

City of Pittsburgh/Allegheny County

Task Force on Disability

Monday, July 20, 2015

Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members in Attendance

Paul O'Hanlon, Aurelia Carter-Scott, Joe Wassermann, Karen Warman, Sara Goldstein, Janet Evans, Rich McGann, Katherine Seelman, John Tague

Task Force Members Absent

Jeff Parker, James C. Noschese

Also in Attendance

Patrick Roberts, Scott Bricker, Ashley McFall, Georgeanne Lingenfelter, Sharon Clark, Joy Dore, Mike Spagnoletti, John Licina, Richard Meritzer, Isabela Ortiz, Julia Wallace, Zion Moor, Mary Esther Van Shura

Welcome, Introduction, and Announcements

The meeting began with the introduction of Task Force members in attendance as well as other individuals present.

Ms. Van Shura reminds the Task Force of a conference held by Mayor Peduto and County Executive Fitzgerald on July 27th at 10:45 in the courtyard by the fountain at the intersection of Grant and Forbes to celebrate the achievements of the ADA.

Dr. Seelman reminds the Task Force of the Thornberg lecture on October 27th, given by Mark Johnson.

Mr. Spagnoletti, representing Top Soccer, discusses the program to the Task Force. Originally targeting children ages 4-18, there is now interest in starting an adult program and expanding it to meet multiple disabilities (such as soccer games on pavement to accommodate people using wheelchairs). He urges anyone who is interested in helping or learning more to contact him or fill out one of the forms he's brought.

Discussion of Bike Lanes in Oakland

Mr. Meritzer introduces Scott Bricker from Bike Pittsburgh. Mr. Bricker reviews the Bus Rapid Transit system (BRT), a partnership between Allegheny County and Port Authority to create transit improvements in the corridor between Oakland and downtown. This would be accomplished by a bus lane that is transit only. He informs the Task Force that ACCESS paratransit vehicles will be able to use said lanes. Also involved is improving the technology so people are more aware of when their stop is coming and when busses will arrive.

The Task Force then addresses other concerns such as how the amount of time ACCESS vehicles need to pick up residents will affect the normal operations of the bus system, if and how the routes will change, and whether or not there will be elevated bus stops. Mr. Bricker assures everyone that they are taking all of these things into consideration and that they are testing the corridor between Oakland and Downtown before expanding it to the East End and other parts of Pittsburgh. Elevated bus stops will also require new buses.

The bike share project is going well and Mr. Bricker explains that after a few months of data, they will be able to tell where it is most popular and where it may be causing some issues restricting access to the curbs. Mr. O'Hanlon suggests extending the curb across the bike lane so it's a gradual ride up. Mr. Bricker responds that at the round of fall meetings, he can provide advanced materials so everyone may contribute at meetings.

Disability Agenda 2000 Retrospective: Neighborhoods and Community

Mr. Henderson addresses the need for greater awareness and education in the community. A lot of people are not aware of the ADA and places are not compliant. Ms. Evans mentions hotels and motels as an example of places where improvements have been made but there must be continued education towards managers and new employees. It is suggested that schools and television are the most successful means of changing attitudes.

Dr. Seelman next addresses the lack of help offered to the disabled community. The Task Force suggests this is because younger people do not know if they are being kind or offending someone. Mr. O'Hanlon concedes there is a culture where asking someone if they need help is offensive and suggests the Task Force tackle this issue. Once again, increased education could alleviate this.

Mr. O'Hanlon moves on with the agenda towards the construction of new neighborhoods and handling problems such as single steps, tree roots blocking sidewalks, and broken sidewalks in general. If the city says they cannot afford to fix it, how does it get resolved? Ms. McFall suggests talking to developers *and* funders can prevent the recreation of problems in the community such as one-step issues and inaccessible locations. Shift the focus towards residential areas that already have people with disabilities living in them. Mr. Meritzer counters that people in the disability community need to take a more active role in holding developers accountable for eliminating these limitations (i.e. participation at budget meetings).

Motion to meet with the Chief of Police concerning domestic violence

Task Force suggests creating a subcommittee to educate the police on interacting with people with disabilities. Ms. Aurelia-Scott requests adding what kind of training officers are provided with to the agenda. The goal is to bring him in and discuss more than just training and education. Dr. Seelman recommends bringing someone in from Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR) to get an idea of which communities are being affected. It is then asked whether domestic violence survivors and rape victims would be willing to come in and speak. The Task Force debates whether or not to bring both parties in separately or simultaneously. Mr. O'Hanlon advises

inviting the chief for a meeting, after forming an agenda, and then hold a meeting with domestic violence survivors and rape victims having the chief sit in.

Hospital Compliance Web Page

Mr. Meritzer and his web intern discuss the creation of hospital compliance surveys in order to shed light on how the hospital is performing in regards to standards on providing consumers with the correct assistance. Important medical information must be understood by the consumer while the consumer should be able to express information clearly to the provider. As it turns out, no such standards exist. The project will evolve into the creation of guidelines for standardizing procedures for people with disabilities to ensure there is equal care for everyone. The survey is on the city planning website and Mr. O'Hanlon requests that Mr. Meritzer send out to the link to everyone.

Dr. Seelman motions to adjourn, Mrs. Evans seconds. Motion to end meeting passes. The next meeting will take place on August 17, 2015.