

City of Pittsburgh/Allegheny County  
Task Force on Disability  
Monday, October 19, 2015  
Meeting Minutes

**Task Force Members in Attendance**

Paul O’Hanlon, John Tague, Joe Wassermann, James “Chris” Noschese, Karen Warmen, Janet Evans, Richard McGann, Sara Goldstein, Milton Henderson

**Task Force Members Absent**

Aurelia Carter-Scott, Kate Seelman, Gabe McMoreland, Jeff Parker

**Also in Attendance**

Ali Abdullah, Joe Elliott, Karen Blumen, Carolyn Galvin, Sheron Clark, Rob Oliver, Alisa Grishman, Henry Glitz, Jimmy Stefano, Angela Jefferson, Travonne Henderson, Dorothy McNair, Kim Macky, Terry Thompson, Georgeanne Lingenfelter, Angela Habovny, Kristen Saunders

**Welcome and Introduction**

The meeting began with the introduction of Task Force members and other individuals in attendance.

**Review and Approval of August 2015 Minutes**

Mr. Noschese brought up that he was erroneously marked as absent. Ms. Evans made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. McGann seconded. Mr. Meritzer brought up changes to minutes-taking style to be more of a summary than word-for-word.

**Guidance on Bike Lane Usage by Public Transit Vehicles**

Mr. O’Hanlon asked Ms. Saunders about the progress of policy development for a reasonable accommodation clause, with regards to the city bike lane policy. Mr. Noschese suggested increasing public awareness of the issue through a press release. Mr. Abdullah suggested following a policy similar to the one for school buses--providing a physical path and barrier to bike traffic that would allow the disabled to be dropped off in bike lanes.

Mr. Meritzer addressed Ms. Warmen’s concern by explaining that the policy language needed to be worded carefully so that it wasn’t something that might be taken advantage of by the general population. Mr. O’Hanlon specified that the main concern—regardless of vehicle and dependent instead on people with disabilities—is a reasonable accommodation clause.

**McKinley Park Sidewalk Proposal**

Mr. Meritzer presented a proposal for replacing the “bad to nonexistent” sidewalks in McKinley Park with rubber sidewalks, which he described and requested the support of the Task Force for a grant request to the federal government. Ms. Evans made a motion to support. Mr. Wasserman seconded. In response to Ms. Evans’ question about how wheelchairs interact with the rubber sidewalks, Mr. Meritzer assured the Task Force of the benefits of the rubber sidewalks compared to what is currently there.

The Task Force voted unanimously to support the grant request.

### **Disability Agenda 2000 Retrospective: Families, Children, and Seniors**

Karen Blumen introduced herself and her colleagues, Carolyn Galvin and Joe Elliott, from the County Department of Human Services and discussed the contributions of the Disability Connection program, which was created in 2004 as a direct result of the Disability Agenda 2000's work. The Disability Connection, headed by Judy Baricella, provided numerous important services for Allegheny County's disability community, according to Ms. Blumen. Mr. Elliott discussed the agency's history and current activity of extending help for disabled elderly individuals to most or all county residents above age sixty, as well as early prevention measures for children with potential developmental issues.

Audience member Dr. Angela Habovny interposed a comment that blind-deaf individuals do not necessarily have behavioral issues, and asked about what the Task Force could do for an elderly woman she knew whom she claimed had been systematically discriminated against. Ms. Blumen talked with her aside.

Mr. McGann and Mr. Noschese discussed the importance of public awareness about relevant laws, and expressed opposition to the lack of state funding for the SSP (Service Support Provider) for individuals who are deaf-blind due to the state budget impasse and insufficient resources. Mr. Abdullah asked about possible differences between renting and owning in relation to aging and the disability community. Mr. Elliott replied that most of the County's regulations apply mostly to those who own their houses rather than renters. Mr. O'Hanlon and Mr. McGann discussed the possibility of streamlining and centralizing access to affordable housing for disabled individuals.

### **Upcoming Special Meeting**

Mr. O'Hanlon suggested that there ought to be another Task Force meeting, suggested by Ms. Evans to take place in December. He also suggested sitting down to formulate a seven-point agenda for the tentative December meeting. Mr. McGann supported the motion, Ms. Evans seconded it.

### **Vox Pop**

Dr. McNair in the audience again brought a complaint about city accommodation in public transportation. Ms. Grishman talked about next Saturday's mapathon. Ms. Warmen brought attention to a meeting going on next weekend at CSP. Next Tuesday, according to Mr. O'Hanlon, Mark Johnson is slated to speak at the Thornberg Lecture series at the University Club in Oakland.

An audience member brought up a complaint that the board of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf doesn't accurately represent deaf culture. Mr. O'Hanlon and Mr. Noschese explained that the issue was outside the competence of the Task Force.

Mr. Wasserman moved to end the meeting, and Ms. Evans seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Monday, November 16, at 1:00 P.M.