

City of Pittsburgh / Allegheny County

Task Force on Disabilities

June 19, 2017

Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members in Attendance

James C. Noschese, John Tague, Joe Wasserman, Richard McGann, Sarah Goldstein, Steve Fowler, Milton Henderson

Task Force Members Absent

Janet Evans, Karen Warman, Gabe McMoreland

Also In Attendance

Richard Meritzer, Joy Done, Georganne Lingenfier, Maria Driediger, Milton Henderson, Alisa Grisham, Ali Adullah, Carrie Fierter, Mevan Saura, Mary Esther Van Shura, Jonathon Robison, Dominick Klonicki, Caleb Schweter, Kaitlyn Buss

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

Mr. Tague's financial report showed that the current balance stands at \$1463.00. He indicated that the estimated cost of July's meeting will come out of that balance. He has not been notified as to how much money the Task Force will receive from the county for next year, but assumed it will be similar to last year's allocation of \$9,000.

Mr. Tague mentioned that there is still \$3400 from last year sitting with a side project. Mr. Meritzer clarified that this project is a conference to discuss new developments and universal design. This project is still up in the air, and Mr. Tague said the Task Force will have to address that at some point.

Mr. Noschese asked for clarification on the date to discuss the budget. Mr. Tague clarified that the Task Force year runs from July 1st to June 30th every year, and there is supposed to be an annual meeting on the budget every June. This has not been happening, as the chair is usually out of town around this time.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from May's meeting are finished, and Mr. Meritzer ensured those would be sent out in an email later in the week. Mr. Tague asked which months still have to be sent out, and Mr. Meritzer replied that he would follow up on that. Mr. Noschese expressed concern about

continuing to put off minutes, and it was decided that the minutes would be prepared for the next meeting.

Welcome of New Members

Mr. Fowler introduced himself and said he is looking forward to working on the committee.

Mr. Tague stated that Cori Frazier will be inducted as soon as they receive the signature from the county executive, and hoped that the Task Force could welcome Cori Frazier at the July meeting.

Mr. Noschese received a letter from Sarah Goldstein expressing her resignation and gratitude to the Task Force.

Report from TIRES Conference

Joy Dore introduced herself, and recalled her experience at the May 25th TIRES (Transportation Information Research Education Services) Conference at the Human Engineering Research Laboratory. She gave an overview of the speakers she witnessed.

She was asked to clarify the issue involving a lack of sidewalks in certain areas. She described the shuttle service and explained that people can call a number and request a shuttle to areas where buses don't go/areas where there are no sidewalks. She clarified that there is a \$0.25 one-way cost to use the shuttle.

Mr. Noschese asked what requirements are necessary to be eligible for the \$0.25 shuttle ride. Ms. Dore explained that it is to be used for employment purposes – describing it as an at-demand shuttle to take you to your job in cases where the bus does not go all the way to the destination. The shuttle runs from 6am until midnight, seven days a week. She will forward the website and information to Mr. Meritzer.

Annual Meeting

As chair of the committee to elect new officers, Mr. Tague mentioned that the election of new officers will take place at the Annual Meeting. Currently there are four candidates to be considered. He indicated that Annual Meetings are typically around three hours in length, and asked the Task Force for their opinions in arranging this year's meeting.

Mr. Meritzer confirmed that with enough notice, the Task Force could reserve the usual meeting room for a Saturday, and affirmed that refreshments would be allowed. He recalled two viable options for the annual meeting: a 3 hour meeting interspersed with administrative activities, or a 3 hour meeting in which the first hour would be strictly for administrative business. Mr. Wasserman asked whether the room could be held at noon on Monday, 7/17, and Mr. Meritzer confirmed that it could happen with enough time to set up/tear down.

Mr. Noschese was concerned about the lack of an agenda for the Annual Meeting. Mr. Tague agreed that it would be beneficial to get the administrative tasks done within the first hour, as this is of less interest to the public. Mr. Tague then asked what the second part of the meeting would be about. Mr. Wasserman stated that there could then be a discussion about future tasks, including the previously-mentioned universal design side project. He also suggested that someone from Public Works attend to discuss sidewalk issues, and Mr. Tague added that it would be difficult to get someone from Public Works on a Saturday.

Mr. Meritzer mentioned that in the past, a central topic of interest within the community was decided upon to bring people to the meeting and stir public interest. He expressed the concern of advertising a meeting without a clear reason for people to attend.

The discussion on a topic for the annual meeting was opened up to the audience. Jonathon Robison suggested the BRT proposal and its issues concerning the disability community.

Alisa Grisham informed him that a private meeting had been set up with the Mayor and County Executive to address the BRT proposal, which could render the topic moot. Ms. Grisham stressed that this meeting is an incredibly private affair, and that it would be near impossible to send a representative.

Ms. Dore suggested another topic for the Annual Meeting: discussing the two services in Monroeville that are competing for the state grant to serve Allegheny County. She stated that a lot of people don't know what services they offer, and that it would be beneficial to inform the community.

Mary Esther Van Shura suggested that the Task Force wait until the July meeting to identify a topic, as many of the issues referenced thus far were too complex to understand and organize in under a month. She recommended that the Task Force keep the July meeting as is, and use that meeting as an agenda-setting meeting for August (or for whenever the Annual Meeting would take place). Mr. Tague recalled that the Annual Meeting is typically supposed to be held in June, and agreed with her that it would be difficult to have a topic prepared for July.

Mr. McGann expressed the hope to address new things at the Annual Meeting, and agreed that waiting a month would be beneficial to research and identify what is going on. Mr. Noschese concurred and stated the need to hear an update from Dawn Smidga and the County.

Mr. Fowler motioned to make decisions surrounding the Annual Meeting at the July meeting. Mr. Noschese called for any discussion. Mr. Tague asked if the July meeting would officially set a date for the Annual Meeting, and Mr. Meritzer asked for clarification on July meeting's agenda. Mr. Fowler responded that the first priority is to set a date for the Annual Meeting. He clarified that the July Meeting will be a regular meeting, but with the sole agenda item being planning for the Annual Meeting.

Mr. Tague reminded the Task Force that there is a budget to approve and officers to elect, and asked when this would take place. He stated the budget could easily be approved in July. Mr. Henderson suggested a committee be formed to decide a topic for the Annual Meeting, as this should be top priority. The Task Force reviewed the topics brought up thus far.

Mr. Noschese restated the proposed motion: to have next month's meeting to discuss the Annual Meeting agenda. He called for a vote, and the motion carried.

New Vacancies

Mr. Tague reminded the Task Force that Sarah Goldstein, Aurelia Carter, and Gabe McMoreland are stepping down. Steve Fowler, Cori Frazier, and Alisa Grisham will be filling those vacancies. Mr. Tague confirmed that they received the letter from the Mayor confirming Mr. Fowler's appointment. He stated that there are ten remaining people interested in being interviewed.

Mr. Meritzer noted that there are two additional vacancies to still be filled. Mr. Tague asked the Task Force whether they wanted to review the existing list of ten names, or send out another notice to the public. Mr. Fowler stated that he would prefer to review the names on file, and asked whether credentials were available. Mr. Meritzer confirmed that their resumes are all on file. Mr. Fowler volunteered to join the nominating committee, and Mr. Tague told Mr. Fowler to let Mr. O'Hanlon know.

Mr. Meritzer expressed the concern of maintaining a cross-disability focus, and noted that Aurelia Carter leaving the Task Force meant the lack of a parent of a child with a disability. Mr. Fowler knew some possibly parent candidates, and will follow up on those names.

Mary Esther Van Shura indicated the need to specify the terms of Task Force member appointments. She asked that this issue be resolved when administrative issues are dealt with at a future meeting. Mr. Meritzer responded that Task Force terms are coterminous with the Mayor's office, according to the Task Force bylaws. Mr. Tague expressed concern at this set-up, illustrating that Mr. Fowler's appointment is affected by the Mayor's potential re-election.

Mr. McGann brought up the issue of how the County approves appointments. Mr. Noschese said that he has never seen the bylaws, and Mr. Meritzer agreed to email the bylaws to all Task Force members.

Mr. Tague noted that technically, no one currently on the Task Force was reappointed by official letter from the Mayor or County Executive. He emphasized the need to revisit the term rules and limitations. He then expressed his idea to transition to independent, four year terms with reinstallation per the Mayor's approval. It is clear that this is an issue to be addressed by the Task Force in coming months.

Mr. Robison stated that in most cases, the bylaws address whether a member serves a term until a successor is appointed. Mr. Tague responded that the Task Force bylaws do not address that continuity, and agreed that it was an important thing to consider. Mr. Tague brought up the idea of a facilitated Task Force session to bring new members on board and address the administrative clean-up to be done, and asked Mr. Noschese to talk to Mr. O'Hanlon to potentially organize such a meeting. Mr. Noschese agreed to work with Mr. O'Hanlon on this situation.

Vox Pop

Ms. Grisham encouraged Task Force and audience members to attend the 27th ADA Anniversary Rally on July 26th, and said that she and Mr. Meritzer would follow up with emails containing more information on the event and also the networking event the night before.

Mr. Robison brought up the upcoming public hearings on the BRT plans and mentioned the upcoming Allegheny County Transit Council election this upcoming Wednesday at 5:30pm. Mr. Tague recalled previous discussion of a small, private meeting with the Mayor and the County Executive about the BRT plans. He indicated that this is a wait-and-see type situation to see what comes of that meeting.

Ms. Dore encouraged people to attend the BRT public hearings to express their opinions. Mr. Fowler clarified that these hearings will be taking place in different neighborhoods, and therefore they will be dealing with transit specific to those individual communities.

Ms. Esther Van Shura asked for the Task Force's support for her meetings with United Way and involved groups to support employment for those with disabilities, particularly veterans. The Task Force motioned to write a letter of support for her efforts, and the motion carried.

Mr. McGann thanked Mr. Meritzer for his work at the Penguins Parade in encouraging interpreters, but also mentioned the accessibility issues that arose at the event. Mr. Meritzer confirmed that improvements would be made for future championship parades, and he will look into the idea of special passes given out to those with disabilities to allow them to see the interpreters. He also stated that he and others will be invited to preliminary site walkthroughs to gauge distances, and that they will interface earlier with the police to fix the communication gaps between the police and the event coordinators.

Ms. Grisham announced that the dates for this year's Rehabilitees Film Festival are September 6th through 13th, 2017.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:44pm. The next meeting will be scheduled next month on Monday, July 17th at 1:00 pm in the first floor Conference Room of 200 Ross Street.