

City of Pittsburgh / Allegheny County

Task Force on Disabilities

Monday, September 18, 2016

Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members in Attendance

Paul O'Hanlon , John Tague, Jeff Parker, Aurelia Carter, James C. Noschese, Richard McGann, Karen Warman, Sarah Goldstein, Joe Wasserman

Task Force Members Absent

Milton Henderson, Janet Evans, Gabe McMoreland

Also In Attendance

Georganne Lingenfolter, Megan Flor, Andy Grubb, Alisa Grishman, Joy Dore, Angela Marcone, Gabrielle Bucci, Dawn Smidga, Rob Oliver, 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 the Treasure's Report

Mr. O'Hanlon starts off the Approval of Treasurer's report by stating that there is not much to report. Mr. Tague then explains that there is now a surplus of \$2,000 in the budget. Mr. Tague then further explains that, on average, each meeting costs around \$650 to conduct. Mr. Tague then asks to the audience if there are any questions. There are none. The meeting continues.

Winter Activities for People with Disabilities

Ms. Flor, intern for Citiparks, starts off by talking about what the department offers in the fall and winter months. She states that Citiparks has lots of facilities that are handicap accessible, she continues that lifts were recently installed in the Schenley Park Ice Skating Rink. Ms. Flor continues that programs that are not directly tailored for those with disabilities can be made accessible. A member of the audience then asks if any Citiparks centers have accessible gyms and wheelchair accommodations. Ms. Flor responds, stating that the Phillips recreation center in Carrick, the Amen recreation center in the Hill District and the McGee recreation center in Greenfield are centers with accessible gym facilities. Another member of the audience asks how

Citiparks ensures this information is circulated within the community. She refers to concerns regarding lack of internet access, individuals with learning disabilities and those in low-income communities as groups who would face difficulty obtaining this information. Ms. Flour responds by stating that a booklet for summer is in circulation in all facilities, as well as in schools and at events. This will continue with fall and winter booklets. There is also a referral line to ensure people can reach the facilities they require over the phone.

The next question from the audience concerns accommodations for deaf people in certain environments and the use of SSPs (Important Service Providers). Mr. Noschese, another member of the audience, responds, stating that he is looking in to this. He mentions that there is a need for phone numbers that provide these accommodations, he mentions the fact there are no phone numbers to call listen. He signifies the need for a specific phone line to enquire about various accommodations. Mr. Meritzer responds to Mr. Noschese, stating that whenever there's a question about accommodations for programming, you can always call him, and accommodations will be made, he also mentions that we encourage people to come directly to our center to work through these problems directly. Mr. Noschese retorts, asking if there are interpreters at the center. Mr. Meritzer states that there is not, to which Mr. Noschese responds, how would he be able to communicate one-on-one as a deaf person. Mr. O'Hanlon acknowledges the fact that perhaps a plan should be put together to accommodate this, perhaps having interpreters at centers across the city. Mr. O'Hanlon elaborates, saying it is a good idea to have a number on there to call for accommodations, but we need to know in advance if we need to accommodate someone, he also mentions the fact that the best place to contact is individual facilities as they are the ones who will be making the accommodations, not a single individual.

Ms. Dore, a member of the audience, speaks. She states that, as someone suffering with hearing loss, that lack of closed captioning in various facilities across the city is a persistent concern, she states that she prefers email. She asks whether there is an email address where one can enquire about accommodations. Mr. Meritzer responds that various establishments need to plan to accommodate the wide array of disabilities people may have and someone there who could assist with those individuals. Mr. O'Hanlon then asks would it be more helpful to have one person either within the department or is it more beneficial to reach out to whoever is running that program. Mr. Noschese then responds that while Mr. Meritzer is a good contact to have, he can't handle every request. The next question is directed at Ms. Flour. It concerns accessibility to the restrooms on the bike trails. Ms. Flour responds that there are no restrooms on any of the bike trails. Another member of the audience asks whether there could be an improved parking system for wheelchairs in the city's parks. Mr. Meritzer responds, stating that through his work with the director of parks, they are working together to educate the staff on how to accommodate those with this disability. Another question directed towards Mr. Meritzer comes from the audience, it concerns the inclusivity of deaf people within the ADA framework. They conclude by asking whether there would be an interpreter at events. Mr. Meritzer responds that it is possible and that the programs are adaptable to those with disabilities. This agenda item concludes.

Partnership with the Complete Streets Project

Mr. O'Hanlon states that this portion of the meeting will look at what the task force can gain out of this partnership and our role within. He elaborates that there should be some revision as our status as a partner of the complete streets project, there is further concern that despite the project being a collaboration, the task force is having trouble with having their voice heard. Mr. O'Hanlon mentions how he was at a complete public streets event at the Jewish community center and accessibility was an issue that was barely discussed. It wasn't a consideration when considering the infrastructure of the project and accessibility appeared like an oversight. Mr. O'Hanlon concludes his remarks by stating he hopes this task force meeting could be used to a forum to discuss what specific things we want to engage with in regards to the complete streets project, and at what point do things go through the ADA office, the task force and the public. Mr. Metzter then says that the task force needs to be on the table early to ensure accessibility is an integral part of the decision-making process. Mr. O'Hanlon then mentions how using email is an inefficient form of communication with the complete streets project and face-to-face interaction could be a more productive form of communication. A member of the audience asks Mr. Metzter if people from different areas of the city could form an organization, to which he replies that technically any group of people could. He elaborates that he is forming a list of community organizations related to accessibility. The discussion then concludes with a statement by Mr. Metzter stating that outreach and including in the disability is in the broader discussion.

Election Day Assistance

Mr. O'Hanlon states his concern regarding the ability of those with disabilities being able to vote on election day. He indicates his request for volunteers to assist on this day. Joy asks whether prospective volunteers they would e-mail Mr. O'Hanlon if they wish to volunteer and how this would be funded, with Joy suggesting Kickstarter as a potential source of funds. Mr. O'Hanlon replies that this is a good idea but he needs assistance to organize this. Mr. McGann then states his concern regarding the fact that 30% hasn't registered to vote and when they do, they may not understand the difference between the different parties. Mr. Noschese responds that we should ask them why they are not interested in registering to vote. He also mentions the fact that most TV advertisements aren't captioned meaning deaf individuals don't know what they stand for. Another concern mentioned by an audience member was the fact that some of these polling places are not accessible and that a database would be a good way of collating this.

The Symposium Update

Mr. O'Hanlon starts by stating that his recommendation of the affordable housing task force was that the trust fund have the requirement that 10% of the units wheelchair accessible and 4% of the units be accessible to people with vision or blindness related disabilities. And that and that the housing it builds be primarily targeted for people at and below 50% of medium income with a

particular emphasis at 30% of medium income. A member of the audience asks how these initial numbers were reached, to which Mr. O'Hanlon responds they were obtained by the affordable housing task force. The first motion and a second on whether the task force will trust funds money be attached to it, gearing for vision related disabilities and that we recommend that the common areas be accessible as well as the second floor accessible with respect to issues like door I hath and I think that the disability ordinance talk about door width and the light switches is passed.

Vox Pop

There were no comments for Vox Pop.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm. The next meeting will be scheduled next month on Monday, October 17th at 1:00 pm in the first floor Conference Room of 200 Ross Street.