

City of Pittsburgh / Allegheny County

Task Force on Disabilities

Monday, June 20, 2016

Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members in Attendance

Milton Henderson, Richard McGann, Jeff Parker, John Tague, Joe Wassermann, Karen Warman,

Task Force Members Absent

Gabriel McMoreland, Aurelia Carter, James C. Nochese, Paul O'Hanlon, Janet Evans, Sarah Goldstein,

Also In Attendance

Steve Everard, Jessica Young, Michael Hansom, Joy Dore, Georganne Lingenfelter, Linda Warman, Dawn Smidga, Ali Abdullah, Sheron Clark, Kathy Stefani, Emily Galfond, Ryan Schaitkin, Peter Roh, Yue Wang, Kathy Stefani, Angela Habdavny, Kristin Saunders, Akshali Gandhi, Richard Meritzer

Welcome and Introduction

The program started around 1:00 pm and began with the introduction of the Task Force members and individuals in the audience.

Review and Approval of Treasurer's Report and Minutes

Mr. Tague chaired the meeting because Mr. O'Hanlon was absent. He said that there were two action items on the agenda, review and approvals of the minutes. Mr. Tague said that they are not going to approve the minutes until the next meeting.

Report on TIRES

Ms. Dore starts off her report on TIRES which is a transportation agency that has quarterly meetings. She talked about a recent event with TIRES and how they had different types of agencies including the American Cancer Society, Family Services, Services from Ross Township, shuttles for senior programs and other places that were there. Ms. Dore mentioned

about the event that they talked about several services which some were related to transportation and some that were related to housekeeping. She also said that there was a new agency that the event talked about which was inspired by the Snow Angels program. She said that the program it is for people who are enrolled in the Snow Angels program which helps with different neighborhoods to help with work including yard cleaning, lawn mowing and other types of work. Ms. Dore also said that she is going to give all the information to Mr. Meritzer if people are interested. She mentioned another program which is a Highmark Program that is for people who have insurance with them and they also provide volunteer transportation for seniors. Ms. Dore said that they refer to other services for people with wheelchairs get accessibility. She also mentioned another agency which is the North Hill Community Outreach that has a pet program for people who are able to drive that are low income and need temporary help so they can apply for a car, get AAA memberships and other stuff. Ms. Dore mentioned another agency which was the American Cancer Society which has a transportation program that helps with patients get around to places.

Mr. McGann asked if the hours are strict and if it is limited on the programs. Ms. Dore answered saying that it depends on what type of program it is and it is based on the availability on the volunteers and upon the geographical area. Mr. McGann said that there are a lot of senior citizens who are deaf and would need to have transportation at night but they do something at night and they're isn't access during that time of night. Ms. Habdavny asked a question about what kind of income are eligible for these types of program such as Medicaid. Ms. Dore answered saying that it depends on what type of program it is and asked if she was interested but will forward the information to Mr. Meritzer.

Report on Complete Streets

Ms. Gandhi and Ms. Saunders started off their presentation on complete streets. Ms. Gandhi said the reason of the Complete Streets policy because they wanted to design streets for everyone and there are number of activities that happen in the streets. She mentioned that it will include the roadways, sidewalks and any space in between it. Ms. Gandhi said that the initiatives are to have streets accessible to be used for all modes of transportation and accessibility such as walking, riding bikes, taking transit and other types of mobility. She also said that it will help affect the diversity mode of traveling that people in the city use. Ms. Gandhi said that they had a meeting last December for the launch of the initiative and last spring Mayor Pedudo signed the executive order to kick off the process. She mentioned that their main goal of Complete Street is to connect the whole City of Pittsburgh and want to make a better city that is connected to all the neighborhoods by using other mobility and not being auto depended. Ms. Gandhi also said that, to integrate the land use of the city with the transportation and to have strong neighborhoods in the city. She even said those streets are important public space for the city. Ms. Gandhi read the vision for complete streets the City of Pittsburgh complete street's policy is to create a safe, accessible and livable mobility network for everyone including, pedestrians, bicyclist, motorist, transit riders and vehicles.

Ms. Dore says that she a concerned about people that were not in the meeting would be benefitting on them. She also talked about her main concern that people who have visually

impaired can't see the slides and asks Ms. Gandhi to send it to email to Mr. Meritzer so he can set it up. Mr. Meritzer said that he is going to send out the slides for everyone in an email. Ms. Gandhi mentioned that she did state holder outreach with different transportation groups, agencies and non-profits in the city including Pittsburgh Water and Sewage, Penn Dot, Department of Public Works, the Mayor's Office, the Allegheny County, many bike groups and advocacy groups and a disability group. She also stated their goal is to have a planning commission in July and have the city council to adopt it in September.

Ms. Gandhi, also mentions the five principles that are in the policy which includes Experience, Environment, Economy, Access and Efficiency. Ms. Gandhi said complete street should provide a safe comfortable travels for all users so people can have a good experience in the public streets. She also noted that open space and public realms are important to this idea. She talks about the second principle is Environment, complete streets are preserve to protect the Pittsburgh environment; the less people use of vehicles the more they can meet the climate initiative's goals. Ms. Gandhi also said the more active transportation that people use; the more they are going to lead an healthy life. Ms. Gandhi talks about the third principle which is Economy, complete streets will bring a strong work force to it and it will give more mobility options to it. She also said that, if people use one mobile option then it would not promote a multi-mobile economic development. Ms. Gandhi said that the complete streets should be implemented with fiscal and financially responsible because they want to add costs to the different project that will be added to the budget. Ms. Gandhi talks about the fourth principle, Access, saying that the whole complete street is meant to be used for all ages, all modes and users. She also said that, Equity and inclusivity having projects in various parts of the city is important so it can advance equity. Ms. Gandhi talks about the last principle which is Efficiency, they wanted to create a connected network for their project. She also stated the planning at the network level is important because it will help fill the gaps in the pedestrians and bicycling networks. Ms. Gandhi mentioned that, they are trying to corporate intelligent technology partnerships into the work that they do by doing upgrades on the traffic signals within the smart cities grants. She said that when it upgrades the signal it will have be to be at the latest ADA standards and other signals will have to be at that standard too. She also stated that this is applied for the city but trying to aim for other municipalities for it.

Mr. Henderson had a small complaint on the pictures from the slideshow saying there are some inclusions to it and said it could have been better. Ms. Saunders said that they are going to improve on it by making updates on the pictures. Mr. Henderson also said they should put people with wheelchairs and visually impaired people should be included on the list.

Ms. Warman gives a question about if the alleyways were going to be used for the project. Ms. Gandhi answer Ms. Warman's question saying that it will be used for the project but will consider the physical limitations of the alley way. Ms. Saunders stated that there are no streets that are excluded for the project and that it applies to all roads.

Mr. McGann said that there would be a problem with the water and sewer system and the gas line because if they repaving over that, the water and gas might break and cause damage for them. Mr. Meritzer said to use to the 311 line to call for these types of emergencies.

Mr. Parker asked if sidewalks were part of the complete streets and Ms. Gandhi answered saying that it is included with it. Mr. Parker said that it is part of the umbrella that it is an area of interest for them and plans on setting up a public hearing about it. He mentions that snow removal isn't included in it but said that the snow can eliminate the use of streets which causes problems for people.

Ms. Habdavny talked about this issue of snowstorms and draining and how the problem with intersections would fill up with water and over flood in the overcuts. Ms. Habdavny also said that the curb cuts and intersections would be over filled with water. She mentioned that this problems needs to be fixed because people who use wheelchairs and the visually impaired would be caught in the water. She pointed out another problem saying that they need to have provisions for those who are visually impaired so they can know where they at so they won't get lost. Ms. Saunders said that they are going to go through design guidelines that will help with the intersection problem. She also mentioned that she will pass it to Mr. Meritzer. Mr. Meritzer said that he is going to look at this issue. Mr. Wasserman thanked both Ms. Saunders and Ms. Gandhi for their presentation.

Update on the Police Committee

Mr. Meritzer starts off the current updates on police committee saying that the process is moving forward. Mr. Meritzer mentions that he was going to the police meetings with his intern Ms. Hansom to learn more about the police committee. He talks about the second meeting and dealt with the further relationship building. Mr. Meritzer talked about the police's plan on setting up a walk around to see what is going on with the neighborhood and training issues how to develop better training sessions which includes the police academy. He also discussed on communication aids which will help the police communicate with people who are hearing impaired. Mr. Meritzer talked about putting iPads for the Police cars with helpful apps and more communication books for them. Mr. Meritzer mentions that the police are looking at how other cities use different resource models, how UPMC does it and how it will work for them. He also mentioned that they have plans on getting people to work with the police on real time issues. Mr. Mertziger talks about how the missing person issues on the disability community and how the police is need to work on that issue. He mentioned that there were a number of actions items that were developed at the meeting. Mr. Mertziger said that there were people from different agencies that came to the meeting which includes FISA Foundation, Center of Hearing and Deaf Services, Mr. McMoreland, Ms. Hansom, the Autism Connection, NAMI and the Epilepsy Foundation and many more groups that included police officers and sergeants. Ms. Warman asked when will be the next meeting and Mr. Meritzer answered that it hasn't been set up yet and it is a long term process.

Mr. McGann thanked Mr. Meritzer for bringing up the communication books that will help with the deaf and blind. He also stated that it needs to be very clear and it should be used for everyone. Mr. McGann mentioned that they should have an interpreter as soon as possible is anything happens when the police will show up so things won't be difficult for them. Mr.

Meritzer said that the staff doesn't know how to communicate with people who are deaf when they come to their office and that they are trying to do basic training for the city staff on sign language for the upcoming budget. He also mentioned that they are trying to get one person on their shift that will know American Sign Language so it will be easier for them to communicate with them. Mr. Meritzer mentioned that he hope it will work very quickly.

Accessible Neighborhood Design Symposium

Mr. Parker starts off the Accessible Neighborhood Design Symposium by mentioned that, Mr. O'Hanlon contacted Mr. Tague and Mr. Parker to give the updates on activities for the symposium. Mr. Parker mentioned that Mr. O'Hanlon said that were new neighborhoods under construction that it would be nice if was planned earlier so it could be accessible and open as soon as possible. Mr. O'Hanlon also mentioned that he contacted Mr. Steinfeld who is an architecture professor from Buffalo who done work on keeping communities accessible rather than other communities being build accessible causing people to move. Mr. Parker mentioned that Mr. Steinfeld is pleased to come to do a presentation panel discussion in August. Mr. Parker also said that Mr. O'Hanlon contacted the director of technology and information services of the US access board Ms. Mase that will help with accessible design and guidelines. Ms. Mase said to Mr. O'Hanlon she is very interested to come for the presentation.

Ms. Galfond said that the city has a contextual design advisory panel and that they are interested in incorporating universal design and more accessible design for their meeting. Ms. Galfond also mentioned if anyone in the task force is interested in coming to the events.

Hoarding Task Force Initiative

Mr. Meritzer starts off by introducing his policy intern Mr. Schaitkin the update on the Hoarding Task Force Initiative. Mr. Schaitkin gives a summary of the leading requests and on the revaluation on what is going on with the hoarding task force. He mentioned that he went to a couple of meetings and discussed about how what are goals and initiatives that the task force wants to go through. Mr. Schaitkin talks about the suggestion of the community advisory board. The structure of the hoarding task force is social workers and the workers of Department of Human Services and therapists. He also stated the people who have the hoarding disorder don't have a real voice on talking about their concerns issues with the task force. Mr. Schaitkin mentioned that he planned on having it staffed by the ADA office and the Department of City Planning. He also said that it would open to the public and a once of month meeting that would allow people an open voice to talk about the issue of having the hoarding disorder and the concerns of the community.

Vox Pop

Ms. Habdavny starts off the Vox Pop on the issues of the events that happened in Pittsburgh. She mentioned that every time an event happens up here it causes issues for the transit authority, the city and everyone. She stated that the problem is that there is no way to get anywhere when it happens. Ms. Habdavny said that it needs to have coordination and plan so people will be able to get around when these events happens. She made a discussion about her personal situation that happened to her when there was an event saying that she had difficulties getting home. Mr. Meritzer said that Port Authority has a representative that deals with special events committee that deals with street closings. He also mentioned that he went to those meetings but it was time consuming but wasn't contributing too much. Mr. Meritzer also mentioned if that is an issue he will try to get back into the committee. He also said that the Port Authority is supposed to look at how the buses are affected from the events and how it will affect the riders before the street closings. Mr. Meritzer mentioned that the police has the authority and rights to tell buses to not go into certain places and that they don't have power to do it. Mr. Meritzer said that he and Ms. Hansom will check with the police to see what the policy is with situations of special events cause undo hardships of mobility of buses and cars and how they can inform people when it happens. Ms. Habdavny also continued to talk about the issues and problems with special events and how it causes problems for people who have mobility disabilities and people who are hearing impaired/deaf and blindness. Ms. Habdavny talks about the issues of special events in downtown. She mentioned that radio stations and the news don't put out what is happening in Pittsburgh.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:48 pm. The next meeting will be scheduled next month on Monday July 18, 2016 at 1:00 pm in the first floor Conference Room of 200 Ross Street.