

**City of Pittsburgh/Allegheny County**

**Task Force on Disabilities**

**April 16, 2018**

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

**Agenda**

**Task Force Members in Attendance**

Joe Wasserman, Steve Fowler, Sarah Goldstein, Karen Warmen, Paul O'Hanlon, Chris Noschese, John, Richard

**Task Force Members Absent**

Milton

**Also In Attendance**

Dawn Smidga, Richard Meritzer, Ali Abdullah, Jala Johnson, Ryan Niespodzianski, Sarah Clark, Theresa Devase, Kristen Wong, Sheron D. Clark, Raymond Moore, Felicia M. Alexander, Shirley

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting started at 1:00 pm and began with the introduction of the Task Force members and individuals in the audience.

**Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Noschese: Thank you, now, I'm not sure on the agenda. The next item is the action item review are the treasurers report there are no minutes to prove this meeting.

John: I'm waiting on a report from community living and support services who basically who basically is our fiscal agent who handles our task force money to give us an update. So that I can make sure that the figures I'm using are identical to what theirs are. It is kind of like I am doing a mini audit on where we stand. So there will be a report at the next task force meeting.

**Veterans with Disabilities Event with United Way**

Mr. Meritzer: Dawn would you like to join us?

Ms. Smidga: So last year we had a veteran's event to help with workforce development for our veterans, and it was such a success that we are doing it again this year, the city count task force, the united way, and the University of Pittsburg. We are going to be sending out official invitations tomorrow so if anyone else would like some information about this event they can

email me. This year it will be interpreting military terms used on a resume and need of our veterans with disabilities. We're looking at Thursday June 7<sup>th</sup> 12:30-2:30, folks can RSVP. We'll be sending our official invitations tomorrow Located at Soldiers and Sailors. Most of you can reach me, if you go on the Allegheny website, if you go to the bottom of any of our pages there will be an accessibility page, there is a survey there that I am trying to get responses for that I am trying to get it out there, we are looking for feedback from the public on programs, services, and activities. If you go to the regular Allegheny county page there is the accessibility link at the bottom.

### **ADA Anniversary Celebration**

Mr. Meritzer: I put this on the agenda from Dustin's request to Disability Options Network (DON) who is co-organizing the anniversary this year. We had a discussion about this at the Oakland for All meeting and they have requested that the anniversary be in Oakland this year so that they can coordinate this with the ramp crawl this year. So I don't know what is going on with that other than Dustin wanted to discuss it further. He is not here so maybe we can get back to him later. Maybe we can take the Wyndham now, Jala.

Ms. Johnson: We're not ready for that yet.

Mr. Noschese: I'm not sure exactly how long this is going to last, but if there is time maybe you can come back up and tell more about what you are working on.

Ms. Smidga: As many Task Force members can turn out to the event as possible, we had a decent turnout last year.

Mr. Noschese: I understand that Dustin Gibson is here, would you like to come up and talk about the ADA anniversary celebration?

Mr. Gibson: Hello, my name is Dustin Gibson, I am from Disability Options Network, serving 7 counties, one being Allegheny. When I initially reached out to see if I could get on the agenda we had a different plan for what the ADA celebration was going to be, since then we've talked to people from OFA which is a group designed to improve accessibility in the city and remove some of the barriers in the community. They are having an event on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July which is the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ADA, which we are going to try and combine efforts, I think what they have right now is the ramp crawl starting at 5 pm, so we are looking to do the celebration at around 3:30 or 4 pm, so sort of a rally if possible in Schenley plaza, we are still seeing if available then, if not downtown. I am still talking with Alyssa who planned the rally last year, I know that she brought it to the task force for support, so I'm not sure what we'll need but I'll be reaching out at some point, once we have that.

Mr. Noschese: Do you have in other words, do you have a budget set up yet?

Mr. Gibson: We actually do not have a budget at all, we are planning to have our first meeting with the actual combined plan, us and OFA, in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Noschese: Okay.

Mr. Meritzer: Would it be possible if Schenley Plaza isn't available could we use the plaza in front of Soldiers and Sailors for this?

Mr. Gibson: Soldiers and Sailors is a county facility so we would have to rent it, but I could check for you. Maybe I could coordinate with you to check.

Mr. Noschese: Is there anything else for Dustin.... Well keep us updated.

Mr. Gibson: For the planning meetings, it will be open to public so I will send that to Richard and if you can pass that to the task force that would be nice.

### **Wyndham Accessibility Audit**

Mr. Noschese: The next item will be on the Wyndham Accessibility Audit where the ADA... \*inaudible\*

Mr. Noschese: Would you like to give us an update?

Ms. Johnson: It will be held on June 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, beforehand the Pittsburgh Downtown partnership and our office are planning to do a WAA around the facility to see if there are any accessibility issues we can solve before the event. Since Zach and I evaluate 311 requests, we will go on a Wednesday to assess certain items, such as sidewalk conditions, crosswalks, and John brought to my attention to check bus stops and parking. We are developing a checklist with Richard so that we have more organized field work for Wednesday. The audit with the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership hasn't sent us a date but we want to get that information so we want to get that beforehand so we can show them the issues.

Mr. Noschese: How did this come to be, working with the PDP?

Mr. Meritzer: Actually they contacted the department of mobility and infrastructure that they didn't know anything about the conference that there was this big symposium happening and said 'gee does anyone in the city know this is happening' and of course the director of DOMI contacted me and don't we have to check to make sure it's okay to happen around the hotel? Well yes I know it's happening and yes we can certainly do a mobility audit around the hotel. It's a little funny that they never said anything beforehand or the organization didn't do it themselves.

**I don't know that they have or haven't**

Mr. Noschese: Does Jala need to communicate with them, maybe you can let them know and they can help out. I know John had said that there were some particular areas he wanted you to

look at; that particular sidewalk that has concrete planters for the restaurant that could be wholly separate from the hotel, and the valet is out there too and the signs for that are up which could make it nearly impassible.

Ms. Johnson: Okay thank you.

Mr. Fowler: This is Steve Fowler.

Mr. Fowler: There is an admin building that butts against their property line, which the sidewalk is bad which might be a that's not my problem that's his problem type of thing.

The other thing is they have an automatic door opener in the front of the hotel but nowhere else in the hotel; I'm assuming you're going to be looking at the hotel too to make sure you can get in.

Mr. O'Hanlon: And if there are any other issue you think we would run into you can email us and we can always schedule to go back at another time.

You're talking about the Wyndham right?

Ms. Johnson: Yes.

Mr. Noschese: They do have the bus stop down there and they do have busses that run by there and they, I mean... Are the busses able to pull over to the curb, that sort of thing, is there designated signs there that you're not allowed to park at the bus stop or do we need to put up signage.

Shirley: My name is Shirley, I've used the bus stop at that location and it is very accessible. I've used it many times. There is one other issue, sometimes there is like also big puddles right there and there could be puddle after rain.

Mr. Meritzer: I have an apology, this is actually not the agenda I sent out Friday. The agenda I sent out Friday also includes something Rich McGann set up, there are emails on the back table that and he wanted to discuss that, this is the previous agenda and I didn't check when that was printed and I apologize.

## **Director of Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

Thank you, first thing, Richard, I actually had a problem with the email, and I only needed help with the email addresses so that I can send them to this group only. Recently, last week, on April 9<sup>th</sup>, there was a large deaf/blind rally who made their way to Harrisburg who made their complaints who wanted to improve the hours for the provision SSP services for the deaf/blind community and I know soon, this week, there will be a vote in Harrisburg. Now the deaf group were from the Pennsylvania Society for the Advancement of the Deaf and they complained about the state not hiring a new director for the office of deaf and hard on hearing, so we wanted to encourage the representatives... so Senator Wayne Fontana had actually spoke out about that so that the Department of Labor and Industry would accept the office of deaf and hearing so that they would hire someone now so to stop putting it off and continue putting it off so that it was very important for those improvement s that were needed. Now PA Act 57 getting that improvement for communication for interpreters for police situations it is very frustrating, and

they haven't gotten a new director so it is very important for someone to get hired now and for them to stop putting it off.

Mr. Noschese: Okay well, just a comment, so the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, how long has it been without them having a director, do you know Richard?

Mr. Meritzer: Since last year.

Mr. Noschese: So is there something that you would like the task force to do?

I would like you to encourage the Department of Labor and Industry to hire that new executive director now and to stop putting it off.

Mr. Noschese: Okay, I'm going to be at the OBR board meeting at the beginning of May, I can then also ask the secretary who chairs those meetings; I can do some follow up on that myself if you like.

Yes please, go ahead.

Mr. Noschese: The SSP program, my understanding is that there is legislation on this and one of the things I heard about this is independent living laws in PA, Act 139, to include that as one of the coverage services, but I wasn't sure, could you enlighten us more on the SSP program and where it stands?

Well the house bill it's 2069, would actually increase state support and finances for all of the SSP program across the entire state, it would help to increase hours, now before it had actually been 15 hours per person and then they actually cut that and then it was 5 hours per month. Now they have since recently increased that but think about the people in college or with a job it's just not fair. So it is important that we encourage that legislation and representatives to support that bill to increase the hours because you think about individuals in college and other people who need those hours.

Mr. Noschese: So it is house bill 2069?

Correct.

Mr. Noschese: Just a clarification, I got you I just wanted to clarify.

It is this Wednesday so keep your fingers crossed.

Mr. Noschese: What happened to the pilot program, does it still exist?

Well OVR and the head had cut the funding, it was supposed to be a 3-year program so that funding was ending.

Mr. Noschese: So how long was there fund for, less than 3 years?

Well it was supposed to be 3 years, but they're kind of stuck.

Mr. Noschese: In other words, you're saying, they don't have the funding for it.

The money is gone... it continues until the end of September and then it's gone. Unless there is legislation passed.

Mr. Noschese: And house bill 2069, does that, where does the SSP program remain with the Department of Labor and Industry or somewhere else?

I don't know, now I know it was the sill in Central PA but we don't know for sure after that. Now our representative Dan Miller has been responsible and kind of the caretaker of that bill.

Mr. Noschese: Okay. Again, do you want any action taken by the task force?

Yes, again, to encourage any of the legislators to encourage house bill 2069.

Mr. Noschese: Now we don't really have... we can't take a vote to take action. Now the individual members can take action themselves and call their local representatives about in support of 2069, can we send out who the sponsors are of that bill, Richard, you have the ability to do that rights, just look up house bill 2069 now Dan Millers name is on their sure, but find out who else of our representatives are on there. So is that okay Richard?

Yes it is.

Mr. Noschese: Is there any additional that you would like to add on?

Mr. Wasserman: Yes I will, now remember again a white cane is a good representation because it shows people are blind, but a white cane doesn't mean an SSP, a cane doesn't have vision, ears, hands, doesn't tell me to go left or right or straight, it doesn't tell me who is out there so it is very important for us to have SSPs around us to tell us those kinds of things. Now also, I did speak with the legislators and we did talk about trying to make all of the public; when they're going places in public for SSPs to get into different events for free so there would be no charge for them to be able to assist us. For example, us going to a baseball game, a football game, a hockey game, the SSP should be able to get in for free while they're working with us, for example another place is a movie theater because again, an SSP is guiding us in these places.

Mr. Noschese: That is interesting, that is true, and obviously people have tended care which is obviously similar that there are times that there is at least half fare. On the 2069 is that are we just talking about the Deaf/Blind community?

Yes. Someone with hearing loss and someone who is deaf with vision loss too, so if you have a degree of either one of them.

Mr. Noschese: Okay well thank you very much. Our illustrious chair is not here yet and we cannot talk about the issue because I was not at the meeting with Deb Gross so I'm not exactly sure where that stand, I know they're supposed, tomorrow I think the community meeting there is an opportunity to talk about it, I don't know how many members of the task force are even familiar with the issue about the permits and licensing and the ongoing conversation with them but I'm going to have to leave that to Paul to talk about, but Paul is not going to be here and I'm not sure of what to do because it is only 1:39 and so we're kind of early, I could talk for another hour but that's what I normally do, talk for an hour and say nothing.

## **Vox Pop**

Mr. Noschese: Do you have anything you want to add about the community health choices?

Ms. Alexander: Not really, I'm only here to talk about what is going on with PA health and Wellness, I can't talk about the other two MCOs.

Mr. Noschese: Well there's nobody here from UPMC or Ameri Health Car.

Ms. Alexander: Basically what's going on with PA Health and Wellness is that we're working on transportation that is one of the biggest bears we have found, well two, one being transportation and the other being affordable housing. These are the things that have wait lists and realized that the people we are transitioning out of nursing homes are on limited income, some of them are only getting 750-800 a month, so you can't go into a building with a rent of \$600-\$700 a month. SO one of the biggest bears we are addressing that we found because I do nursing home transitioning is that we want our residents to go into places that are safe. I'm not going to put someone in there just because it is available, one of the things we are working on is safe affordable housing for our participants like I said transportation, we have MTM which is our broker that provides transportation, we are in the process now of getting nursing homes contracted with them and we are also in the process of going out and hosting community events now. So those are the things we are working on now at the office and working with compliance waiting for new stuff to come out next year. Thank you.

Mr. Abdullah: I have a question also.

Mr. Abdullah: So this is Ali Abdullah with the housing authority for the City of Pittsburgh disability community compliance office, I mean any individual or individuals in general or I should say more specifically individuals with disabilities can apply for housing through the City of Pittsburgh Housing Authority if they're willing to live specifically within the city limits, I encourage them to do so, we take applications primarily for our family communities as well as our high rises and we do have accessible units unfortunately I wish I had that information specifically as it relates to the accessible units people can apply for, but that is something you can do at any time, you can do that anytime right down the street at 100 Ross St, fourth floor with applications or you could always call in at 412-456-5030 so we do have housing that is subsidized for people in the community who are looking for affordable, safe places to live, so if anyone has any questions I'd be more than welcome to ask

Mr. Noschese: Have you had conversations with the housing authorities?

Ms. Alexander: Yes, I have but our main goal is the waiting list. And realize that, yes I have had conversations, but the idea that one of our participants comes up and says 'I want to transition out' I'm getting the information now that these are people that want to transition out next month and they can't do that because of the waiting list. And that wait list can be anywhere from 18 months to 2 years, at a minimum 8 months so that is the main issue I am dealing with in senior high rises because they want out next month and I'm trying to get them out next month.

Mr. Noschese: You mentioned a couple of issues, and one of them was transportation, is the concern that is being expressed is that are folks going to be able to get the transportation they need now because it's not just about getting to doctor's appointments as you know it's about being a community, so those are things that need to be addressed with transportation.

Ms. Alexander: We do non-medical transportation as well. Everything is not medical, now I'm going to be honest with you I don't know how many non-medical they do each year but they are doing some non-medical transportation.

Mr. Noschese: What is your program, the health and wellness, can you explain a little bit more about that?

Ms. Alexander: As of this year, the government, the state of Pennsylvania decided they wanted MCOs, to do long term disability, something else insurance companies can't, so the three MCOs are PA Health and Wellness, UPMC, and the AmeriHealth Caritas. We are the 3 that the state selected so our goal as people in nursing homes now, we are managing their healthcare, it's called MCO (Manage Care Organizations) and we are just managing their healthcare. As that person, whatever they're in need of, and whenever the plan came in place whatever services they were receiving as of last year, they are still keeping those services. Not like when we came in and we were like 'we're cutting off everything and we're going to start from scratch.' They keep those same services. However we do have service coordinators that do go into the homes or nursing homes and assessing their health needs. It could be that we see the person needs more assistance in the home, maybe they may need less, maybe the level of socialization they need. So we're trying to find even social groups in the community for them to go to. It could be going to church, maybe a daycare program, the movies or whatever, we are trying to find services that will keep the person active, lively, and vibrant because you want to keep that person in the community. And those who are in a nursing home, if they want to transition out of the nursing home into the community, when they come out of the nursing home, we don't want to say "up, you're out of the nursing home" now we have service planner and service coordinators who go out and assist them as well, so we are trying to give them a wrap-around service. We only do the mental portion because the state of PA, the behavioral health is a carve out, that is handled by the state.

Mr. Noschese: That wasn't exactly my question, I'm sorry, I meant more specifically wellness, what does that mean? I'm seeing the people talk about wellness and I used to think that that used to be related to drugs, I thought that was sometimes different punishments that people get from things related to that, so specifically in this what does wellness mean for people with disabilities?

Ms. Alexander: Well the PA Health and Wellness, that's the name, that's just the name, the name of the program is PA Health and Wellness, just like UPMC is just UPMC, and AmeriHealth is AmeriHealth.

Mr. Noschese: Okay, still wellness though I'm not getting what it means.

Ms. Alexander: Well wellness is just general, overall health, that's just the name of our program; actually PA Health and Wellness is just the name selected by the company we work under which is called Santen and the name that they selected for this state is PA Health and Wellness and in Ohio we're known as the Buckeye Plan while here in PA it is PA Health and Wellness. And wellness is just an overall term for when we are looking at a total capital and that is what we are dealing with participants saying 'Okay we're only going to look at your physical health' we are looking, like I said, when our SCs go to their home and they see there is a need for social we're trying to get them in line with social programs and you see the perks. I haven't been to church in I don't know how long, we're trying to get them in line with those programs if the person is in need of subs mere ever, that is considered a carhop in the state of PA so as far as us to say 'we're going to send you to Mary Sue over here for treatment,' we can't do that we have to get them a list that is approved that they can go through and select we can't just select who they go to.

Mr. Noschese: Just I clarification, I read part of your... obviously your programs also have a health piece to your programs that are designed to keep people healthy, like a lot of insurance plans now, but that's also what the 3 of them provide. Paul, how you doing? We were waiting for you and chitchatting about a number of issues you're here to save the day you can take a few minutes but we were going to talk about the proposed updates to the amendments in the City Code.

### **Update on Proposed Amendments to the City Code**

Mr. O'Hanlon: So we're up to the PLI amendments, is that where we're at?

Mr. Noschese: We've actually done everything.

Mr. O'Hanlon: To kind of explain the background here, many of you may have been at previous meeting where we were discussing what we would call the revolving door of inaccessible businesses in Pittsburgh and trying to figure out what is going on and what is going wrong that we have never removed what is normally a one-step barrier, we've kind of gone round and round with first BBI, and then they became PLI, but in a nutshell what I think we discovered fairly recently, the answer to the question of when will these businesses become accessible and the answer is never. Because PLI finally disclosed that even though they gave us the run around called the change of use, but then it was well they didn't actually modify anything with the entrance so it didn't trigger the need to upgrade the entrance. And then we said well what about this business that renovated the entire façade or the outside of their business and they said well the entrance isn't part out the outside of the business, which that's sort of shocking, and then we have the businesses that renovated its entrance and we got to the crucks of the matter and PLI says code does not require and accessible entrance. I know the ADA which is a civil rights law that is federal law which trumps local law that, what about the federal civil rights laws that applies to the business and you the City of Pittsburgh that applies a service the ADA says must be looked at from the standpoint, aren't there negative impacts for any people's with disabilities and if it is they must change those programs unless it's an undue burden or a fundamental alteration in their program. So out positions is, that just like the ADA says whenever you're

modifying the entrance your first responsibility must be that creating an accessible entrance on an accessible path of travel, and it fits into that 20% of your budget, they have, then that should be the first priority, because the next time there is another triggering requirement that accessibility improvement it keeps getting better and better that at least people with disabilities can get into the door because they can't currently. So last, two weeks ago I guess, PLI proposed amendments to City Council, that mostly covered modernizing the process of applying for permits, but it didn't do anything to address this accessibility issue, and what is also worth noting that at least 4 different occasions we met with the PLI and what we kept hearing from them is that they're unable to make a priority on the entrance even though the ADA says that needs to be the priority because it is not their job to enforce the ADA. And we're not saying their job is to enforce the ADA but what we are saying is that when someone comes in and submits and application and they can see that there is no a zero-step bench or they can see that it is within the budget that the city becomes complicit and don't grant that license. Same thing with when a newspaper get an advertisement for an apartment and they can see that it says something racist like "whites only" the newspapers job is to not publish that. It doesn't mean that they are enforcing the Fair Housing Act it means that they are complying with the fair housing act by not publishing it. So the City has a duty under Title 2 of the ADA to modify its programs to remove those aspects of the programs that adverse people with disabilities. Which is exactly what the ADA says that they are supposed to do as an entity governed under the ADA Title 2. So this Wednesday, City Council will be entertaining the amendments proposed by PLI and we are asking City Council to further amend that having an accessible entrance to be a priority for any accessibility modifications absent of showing an architectural inability, infeasibility, or an undue cost and our position is that undue can quite simply be within that 20% budget that the State requires and so long as the state requires for that amount or less then that should be required to be able to grant a license to operate. So in a nutshell I think that that is kind of where we are. I don't know if anyone has any questions, comments or concerns.

Mr. Noschese: So you're talking about doors, entrances, some places are compliant with that but they are putting them in the wrong place. For example with the wheelchair the door might be coming out towards you, in other places they are you're pressing the button and you are getting stuck and you have to back up and go back because the door is coming out towards you so you are stuck.

Mr. O'Hanlon: I think that even with existing businesses that sometimes the accessibility could be improved but we are talking about a level of magnitude above that where it's just impossible to get into the door no matter how you do it, often because of a very simple on step barrier. We're also being told we can't amend the uniform commercial code, we are asking that a local amendment be made to PLI's duty so that is certainly permitted, because that has been amended countless time, and the definition of a means of egress from a building has been amended so it is hard for us to understand how a section that has been amended already can't be amended again to require accessibility. So hopefully we will be able to get council to do something on this because our 4 meeting with PLI added absolutely no forward progress whatsoever. So Tuesday, a few of us will show up at council during the public comment period to kind of prime the pump so to speak to let them know what is coming Wednesday a number of us are planning to show up

to give public testimony so hopefully we can make the case for this improvement in our accessibility code.

Mr. Noschese: Are there approved talking points on this issue, because you gave a really good overview of what the strategy is so are there set points for discussion in Wednesday's meeting?

Mr. O'Hanlon: Yeah, I'd be happy to provide you with them, we will be putting that up on our Facebook event page, I don't know if you're on Facebook we have an event for the city council meeting on Wednesday probably but I have essentially a summary of our argument, which is pretty I said with respect to the ADA, the other part of the argument is that it isn't just the ADA we are covering, the Fair Housing Act also says that an impediment to housing is a lack of accessibility to community amenities and one of the protected classes might be experiencing one impediment or the other without access, clearly we're used to hearing how poor neighborhoods are food deserts, to stores that sell food and so forth. So those are the kinds of impediments that the Fair Housing Act says the city has an affirmative duty to remove those impediments, so in other words the city has a duty under the FHA to modify its programs to make sure that there is access to community facilities. There is both an ADA argument and a FHA argument for why this should be done and it kind of just makes sense I mean one of the examples we give is a restaurant in Oakland called Sushi Fuku where they made pretty extensive upgrades to the business and they weren't told they needed a zero-step entrance after he made a large investment in his business and he got a complaint filed against him through the Department of Justice for not being accessible and his response was "I would've done that if they would have told me I had to do that, now I have to spend even more money because the city didn't tell me I had to do that and the city led me to believe that it wasn't required." So his position in the beginning was that I've done everything that the city requires. The city is at this point complicit in this process of repetitive inaccessible businesses and I think that it is time we change that. I mean I hear the same thing over and over again it's the question of consequence and enforcement not whether these policies or procedures exist. Complacency is often a result of how our society sees our problem, and the argument from our business owners is that there are so few people affected by this so why should I have to spend that much money making improvements and when I see stories in the paper like the one categorizing Dr. Josie Bazzar as attacking the businesses that is a clear indication of where the public stands on this. They see us as an expensive problem, and the way we fight this is the showing the increasing number by virtue of aging alone shows just how many people need accessibility alone. I mean the fact is to the extent that these positions are being required to spend at least 20% of the budget on "barrier removal" which is just making the entrance accessible they increase their potential pool of customers just that much. As of right now our position stands that look at what they're doing and by not making the entrance accessible they are continuing to exclude a whole group of customers that wouldn't be excluded if there was an accessible entrance.

Mr. Noschese: So we have Sushi FU, so we have any other businesses that lost money because the city failed to do its part?

Mr. O'Hanlon: At this point there are 11 businesses in DOJ arbitration around the issue of lack of accessibility.

Mr. Noschese: You said this is the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> meeting you've had with the city?

Mr. O'Hanlon: We've had 4 meeting with the PLI.

Mr. Noschese: I mean who is their boss?

Mr. O'Hanlon: Maura Kennedy is the director.

I mean what about the U.S. State Attorney hear because I've seen the matter here as go to the federal government whenever I have an issue with ADA issues.

Mr. O'Hanlon: I mean, I think in some cases that might be the right advice, but in some cases it is not. I think that our position right now is we'll do that if we fail here?

Are there any watchdog agencies that we could implore here? I mean I'm all about responsible government these days so, are there any organizations that could be clued into what is happening here?

Mr. O'Hanlon: I think that my sense is that there is a range of federal players, but again I am hoping to get this fixed locally, but I know that the human relations commission has to council the city on this issue, but I'm not really sure if their advice is being taken, but we've been trying to get that to happen.

What about local groups like the PA Chapter of the AARP? Sort of expanding the scope beyond people with disabilities.

Mr. O'Hanlon: I think it is a great idea the only thing is that since this was kind of introduced two weeks ago we've been trying to play catch-up so we haven't done a whole lot of outreach like that. If anyone has any contacts with the local AARP, sometimes the AARP is less receptive to disability issues than you would think they would be.

Mr. Meritzer: Paul, as you know any piece of legislation can be requested to have a hearing by a number residents but there is a roughly small window there. Is there any movement to have a hearing requested before the legislation is passed?

Mr. O'Hanlon: We met on Friday with councilwoman Gross whose committee this is going to be submitted to in the first step of the city council process, and we've asked her if she would be willing to have a public hearing on this and she indicated that she would be willing to. I think that is one of the things we will be asking for.

You said this one property is in Oakland on the University of Pittsburgh's campus?

Mr. O'Hanlon: It's in Oakland, not technically the University of Pittsburgh's campus, but Oakland Ave.

I was going to say maybe there was another organization that you could have reached out to maybe the disability center at the University of Pittsburgh, for students that have been affected.

Mr. O'Hanlon: The 4 meetings with Director Kennedy were through the Oakland for All group which includes all of those players, so the OFA group, for those who didn't know, has had a two-

year public campaign for businesses in Oakland to get some accessibility improvements, and they've had some success but as they met with PLI to discuss this systemic problem, they got nowhere.

Have there been any students or people with disabilities from the Oakland community itself that have involved in that process.

Mr. O'Hanlon: Yeah, the student, I forget the abbreviation, (SDA) Students Disability Organization, or whatever those letters stand for.

Mr. Noschese: I want to make sure, because I'm very concerned about a variety of the community like Dormont, Mt. Lebanon, or Green Tree, that a lot of the area that have different zoning boards, sometimes it becomes very complicated when there is not cooperation with PLI, I've actually gone to zoning meetings before and I have noticed that the zoning boards are terrible I mean they really have no clue and don't understand about disabilities at all, they always say we can't have that or we can't do that and you know I really watch and it seems awful and I feel like it's happening in all the different communities where they don't have that cooperation.

Mr. O'Hanlon: Yeah and unfortunately that is true, and unfortunately it's also true that once you get out of the city each individual municipality has its own code enforcement office and we've gotten 105 municipalities, so it is a little bit daunting trying to hit all 105 but I guess that what we see is that we'll start with the city and try to get that one working. So like Green Tree, Dormont, those are different municipalities so that's a different nightmare.

Mr. Meritzer: One of the things we discussed with Don and Mary Ester in the past is the possibility of setting up some meetings with some of the cogs in the county and this certainly would be an issue to deal with the cogs on because they basically have reach into all the different municipalities in their area when those meetings get set up I think this should be a part of the agenda.

Mr. O'Hanlon: A cog is the council of local governments.

Mr. O'Hanlon: Any other questions or comments, we have a Facebook event page so we are trying to put information on that for advocates from talking points to examples to the legislation and question to all that stuff so I would suggest that if you are on Facebook that would be the easiest way to access this information. If you contact me individually I would be happy to send you our talking points and stuff like that as well.

Mr. Noschese: What the name of the Facebook page?

Mr. O'Hanlon: The easiest way to find it would be to go to the events page and look at April 18<sup>th</sup>, but it is called Pittsburgh City Council meeting, its go an unusual title. And for anybody that would consider coming on Wednesday, what happens before every council meeting is the option for public comment on Wednesday I think the public comment will come after the proclamations. If you've never been through the city council proclamation process you'll probably be happy to do it once in your life hopefully.

Mr. Noschese: If we were to submit written comments would that be the right time?

Mr. O'Hanlon: I think that would be the appropriate time, yes. I would say that given council was a committee of equals, but I think that because she is the chair that would be most appropriate. If you're in the city what we are urging people to do is to call their council person before Wednesday and ask them to amend the PLI proposed amendments to include accessibility for businesses.

Mr. Noschese: What time is that?

Mr. O'Hanlon: The council meeting starts at 10 am, but when the public comment time is unknown but it probably wouldn't be long after that. Basically, amending it would authorize the legislation for that department. If you, the City Code chapter 10 dealing with PLI or then BBI Chapter 10 is the section that includes building code and we are proposing to amend that to include the requirement for an accessible public entrance as being a priority. Any other questions comments, concerns before maybe we move back onto the agenda.

Mr. Noschese: Well the agenda is pretty much done unless you want to move back in Vox Pop. I didn't know if the Vox Pop was complete or not. Yes, Karen?

Ms. Warmen: On May 3<sup>rd</sup> there is a viewing of a video anybody is invited but you have to reserve it's at One Smithfield St. I don't know how to put out the flyers for it but...

Mr. Noschese: It's on May 3<sup>rd</sup> did you say? What time?

Ms. Warmen: 6 O'clock.

Mr. Noschese: Richard we have a request for an ASL translator for the council meeting on Wednesday, did you get that?

Mr. Meritzer: No.

Mr. Noschese: Could you make that happen?

Mr. Meritzer: Yes.

Ms. Warmen: If you want to reserve the number is 412-378-8297. That is the number if you want to reserve. Anybody is invited.

Mr. Noschese: I'm assuming there is no other comments or questions for the PLI issue, is there any other things that people would want to bring up in the Vox Pop session?

Mr. Noschese: Before we get to that I wanted to mention that one of the requests that came from the mayor's office that all appointees forward their resumes to Richard, Richard today has gotten nothing from Milton so what do we do with that I mean its requested because that has to do with reappointment.

Mr. Meritzer: Yes, the mayor's office resubmitted the other names for reappointment but not his because we didn't get his resume, I tried several times and haven't.

Mr. Noschese: I guess what we take away us that we should handle that, you know where he lives right? Anyways that's one of the issues, but the county to date hasn't so it doesn't affect

Karen, me, Sarah, or Chris, the other issue is that you've sent out several request for new members; you sent them out through the newsletter correct? I have I think to date 2 individuals who have expressed their interest in it and you have their resumes and there is a 3<sup>rd</sup> but we don't have any resume or paperwork on that person, right?

Mr. Meritzer: Right.

Mr. Noschese: So that's not a lot, the way it is working is that we'll have two different recommendations, one of them being Alyssa but we need another one to be able to send two of them up to mayor, or 3 depending on Milton, but we have to send up some names with appointment. Same thing with the county, we have 1 opening but we need 2 names but we have to date 3 individuals, but the question is do we need to do something differently because the last time we did something we got very little response but the 2<sup>nd</sup> time we got 13 or so but again we need to, Richard is going to send me the name of the people and the information on who they are because part of the membership committee is here today but they don't really have anyone to consider just yet.

I had a thought, there is a local job board that also post volunteer and board opportunities, its called non-profit talent, by a gentleman named John Owens, I know if you are posing a volunteer, non-paid position you do not have to pay for the posting and you get a lot of visibility if nothing else. And it is made very clear from the beginning that it is a volunteer opportunity and not a paid position, but I know in the past they have done features on their available position on the social media through outreach. If you send me the appropriate language for the task force description I can get that posted if that is something we are willing to try.

Mr. Noschese: Well that is one thing, but what did we do the last time, maybe it got hidden in the newsletter or something. How many followers of your Facebook page do we have?

Mr. Meritzer: We have about 500 but we haven't had anyone to work on that but we will next month.

Shirley: I've been sick so maybe I didn't get the email but I'd like to apply for a county position.

Mr. Noschese: Thank you Shirley, I was wondering when you would apply. So I will do that when I get home today. So that's good that would be a potential county appointment.

Shirley: I come every time except when I'm sick so.

Mr. Noschese: So that's the only comments I have, so I recommend that it is up to you, chair, on what to do with Milton.

Mr. O'Hanlon: think the said he'd be here Wednesday so I'll put some screws to him.

Mr. Noschese: And even if he doesn't have a resume we can help put one together for him.

Mr. Noschese: Any other business or Vox Pop?

Mr. O'Hanlon: Do we call it a day?

Mr. Noschese: I guess I'm glad you showed up we'd have been gone an half hour ago.

## **Adjournment**