

CITY OF PITTSBURGH
ADA Strategic Planning Team
December 17, 2008
MINUTES

Location: Director's Conference Room
Department of City Planning, 4th Floor, 200 Ross Street
Pittsburgh, PA

Members Present: Lauren Beck, Roy E. Cox, Ron Deutsch, Dawn Jakomas, Ryszard Janik, Sherilyn Mannion, Regina McDonald, Richard Meritzer, Eric Miazga, Kelly Morgano representing Barbara Curry, Charles Morrison, Lance Petro, Sandra Steward

Members Absent: Darnell Griffin-Benton, Anthony Boule, Jason Zollett, representative from Emergency Operations Center, representative from Magistrate Court, and representative from Sports and Exhibition Authorities

Others Present: Noor Ismail, Ying Lee

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Meritzer at 1:00 PM.

PRESENTATION on ADA STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM and the ADA Coordinator

Please see the attached PowerPoint file for the complete presentation. During the PowerPoint Mr. Meritzer announced that he was getting a volunteer who is blind to help him and the volunteer is willing to run American Sign Language classes. He asked each representative to get him names of anyone in their Department of Authority who wants to take this class by the end of the month.

ISSUES and PROBLEMS

1. EMS Trips to Hospitals
Mr. Meritzer, the City's ADA Coordinator, explained that the current EMS system works effectively. However, it is difficult to transport a person or a caregiver with electric wheelchairs or scooters to hospitals. Dr. Roy from EMS agreed and explained that with the current vehicle they are using, sometimes they need to leave the wheelchair behind because it would not fit into the vehicle.
2. Transporting Wheelchair-Bound Prisoners
Ms. McDonald from the Police Department asked if the committee would expand the discussion to transporting prisoner with wheelchair. She also mentioned the issue of transporting people running out power of their motor wheelchairs. Mr. Richard replied that the point is to charge dead batteries than transporting the citizen along with the battery-dead wheelchair. Mr. Meritzer also reminded that the Public Safety Department had used EMTs before to charge the batteries. Mr. Morrison from Human Relations Commission ~~referred that~~ asked if it was EMTs from EMS but Dr. Roy replied that EMS has never used EMTs for such purpose at all.

3. Accessibility of City buildings
Ms. Jakomas from Equal Opportunity Review Commission expressed her concern about the accessibility of the city buildings. ~~Her supervisor~~ one of the Assistant City Solicitors has no arms and legs and because no one was able to carry him down, he was forced to climb down the stairs on his chin during a fire evacuation. Mr. Miazga agreed and stated that it is impossible for him to climb the stairs as well and the city need to do something to fix this inaccessible issue. Mr. Morrison suggested that each department should identify people with special needs and notify the EMS so that all can be taken care of during emergencies. Mr. Petro from the Department of Personnel replied that at least 2 fire marshals are located in each city buildings on each floor and there is a designated area for people with mobility issues to go to during emergencies. Mr. Meritzer requested for the information on the fire marshal and locations.
Mr. Miazga also mentioned that the Civil Building is inaccessible. He had great difficulty getting into the building today. Mr. Meritzer replied that according to the members of Task Force on Disabilities and his volunteer with mobility issues, the Civil Building is really accessible and no one has filed any complaints. However, he will look into the problem.
4. Audible Signals and Ramps
Mr. Janik from Public Works has received complaints about the city not installing audible traffic signals or ramps. He would like to know where these improvements are most needed. Mr. Meritzer replied that because the Federal government has not yet decided which the standard audible traffic signal would be and the city is waiting for the final decision and would then install the standard system instead of setting up the device and then take it down. He said that they were identifying locations for the audible traffic signals and since the issue with the ramps is the sight impaired, he would get Mr. Janik the information he received from the Greater Pittsburgh Association for the Blind and Access.
5. Strategic Planning Team as the ADA Information Hub
Mr. Meritzer expected that the ADA Strategic Team be the platform for sharing concerned issues and solutions. Every member of the Strategic Team can bring problems his or her department is dealing with to the table.

TASKS BEFORE NEXT MEETING

1. Each department is welcomed to send two staff member for the free ASL workshops starting January 2009. Please RSVP with Richard Meritzer by December 31 2008.
2. Everyone will list and prioritize accessibility issues that they would want to tackle if budgets and funds are not of issue.
3. Dr. Roy and Ms. McDonald will discuss and email Mr. Meritzer the requirements for vehicles transporting citizens or prisoners that use wheel chair. The requirements will then be distributed to the committee and everyone will examine the vehicle they currently have within each department and see if that can be utilized for this purpose.
4. Mr. Petro will email Richard Meritzer information on location of fire marshals in city buildings and Mr. Meritzer will distribute the information to the committee.
5. Mr. Meritzer will forward contact information of Greater Pittsburgh Association for the Blind and Access to Mr. Janik.
6. Everyone should feel free to contact Mr. Meritzer regarding any ADA issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 P.M.