

CITY- COUNTY

Task Force on Disabilities

December 20, 2021

Task Force Members In Attendance

City

Leah Northrop, Member at Large
Paul O'Hanlon
Joe Wassermann

County

James "Chris" Noschese, Chair
Georgia Petropoulos, Cochair
John Tague, Treasurer
Cori Frazer
Sarah Goldstein

13th Member

Paul "Rich" McGann

Task Force Members Absent

City

Janet Evans
Mark Schmeler
Michelle Walker

County

Karen Warman

Staff Present

Hillary Roman, City of Pittsburgh ADA Coordinator
Caylin Snyder, Allegheny County ADA Coordinator
Danielle Nicol, Dept of City Planning Senior Secretary

Welcome & Introductions

Chris Noschese called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and welcomed all attendees. Task Force members introduced themselves.

Agenda

A. Minutes approval

- Paul O'Hanlon made a motion to approve the minutes from November's meeting. The motion to approve the minutes was seconded by Georgia and it carried unanimously.
- Rich McGann reported that he hasn't been receiving any attachments in his email, including meeting minutes and financial reports. Hillary Roman and John offered to help resolve this problem.

B. Treasurer's Report

- John Tague gave an overview of the CCTFD budget balance. So far the Task Force has spent \$4127 which leaves a balance of \$8773 for the rest of the fiscal year.
- The two major expenses thus far have been the Annual Richard Meritzer Award of \$1000 and the CLASS Community Heroes Award Dinner, costing \$800 plus interpreter fees.

C. Events and announcements

a. Community meeting with Mayor-Elect Gainey

- John discussed setting up two meetings with the new mayor: a smaller community gathering and a larger forum along with Oakland for All.
- Paul O'Hanlon sent a letter to the new administration and several other members of the community have done outreach as well.
- Rich requested that the group talk to Mayor-Elect Gainey about street accessibility, sidewalk dining, and sandwich boards.
- Chris suggested sending along a list of issues for awareness-raising and following up with specific meetings.
- Cori Frazer added that having a list might not be appropriate since they don't believe that the new administration had a disability platform and may not be familiar enough with the issues.
- Dates and times for said meetings are not yet set.

b. Update on Eradicate Hate Global Summit

- John and Leah Northrop had a call with Laura Ellsworth, a Cochair of the Eradicate Hate Global Summit about improving accessibility at the event.
- Leah would like to work with event organizers to broaden their topic to be more inclusive to disability issues. They are looking for folks who would be interested in sitting on a panel discussion about these important issues.
- Cori suggested data sources that include the Ruderman Family Foundation, and Disability Day of Mourning organizers.
- John proposed a working group to return to the conversation.
- Sarah Goldstein offered that many issues stem from the fact that people don't want mental health institutions and similar facilities in their neighborhoods.
- Paul clarified that hate towards the disability community can look different than among other groups in that people with disabilities are often ignored and othered.

D. Proposal to add previous Chair to Executive Committee

- John introduced a proposal to add the immediate previous chair to the Executive Committee.
- Leah and Rich agreed that this might bring a level of continuity and wisdom to the Committee.
- John and Hillary will revise the guidelines to reflect this change and have the CCTFD vote on it in January.
- Cori would prefer to have the language in place before voting on the proposal; John agreed to work with Cori on changing the guidelines.

E. Dept of Human Services presentation on disability working group

- Brenda Bulkowski from the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) under the Office of Developmental Supports introduced herself and her work. Her department primarily helps people with intellectual disabilities and autism register for and receive services.
- The Office of Developmental Supports helps people to transition from different stages of life with appropriate services. Such services include group homes, supported living, employment, family respite, and other day to day supports.
- There are five program offices at DHS including this office: Behavioral Health, Children, Youth, and Family Services, Area Office of Aging, and Drug and Alcohol.
- DHS is interested in exploring the experiences of folks with disabilities and how well their offices are meeting the needs of their clients.
- The office is looking to expand services to children and people with developmental disabilities.
- The group shared information about all the different services available and how they might better connect with one another.
- Paul emphasized problems of unfriendliness toward those without adequate housing in the city.
- John suggested that the group have a brainstorming session with the Office of Developmental Supports and Brenda was amenable to that.

F. CCTFD employment project, continuing discussion

- Michelle Walker will chair the Employment Committee.
- Caylin Snyder will send notes about the past meeting to the group.

G. Proposal for “Small Differences” update

- John reintroduced a proposal for a sequel to the original film. He asked whether the group is interested in reprising the film with a focus on disability employment for its original subjects.
- Production costs would be around \$3000 with a coordinating cost of about \$1500. Funding would come from the proceeds of the original film; it is currently being held by CLASS.
- Paul supports this effort from the Task Force.

H. Announcement from the Director of City Planning, Andrew Dash

- Director Dash expressed his gratitude to the CCTFD and Hillary for their work in disability inclusion, including the Disability Service Facilitator Program.
- He noted also that Mayor Peduto is thankful for the group’s guidance over his terms in office.
- He assured the Task Force that the department’s accessibility work will continue under the Gainey Administration, including a comprehensive ADA Transition Plan beginning in 2022.

Adjournment

Rich made a motion to adjourn, it was seconded by John and the meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

Relevant links and information:

- YouTube link with closed captioning: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ok5SirmOjzw>
- “Small Differences,” film, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ok5SirmOjzw>