

**CITY OF PITTSBURGH/ALLEGHENY COUNTY  
TASK FORCE ON DISABILITIES  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2007  
MINUTES**

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

**Members Present:** Jeff Parker, Chairperson, Katherine D. Seelman, Co-chair, Aurelia Carter, Sarah Goldstein, Paul O'Hanlon, John Tague

**Members Absent:** Linda Dickerson, Janet Evans, Liz Healey, Milton Henderson, Rich McGann

**Others Present:** Colleen Cestro, Holly Dick, Mary Figlar, Dianne Gallagher, Doug Glovier, Chaz Keller, Chuck Keenan, Kris Lamont, Susan Lichtenfels, Kevin Maxwell, Richard Meritzer, Pat Moorhead, Charles Morrison, Teresa Nellans, James C. Noschese, Terry Reynolds, Susan Schaeffer, David Stragar, Evelyn Stypula, Milt Wolfson

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Parker at 1:03 PM.

**Introductions:**

Everyone introduced themselves.

**Approval of the August 2007 Minutes:**

Ms. Cater asked that her statement in the second paragraph on page 5 be corrected to reflect that she urged the Mayor to consider employing people with disabilities. Mr. Tague moved TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS AMENDED. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Financial Report:**

Mr. Parker passed out copies of the report. The only charges are for the interpreters and the fiscal / operations support. There is no change for captioning because we were credited for an overpayment. Mr. Tague moved TO ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL REPORT. The motion was seconded by Ms. Goldstein. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Small Differences Video – Chaz Kellum**

Mr. Parker introduced Chaz Kellum. He was in the original “Small Steps” video and now he is reinvigorating the second video. Mr. Kellum reported that the first video was about 10 years ago. I showed interaction between young people who had disabilities and those who did not in day to day living. Parents were interviewed as well. They are now planning a follow up video showing how the young people have become adults. It deals with transition, development (both personally and professionally) and inclusion. It looks at both their lives now and the challenges they face. They are planning a kick off in September for both those who appeared in the first video and members of the City / County Task Force on Disabilities. The new video will be dedicated to Ruth Brenyo and Jane, both of whom have passed away.

Mr. Kellum went on to report they are planning a contest for videos on disability issues of 30 seconds to 2 minutes. The winning will have some or all of their video included in the new production. This will provide addition publicity for the project. Like the first video instead of a script they will have guidelines. They are also looking for 10 young people to represent the next generation of small differences. They will tape at various locations around the City. Mr. Kellum works for the Pirates so they will go to PNC Park. There is a trailer online on Youtube under Small Differences 2 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzZ5GFmYY4Y>) and Chris Millow will produce a webpage. The actors and the director will go on speaking engagements. Ohio State University is already interested.

Mr. Parker said her wants the Task Force involved. The original video was young people interviewing young people. He would like to see proposing ways to update that concept. They are opening it up to personal videos. Mr. Kellum is the idea man. The idea is transformation. When you have services in school and they end, what do you do? The Task Force needs to develop a process for suggestions. Mr. O’Hanlon added when we conceptualized the first video we had a clear sense of who our audience was. Do we have a sense of who our audience is for this video? Would any Middle School be the appropriate audience? Mr. Kellum responded that the audience for the second video would be the same as for the first. Magic just happened the first time. There was no script. Many current professionals like the video. And increasingly there is more awareness by people who live in communities, parents with babies and medical professionals about these issues.

Dr. Seelman said she found that one out of three of students have a disability. She invited Mr. Kellum to her class. She hoped that the Public School system and the employment infrastructure (Career Links, Bender Consulting Services, Inc., etc.) would endorse this project. The Public Schools currently use “Small Differences”. Mr. Kellum responded that they are working with Bender Consulting Services, Inc. They will work with Career Links. He would love to talk to her class. Dr. Seelman added Larry Powell of Carnegie Mellon University Disability Service would be an excellent resource. Ms. Carter said she was glad the project was getting off the ground. Mr. Kellum talked about connecting with Universities but not with schools. Not just public schools, but all schools. They are not treated as children; they are treated as children with disabilities. At High School the relationship changes. Mr. Kellum pointed out he plans to work with Dr. Cupples, Executive Director of Support Services for the Pittsburgh Public Schools. He was there for the first video. Like the first video, they have a question sheet.

Mr. O’Hanlon said Judy Barricella worked on the first video. Mr. Parker said Lucy Spruill wrote a study guide. He suggested that part of the plan should be to bring back students who had no disabilities. High School is where the rubber hits the road. Mr. O’Hanlon pointed out that the magic was in the process of making the film. He was part of various cuts of the film. The first cut was very different from the final version. The Task Force had the opportunity to have input during the process. Tony Buba is one of the most unassuming people, but he is a film genius. He will want to draw on our experiences. It is a very interactive process. Teresa Nellans asked if the film was captioned. Are there any deaf or hard of hearing participants? Mr. Parker said the original video was captioned and this one should be as well. Mr. Kellum pointed out that Amber and her sister Crystal were in the first video. Amber has a hearing disability. They are both going to be in the second video. Dr Seelman asked if people can be posted on the progress. Mr. Kellum said he would get all that information to Jeff. He will also be attending future Task Force meetings.

**Task Force Committee Work – Follow up on the Mayor’s Visit:**

Mr. Parker reported the Mayor is planning to have an ADA Coordinator in the 2008 budget. When the County hired the Director of Disability Connections, was there any Task Force involvement? Mr. O’Hanlon and Mr. Tague both said “No”. Mr. Tague added that County Executive Roddy did come to a meeting to discuss this. Mr. O’Hanlon said once the job announcement was posted we helped get the word out. Ms. Carter said we should request to be involved. She wants to make sure the person can do the job. Mr. Parker suggested the Task Force offer to help with the selection process. Mr. O’Hanlon added the Task Force should be involved to the greatest possible extent. Ms. Goldstein and Dr. Seelman agreed.

**Task Force Committee Work – Board Appointments:**

Mr. Parker reported the Mayor’s Office sent the Task Force the list of vacancies on City Boards and Commissions. Mr. Tague is interested in the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. Mr. McGann is interested in the Sports and Exhibition Authority. We could write the Mayor in support of appointing these members. They will pursue these requests as well. Mr. Tague added that Ms. Evans had previously applied to serve on the Housing Authority Board.

**Task Force Committee Work – Snow Removal:**

Mr. Parker reported we had talked about Public Service Announcements and a City wide campaign. He asked Task Force members to propose some steps at the next meeting.

**Task Force Committee Work – OVR Building:**

Mr. Parked reported that Gabe Mazefsky from the Mayor's Office email him asking the two of them meet with the Office of Vocation Rehabilitation (OVR) and Public Works Director Guy Costa at the building. The representative from OVR was unable to find them but the rest of them met. The building in question currently has no back wall. When you are facing the building on Penn Avenue there is an alley to the right which continues to the back of the building in an L shape, which is then blocked by a chain link fence. The restaurants that abut the alley have dumpsters in it. It was determined that the dumpsters must be at the side of the building they serve and should be locked shut. Locking the dumpsters will keep homeless people from getting food from them, which should reduce the number of homeless people in the alley. The pathway is uneven with depressions where water can accumulate. Mr. Costa said they will resurface the alley this spring. There is six weeks left in this paving season. But construct is still going on and they want to wait until it is completed. They will also build up the drains in the alley to surface level. He asked if OVR would put lighting on the building during renovations. There needs to be follow up with OVR.

Mr. Tague pointed out that the building will be opening in April. He will pursue the question of lighting with OVR.

**Task Force Committee Work – Hospital Survey Follow-up & Annual Meeting:**

Mr. Parker reported that we would discuss follow-up to the hospital survey at the annual meeting. Consumer Health Coalition wants to work on this issue. He asked Susan Schaeffer of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) if she would help. She agreed.

**Task Force Committee Work – Visitability:**

Mr. Meritzer reported that everyone agreed to send the amendments to City Council. He is currently working on a final draft to send up. He would be setting up meetings of both the Technical Committee and the Marketing Committee once the legislation is sent in for submission.

**Task Force Committee Work – Voting Accessibility:**

Mr. O'Hanlon reported the next section of this project is parking. What can be done to provide handicapped parking at polling places? Mr. Meritzer said he was under the impression that the election board included paper reserved parking signs with the Handicapped symbol in the election supplies. He said he would check with the election board. Mr. O'Hanlon pointed out that the district election boards are to go through training periodically. He can ask if this could be included in the training.

Holly Dick suggested the League of Women Voters could help as well. Contact Suzanne Broughton. Mr. O'Hanlon said he is working with her on the Citizens Advisory Board on voting and sees her every month.

**Task Force Committee Work – Nominating Committee:**

Mr. Tague thanked the committee. We received six resumes and interviewed five of the applicants. The three applicants not selected were invited to serve on committees. The committee made its recommendations and sent out an email. Seven of the Task Force members voted to accept the recommendations. They are James “Chris” Noschese for the County and Joseph Wassermann for the County. Mr. Noschese lives in Forest Hill. Mr. Parker will send a letter to the Mayor and the County Executive making the recommendations.

**Task Force Committee Work – Port Authority:**

Mr. Parker reported that Mr. Tague had reminded him the Task Force took a position in full support of Port Authority funding. The State Legislature passed a dedicated source of funding and local government is required to provide a match. County Council will be voting on the tax package for the local share.

Mr. Tague added there was some opposition on County Council to the pour tax and the tax on rental cars. There are concerns regarding the union contract. The voices of the Task Force would be very helpful in supporting the tax package. Mr. O’Hanlon pointed out that County Council has had a steady stream of drinking establishments opposing the pour tax. The legislature approved the funding but they require a 10% match to receive any of this money. It is critical that this tax package be approved. Mr. Parker asked if there was agreement that they attend the hearings to support this tax package. Mr. O’Hanlon said there is no choice. This is our only option. And there is some connection between the pour tax and public transportation. People who are drinking should be taking the bus.

**Staff Report:**

Mr. Meritzer reported that the ADA Compliance Internship was not filled this term. He reminded everyone in attendance that if they know of any college students who want an interesting experience working on a worthwhile project, they should contact him.

**Information Sharing / Vox Pop:**

Mr. O’Hanlon announced October 4<sup>th</sup> Three Rivers Center for Independent Living (TRICL) will have 30 voting machines to try out between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Mr. Noschese asked if deaf people can test out the machines at this event. Mr. O’Hanlon responded that anyone can try out the machines on October 4<sup>th</sup>. There may be a similar event by the Citizens Advisory Panel (see below). Dianne Gallagher suggested to Mr. Noschese that he put this on Pittsburgh Deaf Events. She will check to see that they have interpreters.

Mr. O'Hanlon further announced that he has been appointed by Allegheny County Council to the Allegheny County Citizens Election Systems Advisory Panel. Their preliminary report was submitted in August. The final report is expected in December. Their unanimous decision was to explore new voting machines. The current voting machines have no paper record and they are not accessible to people who have significant manual dexterity issues. There will be a public hearing in the fall. There are limitations to touch screen voting when people can not touch the screen. The panel was created by an ordinance sponsored by Council Member William Robinson and County Council set up the selection process. Eight of the nine seats are filled. The Panel requires two attorneys. Mr. O'Hanlon is one, the other seat is vacant. There is a mixture of political parties. They will have a public meeting as well as a meeting with poll workers. The TRICL event is separate from the Advisory Panel process. County Council will meet with the Advisory Panel next week.

Dr. Seelman announced the Thornburg Lecture at Pitt will be Thursday. Bruce Coker will speak on student testing.

Evelyn Stypula suggested that we invite other members of the community to put their name forward to serve on boards and authorities. Mr. Meritzer said he would send the list out to the broader community. Ms. Stypula requested they reply to Mr. Meritzer.

David Stragar announced Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission and the Access to Work Task Force are developing a Coordinated Transportation Plan which is required to get Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom funds. They held a series of roundtable discussions in August. The next set of roundtable discussions will be the week of October 7<sup>th</sup>. He asked people to see him afterwards for details. Mr. Parker asked if they were going to discuss the ideas brought up at the first set of meetings. Mr. Stragar said they were going to look at gaps and develop strategies to fill them. A draft plan is required by November. Mr. Parker asked if there was a report from the first meeting. Mr. Stragar responded one will be available.

Mr. Noschese announced the things were going well on the national and state level. On the local level T.V. political advertisements are not being captioned. Can we encourage them to caption? Dr. Seelman asked how local are we talking about? Mr. Noschese responded it was about attitudes in the deaf community. They say these candidates are not captioning their ads and they are not going to vote. Dr. Seelman said we need to be specific and non-partisan. The money to do this needs to come from the campaign funds. Mr. O'Hanlon added there are opportunities to speak with the political parties and individual candidates about this. Last Friday was the kickoff for Disability Voting Coalition. Thursday September 20<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. at United Cerebral Palsy is the follow up meeting. The Coalition has identified that a whole range of campaign information is increasingly inaccessible. Ms. Gallagher suggested they email Teresa Nellans about this issue. Dr. Seelman said this would be a plus for both the deaf and the hard of hearing communities. Mr. Noschese added he can email Teresa and we can both attend the meeting. Dr. Seelman said even though he is not a Task Force member, Joseph Wasserman should know about this. Mr. O'Hanlon said he was involved. Mr. Parker asked if there was a need for additional Task Force representation. The answer was no.

Mr. Noschese went on to say as someone who loves the Steelers; the Steelers don't have play by play closed captioning. Deaf individuals have a whole row of seats at the game. Baltimore has 100% closed captioning. Mr. Parker said these are two areas we have not thought about. He asked if Mr. Noschese would be a candidate to the Sports and Exhibition Authority. Mr. McGann suggested him. Mr. Noschese said that would be good.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

**THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING:**

DATE: Annual Meeting – To be determined  
TIME: Annual Meeting – To be determined  
LOCATION: Annual Meeting – To be determined