abreola: The REEL Abilities on October 22nd has 4 great films, I encourage those in the community and outside of it to attend.

Ms. Seelman: That's going to be in Bakery Square?

Ms. Abreola: One of them, and then on the 26th it'll be in Bakery Square and the other will be at Rodef Shalom?

Ms. Snyder: The 22nd will be really cool, the 2 films I think the committee did a great job on at Rodef Shalom is Cinemability which is about the movie industries portrayal of people with disabilities which is a fascinating angle and the other on on the 26th at 7 is Come As You Are, which looks at sexuality from that perspective which is a key aspect that I think often gets forgotten so please check out the REEL Abilities website and Shirley was spot on that we need broad community attendance at this festival.

Ms. Seelman: That was wonderful thank you. Are there any other questions?

Mr. Hockenbarry: I did look up on the computer on www.ahn.org . I looked for language translations and it said that if a person is Hispanic or another language if they need and interpreter they would need to accept a volunteer to do spoken interpreting but said nothing about Sign Language and that doesn't make any sense to me so I'm just throwing that out to you.

Ms. Seelman: Okay, is there anything else that needs to be addressed? ... Task force?

Ms. Warman: Yes. Don't forget to vote.

Mr. Nochese: One more thing and I apologize. We do great work in the City but I'm wondering if we need to do more work in the County – the mall, the airport. About 2 weeks ago at Kennywood's fright night I asked for an interpreter and was told I couldn't have one. It was a constant struggle for me. I finally got one and got there but everywhere we went it was inaccessible for wheelchairs. Things like steps and numerous barriers and I was wondering if that was something we could address in the future. Things like the lights too where the deaf or blind would have trouble maneuvering or communicating, I was wondering if in the future we could address issues like that?

Ms. Seelman: Judy Barisella is the ADA coordinator for the county and I think would be appropriate to bring such things to and we should all remember experiences like that. Is there anything else? I move to adjourn, a second?

Ms. Warman: Yes.

Adjournment

Next Meeting: November 17th, 2014