

City of Pittsburgh/ Allegheny County

Task Force on Disabilities

Monday, February 22, 2016

Meeting Minutes

**Task Force Members in Attendance**

Janet Evans, Sara Goldstein, Paul O' Hanlon, Richard McGann, James C. Noschese, Jeff Parker, Katherine Seelman, John Tague, Karen Warman, Joe Wassermann

**Task Force Members Absent**

Aurelia Carter-Scott, Milton Henderson, Gabe McMoreland

**Also in Attendance**

Karen Brean, Sheron Clark, Tyler Curtin, Joy Dore, Andrew Favini, Alisa Grishman, Travonne Henderson, Karen Hoesch, Angela Jefferson, Richard Meritzer, Brett Morgan, Lee Mueller, Rob Oliver, Kathy Stefani

**Welcome and Introduction**

The meeting began at 1:00 P.M. with the introduction of Task Force members followed by other individuals that were in attendance.

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

Mr. Tague assures the Task Force that by the end of June, we will still have over \$3,000. Since the meeting with the Mayor and County Executive, there could be many additional expenses to come from more meetings. Treasurer's Report is seconded and approved.

A motion was made to approve the minutes, Ms. Evans seconds. Minutes for January 2016 and July 2015 pass. Noted that there were incorrect spellings of Task Force members' last names (They have been corrected, my apologies).

**2016 Port Authority Fare Policy Proposal**

Brett Morgan, the ADA policy intern, explains the recent Port Authority stakeholders' meeting where the proposed fare policy was being discussed. Features include elimination of the free fare zone downtown for buses, an increase in the fare to \$2.75 for cash, \$2.50 for Connect Cards, and elimination of transfers for cash. Port Authority seems very open to suggestions from the community and accessibility being one of their major objectives, creates an excellent opportunity to address some needs and concerns. There are additional topics for debate and comment such as pay-on-enter and fare evasion strategies.

Public comment period from February 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. The only public hearing left is March 8<sup>th</sup> in the Connolly Ballroom in Alumni Hall at the University of Pittsburgh. You can register to speak at the meeting by calling 412-566-5187 or 412-231-7007 for TTY.

## **Allegheny County 2016 Annual Plan**

Karen Brean and Lee Mueller introduce the Allegheny County 2016 Annual Plan to the Task Force. They ask the Task Force if there are any issues that have come up in the past year that they may want included in the new updated plan. Mr. Mueller announces that Allegheny County is preparing its fiscal year 2016 plan covering July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 – June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017. There will be a public hearing community development needs on March 15<sup>th</sup> and a public hearing on the draft annual action plan on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Both meetings are at 10 A.M. at One Chatham Center on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor.

Mr. O’Hanlon starts the discussion off by explaining how state and federal funding for specialized housing has dried up over the years. How can we get people with needs into generic housing that can accommodate them and not institutionalize them? Landlords and tenants have next to no money to make accessibility improvements to housing. Less than 1% of the nation’s housing stock meets any of the five basic accessibility features. Let’s also put money towards better housing and not make the same mistake over and over again. Dr. Seelman points out that for graduate students with disabilities, it is difficult as well.

Mr. Noschese introduces another problem in that people in the disability community cannot get well-paying jobs that would allow them to afford accessible housing. This is the problem that needs identified first. Ms. Grishman adds that the only affordable housing is located outside the city and not on bus routes, making it that much more inconvenient for those with disabilities.

Mr. Mueller addresses Ms. Evans’ concern regarding two bedroom housing with a room for the caretaker and explains that this is not the first time they have heard it. He states the public comment period for the draft action plan will be April 6<sup>th</sup> through May 6<sup>th</sup>.

## **Alliance for Transportation Working in Communities Survey**

Kathy Stefani, representing the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), comes to talk about the transportation survey. Her job is to facilitate discussions for transportation accessibility, mainly for people with disabilities, elderly, and low income individuals and families. The new project is to find barriers to transportation and create a coordinated transportation plan. The five major barriers to transportation are:

- Public funding
- Availability and accessibility
- Geographic coverage
- Program policies and regulations
- Education and information

Ms. Stefani explains that program policies and regulations is the main barrier the SPC wanted to tackle first. There are large, growing urban areas yet not enough is happening to fit people with disabilities in there. This created the assessment sheet which was distributed. Please fill it out and send it back in to Ms. Stefani so the SPC can effectively judge which criteria are more important at this moment.

Mr. McGann suggests interviewing businesses about hiring practices and transportation opportunities available to employees who work the night shift. Dr. Seelman asks how the group is adjusting to new opportunism in transportation, such as Uber. With the increase in technology, Ms. Stefani talks about an intelligent dispatching service that provides shared ride services that more efficient than they are now.

Ms. Dore asks about the possibility of recruiting deaf and hard of hearing drivers for peer support of other people in the disability community. Mr. Noschese takes this point further saying that all drivers need to be better educated; going up to the front door to pick-up passengers because some people may be color-blind and cannot determine the color of the car. Ms. Stefani informs the Task Force that the deadline for the surveys will be the end of March. Rate the top eight “strongly agrees” in order of which you’d prefer to have to least preferred. We can figure out when the surveys will be turned in and see about Ms. Stefani coming back to report the results.

### **Inclusive Leadership in Action**

Mr. Tague introduces the Leadership in Action program which matches people with disabilities with community and government boards. The program was developed by Temple University using a grant. There is a survey to try and locate boards that should enhance inclusion and diversity. The goal is to do a more one-on-one focus on people to find them boards.

### **Western Pennsylvania Disability History and Action Consortium**

Mr. Tague then discusses the Western PA Disability History and Action Consortium. It is an outgrowth of the Rights to Action Conference from November 2014. His role is to organize the community and develop projects and an action plan. One of the central questions to the program is how can we ensure that we do not repeat the same mistakes we’ve made in the past regarding institutionalization?

### **Vox Pop**

Ms. Grisham wanted to remind the Task Force about a meet-and-greet for Access Mob Pittsburgh which is devoted to creating social change through positive means. The meet and greet will be on April 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Panera Bread on the Boulevard of the Allies from 11 A.M. to 2 P.M. There are flyers in the back that will be brought to the next meeting.

There are brochures on the back table for the Community Care Annual Spring Conference. It will feature guest speakers from the University of Pittsburgh on managing pain. It will be at the Omni William Penn Hotel on Tuesday, April 26th from 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Mr. Meritzer will send out a link to conference.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 P.M. The next meeting will take place on March 21, 2016 at 1:00 P.M. in the first floor Conference Room of 200 Ross Street.