

City of Pittsburgh / Allegheny County

Task Force on Disabilities

Monday, May 16, 2016

Meeting Minutes

**Task Force Members in Attendance**

Paul O'Hanlon, Sarah Goldstein, Milton Henderson, Gabriel McMoreland, Richard McGann, James C. Nochese, Jeff Parker, John Tague, Joe Wassermann

**Task Force Members Absent**

Aurelia Carter, Janet Evans, Karen Warman,

**Also in Attendance**

Joy Dore, Terri Bazalewski Austin, Jessica Burkman, Alisha Grishman, Sarah Kintzer, Raymond Moore, Chelsea Rader, Robin Smith, Pat Clark, Michael Hansom, Ryan Schaitkin, Travonne Henderson, Angela Jefferson, Richard Meritzer, Pat Clark, Ray Weathorn, Jessie Young, Arthena Ryman, Emily Galfond, Jessica Berkman, Shirley Abriolla, Janelle Tipton

**Review and Approval of Treasurer's Report and Minutes**

The minutes were approved.

Mr. Tague said that there wasn't a treasurer's report sent out this month based on an email that Mr. O'Hanlon requested. The balance from overall this year was estimated around \$4,000. It was paid out of the current funds and which will be labeled on what amount of money will be remaining left. Mr. O'Hanlon mentioned that there is some leftover money but plans on budgeting the money to pay for the expenses until July. Mr. Tague said that it would not be a problem for the budget because there wasn't a budget last year but they were able to get their allocation.

**Possible Lecture Idea**

Mr. O'Hanlon mentioned an idea of getting a lecture together in the city. Mr. O'Hanlon also said that the task force had a relationship with an architect named Ed Steinfield who headed the federally funded architecture center which was located in Buffalo, New York. Mr. O'Hanlon reached out to him to see if Mr. Steinfield had an interest in setting up this lecture on what the state of the art is and terms to see if there is a way to building new neighborhoods in the city of Pittsburgh. He also said he had meetings with City Planning to get this idea started. He wants this done as soon as possible before it gets too late.

Mr. McMoreland thought the lecture should be about public policy outcome or something the city council would approve. He wants it to be only for a post agenda not only just a lecture. Mr. Tague thought of ideas to have this co-sponsored for city planning and variety of entities. Joe Wassermann said that the task force should work with SWPPA to coordinate for this upcoming

lecture. Mr. O'Hanlon said that he wants this not only just for people with wheelchairs, the lecture to be aimed for everyone including people with aging, with I/DD, people with the autism spectrum disorder and other types of disabilities. Mr. McGann said that they need to be prepared for the scheduling, the location because time is going fast and they need to see how much money they have left for this event. Mr. O'Hanlon said that need to encumber the money and not spend all at once. Mr. Nochese approves with this idea but wants to make sure that they have money would be a purpose of the event. Mr. Nochese said that it would be a good idea to have the money covered and if they didn't then it would be gone.

### **Report on Ramp Crawls**

Mr. Meritzer talks about the ramp crawl that was in May 5, 2016. He discusses on how the event was a success despite the weather was bad that day. The event took place in Oakland. He discussed on how they were able to split into groups to go into different restaurants. Ms. Dore and Ms. Grishman participated in the ramp crawl event. Mr. Meritzer also said that he spoke to the Downtown Partnership to set up another ramp crawl event which will be located in the Market Square of Downtown Pittsburgh. Mr. Mertizer wants to aim the ramp crawl to be on the date of the anniversary of the American Disabilities Act (ADA). He also said that most restaurants in downtown are wheelchair accessible which will make it easier for those who need ramps to get into restaurants.

Ms. Dore explains on feedback from the deaf services on getting help. She talks about her major hearing loss and said that she doesn't have a sign language interpreter to help her. Ms. Dore said she spoke multiple times to get help but was not able to get the help she needed. Ms. Dore also that they told her to call on the phone but she describes on how hard it is to hear on the phone. After hearing that Mr. Mertizer said he is going to look at that issue and speak to the center of deaf services about this. Mr. McGann discuss on how the ADA is a complex law. He also stated to Ms. Dore that she needs to apply to get an interpreter. Mr. O'Hanlon also talks to Ms. Dore on how he apologizes for her being excluded on getting help and will do the best he can to get her the help she needs.

Mr. Nochese said that the group is getting larger and the city is getting overwhelmed with these requests for interpreters for people with hearing loss. He mentioned that they need to have focus on the business and give them encouragement to speak to the city on how to make it easier for them to interpreters.

Mr. McGann said that the ADA is a complex law and a lot of people miss it. Mr. McGann also say that if it was a last minute thing and the staffers show up and would be required to apply He also said that people would have to apply and schedule for an interpreter. Some businesses are clueless about these interpreters and they don't want to be responsible for it. It is important for the interpreters to follow the ADA law.

Mr. O'Hanlon thanked Ms. Dore for bringing up the issue on getting interpreter. He also said that the task force will get better on focusing on this type of problem.

Mr. O'Hanlon said it wasn't a city event but more of a community event and was the Oakland business district. He also said that it was representative to overgrowing community events. Mr. O'Hanlon said that it is a growing and process event.

Ms. Grishman stated that having interpreters is expensive and even mentioned that she is paying out of pocket to get them for her events. Ms. Grishman also gives them a reminder and announcement when to get an interpreter. It also takes a week in advance before the event to know if the interpreter is needed.

Ms. Dore said that she gave them a letter in advance and was offered the opportunity to help raise money to afford for an interpreter.

Mr. McMoreland said that he was excited about another neighborhood organization is going to set up an event like the ramp crawl. He also said that that the ramp crawl was a success and he was excited that a neighborhood association is going to set one up. He mentioned an issue at garage door saloon and another bar that is located on the South Side that used inappropriate language about a minority in the past. Mr. O'Hanlon and Mr. Meritzer said that the bar was under new ownership and already taken care of.

Mr. McGann gave a reminder that the VP related to a third person that was being taken advantage of utilizing third party interpreters and relaying interpreters. He also stated that they can't be using third party interpreters and need to be on site.

### **Report on Meeting with the Police Department**

Mr. Meritzer gives a follow up on a meeting with the police department. There has been discussion on having additional meetings with the police department. He said there were some concerns being moved forward. Mr. Meritzer said that his policy intern Michael Hansom put on a one page information sheet that has a list of accommodation that is related with the law enforcement field. Also, Ms. Hansom is working on a one paged paper on how to help identify disabilities for the police so they can know how to deal with those with disabilities. Mr. Meritzer said that he is negotiating something with the center of hearing and deaf services on getting interpreters for police officers in emergency situations. The officers will have to call the center of good services first and will advise Mr. Meritzer know that the interpreter has been set and the ADA will pay the bill. He also said that the idea of this has been set up.

Mr. McMoreland said that there isn't a date set up yet but it will be a next meeting coming up. He also stated the representatives from the police department want to learn more and have resources. The police will be able to get a variety of resources which includes, the ADA compliance, best practicing and communication ideas on how to speak with people that have disabilities. Mr. McMoreland also said that the officers would like to know what type of training they would have to do and who receives it while they are dealing with people with disabilities. He also wants this meeting to have specific people or organizations that will make it more interesting.

Mr. Nochese said that the committee is great. He also said that his past experience from the last 25 years when the ADA was first created. He mentioned during that time there were different workshops and trainings for the police officers. The years changed because the officers would turn over and there wasn't no re-training for them. Mr. Nochese thinks they should have something that the training should be used every two years, annually or biannually so these officers will be able to have the proper training. He also said that those officers were retired or move out service they should try to retrain them.

Mr. Mertzler said that there was a training officer was at the meeting and was able to speak to her. He also noted that new recruited officers will be trained. He is thinking about getting a web based training together for the officers and it can be used at their police station or home. He said that the web based training can give them a certificate which will be printed out from their computer. This type of training that Mr. Mertzler is talking is currently in the works but there is a lot of negotiation with the police and department of personnel on getting it set up.

Mr. Wasserman mentioned to Mr. McMoreland that the police force in Colombia, South Carolina has instituted some new training and procedures on how to deal with deaf and hearing citizens. He also stated that Mr. McMoreland should look at that as a potential idea.

Sarah Kinzer is with the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations wanted to ask if she can have her group be invited to the table. Ms. Kinzer also said that it would be a good idea because her group wants to learn more about police treatments of people with disabilities.

Mr. McGann said that he involved with the domestic violence workshop. He stated that it would be very wonderful. He said that the police don't understand the issue on deaf and hearing. He also said there were police that missed the training on how to deal with people who are deaf. If the police missed a training then it would be hard for them to understand dealing with deaf people.

Ms. Dore discussed on her hearing loss. She talked about how the deaf was not included in other community boards and places that have domestic violence situations. She also said that there were places like local shelters and police stations that weren't accessible. Ms. Dore said that there were intercoms but it was hard for her to hear them. She also mentioned that there were no videos or numbers to get help with domestic violence. She pointed out the North Hills Community Outreach does work with the Center of Deaf and Hearing Services. Ms. Dore said that there were two locations that have accessible services but the information isn't with police, first responders or the EMS.

Mr. Nochese gave a workshop event last month with the fire fighter department in the Edgewood and Swissville area. He was able to speak with around 30 fire fighters that were at the workshop. He brought Mr. McGann with him at the workshop as an example and it confused the fire fighters because they didn't know what how to deal with people who have both vision and hearing loss. Mr. Nochese was trying to get the fire fighters to provide help for people with disabilities.

Mr. O'Hanlon made a comment on driver training with Port Authority. He said the most effective way is to be trained on video or web based. Mr. O'Hanlon mentioned that it would be better train them personally. Mr. O'Hanlon also stated that there would be dilemmas on getting them trained in person and would take too much time. The issue of personal training is that it would be too long to process.

Ms. Dore mentioned that that county has a database to register people with disabilities and special needs. She also said to ask if there is any communication programs that will help them.

**“Smart Technology” Proposal – Pat Clark**

Mr. O'Hanlon introduces Pat Clark to the meeting. Mr. Clark worked with Mr. O'Hanlon and Rachel on a program called Everybody Vote.

Mr. Clark explains that he is trying to get a proposal that will help apply for funding from the federal government for the city. He wants to actually help get involved with the disability community to get funds.

Mr. Clark said his business, Jackson Partners, which is a consulting business that is aimed to help make things better for the community. He also discusses on this proposal and how he worked to get funds for the following cities which includes Larimer choice neighborhood grant. He also worked on the North Side initiative for the fuel foundation and worked on the Hazelwood community census. He even spoke to someone who worked with CMU's traffic 21 organization with Mayor Peduto office.

He continued to discuss more on his plans which included on doing a proposal from February on the federal government for the smart city funding project which costs around \$40 million for the US Department of transportation funding, and an additional \$10 million from the Paul Allen's Balkin foundation which totaled up to \$50 million. He also said that it is for the future of technology around transportation.

He said that it is all used in the framework for the initiative P-4 which was the frame work of community planning and development planning in the Mayor's office. He also pointed out that it is their goal to hear from a lot of people in the community about their needs, aspirations and resources so it will be able to help them.

Mr. Clark also said that their main goal to hear from many people community about their needs, aspirations and resources. He also gave out his contact number so they can keep in touch with him.

Mr. McGann had a question about Hazelwood and made a suggestion to Mr. Clark saying that he should start to expand his businesses in other areas. Mr. Clark stated that he was going to expand his business in other non-geographic areas that have concentrations on immigrants that includes Carrick, Brookline and Northview Heights. He also mentioned that both Brookline and Northview Heights are the places that he wants to work on.

Mr. O'Hanlon said that the task force would be happy to work with Mr. Clark. Mr. McMoreland agrees with Mr. O'Hanlon and ask if they would have to vote on anything or do some kind of motion on it. Mr. Clark said that the federal government is more interest in a letter of commitment and is willing to commit up to 120 hours in this type of agreement. He also said that there is a deadline for the application this month and that they will make a decision in the middle of the summer. O'Hanlon said that him, Mr. McMoreland and Mr. Parker operate with the task force meeting and have a large email list.

He also said that there are other cities including Pittsburgh that are competing to get this funding. Mr. O'Hanlon ask when they should send the proposal by Friday and should give a warning to the Mayor's office to notice them that they have documents coming. Mr. Tague and Mr. McMoreland said that they will work together on it.

Mr. Clark closed his speech by thanking everyone in the city task force for having him speak at the meeting.

## **Report on Meeting with the Development Committee**

Mr. O'Hanlon calls the report on the meeting with the development committee. He said that there were three meetings which includes with the meeting with the Mayor which were two meetings and another meeting. Mr. O'Hanlon also said that the United Way requested to have a meeting with the Mayor which he attended on behalf of the city task force. Mr. O'Hanlon mentioned that Ms. Kinzer's request to have her group in the police meeting saying that it would be easy. Mr. O'Hanlon also said that it is easy to have repetitive meetings on the same subjects in different groups and it gives the task force group a different type of attention.

Mr. O'Hanlon started the discussion on the meeting with the Mayor and the united way's concern with construction. The problem with construction of new housing if it would be accessible for people with disabilities and affordable for them. He also pointed out on issues with sidewalks, street safety and other things that are related in the neighborhood. Mr. O'Hanlon said that they was not sure if the issue of planning or public works and he brought both of them up at the meetings.

He also mentioned to see if the Public Works Department was complying with the ADA and to see if they were a broad range of accessible sidewalk issues. Mr. O'Hanlon explained on sidewalks to see if it was safe for people to get through. He also mentioned that Garfield did a business by business survey to see if it was accessible for people. The problem is that the businesses didn't want it to be accessible.

He talked about the participations in the meeting which included, the United Way, The FISA Foundations, the 21 and Able and Planning Commission. He also brought up issues with the sandwich boards and sidewalk issues saying that the city doesn't provide permits because there isn't a policy for it. Mr. Meritzer said that the Director of Public Works didn't know that it was an issue but they're going to investigate and get back to them. He also said that his intern Ms. Galfond is going to set up a meeting with the law department about this issue.

Mr. O'Hanlon talks more on the issues on the sidewalks. He starts to describe the problems that the pedestrians had to deal with sidewalks being unobstructed which will be difficult for them to get through. He also said that they should manage sidewalk signing so people won't get hurt.

Mr. O'Hanlon said that he has a plan to have a meeting with developers to get this issue situated.

Mr. McGann believes that it is wonderful work and it is important to think about other places. He talked about sidewalks having landscapes that are growing in areas that people are walking at. Mr. McGann said that it is dangerous to have signs low and would recommend it to be higher so people won't get hurt from it. He also understands that there are places that have hills which is difficult for wheelchair users

Ms. Dore talked about the concerns of the sidewalks in downtown. She said there are issues to it because, they're not getting fixed and there is a lot of construction in that area. Because of this people are having a hard time walking through downtown.

### **Vox Pop**

Mr. McGann starts off the Vox Pop by talking about the rally about the deaf complaining about the issues of voting. He said that there wasn't no interpreters at any of the places and not sure what is going on. Mr. McGann also said that there wasn't no captioning on the president elective Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton's presentation speeches. He also said because they did provided no captioning and said he wasn't going to vote for either one of them.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm. The next meeting will be scheduled next month on Monday June 20, 2016 at 1:00 pm in the first floor Conference Room of 200 Ross Street.