

City of Pittsburgh / Allegheny County

Task Force on Disabilities

Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup>

Meeting Minutes

**Task Force Members in Attendance**

James C. Noschese, Richard McGann, Joe Wasserman, Paul O'Hanlon, Milton Henderson

**Task Force Members Absent**

Aurelia Carter, Gabe McMoreland, Janet Evans, Sarah Goldstein, Karen Warman, Jeff Parker, John Tague

**Also In Attendance**

Janelle Tipton, Damitra Penny, Laura Hahn, Robin Smith, Kim Mackie, Pam Replozo, Mark Lee, April De la Cruz, Richard Meritzer, Monisha Nelson, Anthony Bell, Tyrell Peppers, Peter Telincho, Blake Norton, JP Leskovich, Danielle, Bobbie, Maria Driediger, Dawn Smidga, Jon Merker

**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**

There was a Treasurer's report for this month; however, there were not enough members to vote to approve it. A few members had questions regarding the budget, but the Treasurer was absent from the meeting so it was tabled until May's meeting.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

There were not enough Task Force members in attendance for a quorum, so the meeting minutes from September, October and March were tabled until the next meeting.

**Snow Angels Winter 2016-2017 Summary**

The representative from the Snow Angels program did not show up to the meeting as promised.

**ADA Office- Intern Reports**

All of the college and high school interns briefly reported on what they are doing in the ADA office under Mr. Meritzer's supervision and guidance.

Mr. Telincho, the ADA Architecture intern, reported on the City's One Step project. He explained that two businesses have completed the project since he has been an intern there and about eight more are currently in the process. Mr. O'Hanlon expressed his concern that there are not more businesses partaking in the project and asked Mr. Telincho and Mr. Meritzer what else

could be done to ensure that businesses are replacing their steps with ramps in order to improve accessibility. Mr. O'Hanlon suggested that perhaps the Task Force should meet with the legal department, City Council and/or Public Works to discuss this issue.

Mr. Leskovich, the ADA Grants intern, reported on his research and grant proposals for Green Sidewalks. He explained that Green Sidewalks are more sustainable and improve accessibility due to the poured rubber material that is used to make them. He further explained that they last longer and are easier to repair in comparison to the standard concrete sidewalks. Mr. Meritzer stated that he could bring a sample to the next meeting so the Task Force members could see and feel it.

Ms. Danielle, one of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade high school interns, reported on behalf of all the 11<sup>th</sup> grade interns. She explained that they are tasked with completing the facility surveys where they assess all of the City's facilities for accessibility and compliance. She also explained that they then take all of the data they collected and enter it into the appropriate files on the computer. Ms. Danielle stated that they also help out with the One Step project surveys where they analyze all of the City's businesses to see whether they have one step or a ramp at the entrance of the building.

Mr. Peppers, the 12<sup>th</sup> grade high school intern, reported on all of the tasks he helps with in the ADA office. He explained that one of his most important projects is the intersection surveys, which entails analyzing, detailing, and photographing the City's intersections. Mr. Peppers further explained that at each intersection, he takes note of whether or not there is a tactile guiding system to assist pedestrians in crossing the road or if there are updated, generation three style curbed ramps with the rumble strip that helps blind pedestrians to know that there is an intersection there. This data collection helps with the City's Complete Streets project and upgrades. Mr. Peppers also discussed that he assists the grant interns with the rug tile surveys at the Senior Citizen Centers throughout the City, where they want to replace the entry rug mats with actual tiled rug material in order to prevent tripping and falling hazards for the blind and elderly.

Mr. Norton, the ADA Policy and Compliance intern, reported back to the Task Force on the developments with the Task Force Committee on Police, specifically regarding the recent traffic stop training on how to better interact with deaf and hard of hearing drivers. He further explained that after discussing the topic with Mr. Meritzer, they came up with the idea to create a picture book for traffic stops, which would be similar to the one that was purchased for first responders, but it would be the ADA office's original design and creation. Mr. Norton emphasized the need for these picture books due to the fact that the only thing out there to assist deaf and hard of hearing drivers in traffic stops are visor cards that state the person is deaf or hard of hearing. Therefore, these picture books would be an essential aid in an otherwise stressful situation, which could escalate quickly so having these would help to deter any conflicts or misunderstandings. Many members of the Task Force and the audience expressed their interests in the books and thought it was a great idea. Mr. Meritzer stated that the ADA office would apply for grants to fund the creation of the books in the next fiscal year.

Mr. Merker, the ADA Policy intern, reported his findings on his ADA Benchmark Report, which compared what Pittsburgh's ADA office is doing in comparison to other cities in the United States. The main purpose of this Report was to decide whether there was more that the City could be doing in regards to ADA issues dealing with accessibility, mobility and design standards. Mr. Merker also reported on the Hospital Compliance Guidelines that he has started

the preliminary research on. He explained that hospitals are included in Title III of the ADA and therefore have to provide reasonable accommodations for patients with disabilities. Mr. Merker further stated that based on his research, there seems to be a considerable gap between what hospitals should be providing versus what they are actually providing in terms of reasonable accommodations. Mr. Meritzer reiterated that this research is only in the preliminary stages, but the goal is to publish actual guidelines for all of the hospitals within the City of Pittsburgh.

This concluded all of the ADA office intern reports.

### **Annual Meeting**

Because most of the Task Force members were absent at today's meeting, Mr. O'Hanlon decided to leave the majority of the discussion on the annual meeting for May's meeting. However, he did explain to the Task Force and the audience that one of the main purposes of the annual meeting is to jointly decide what is the next big thing the Task Force should do in the next fiscal year. Mr. O'Hanlon cited a few examples, such as possibly promoting policies in schools or creating more legislation. The Task Force members in attendance decided to leave this discussion to May's meeting, but wanted to mention it so people start thinking of ideas.

Mr. O'Hanlon mentioned that there will be two new members on the Task Force; stating that they will hopefully be coming to the annual meeting in an official capacity. He further emphasized that it would be a good idea for them to start participating from the floor in the meantime so that they are caught up with everything when they do start as official members.

### **Vox Pop**

Ms. Penny expressed her concern that recent developments in the Hill District seem to be replacing accessibility with "visitability" and asked the Task Force whether there is something that could be done about this. Her main concern was that there are fewer accessible housing units in her district as a result of this. Mr. Meritzer explained that 5% of new housing developments have to be for accessible housing. The Task Force agreed to look into this further and various members of the audience gave Ms. Penny contacts she could reach out to in order to start a dialogue on this ongoing issue. This was the only comment for Vox Pop.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm. The next meeting will be scheduled next month on Monday, May 15th at 1:00 pm in the first floor Conference Room of 200 Ross Street.