

**City-County Task Force on Disabilities (CCTFD) Meeting Minutes
December 16, 2019**

Task Force Members in Attendance

Paul O’Hanlon
James “Chris” Noschese
Joe Wasserman
Richard McGann
Sarah Goldstein
John Tague

Task Force Members in Absent

Janet Evans
Karen Warman
Cori Frazer

Others in Attendance

Hillary Roman—City of Pittsburgh ADA Coordinator
Caylin Snyder—Allegheny County ADA Coordinator
Cassandra Masters—ACCESS
Tina Calabro—Advocate
Sue Tran—Fair Housing Partnership of Pittsburgh
Ali Abdullah—Disability Compliance Administrator, Housing Authority City of Pittsburgh
Phyllis Anderson—Disability Compliance, City of Pittsburgh
Georgia Petropoulos—OBID
Samantha Stedford—ACAA

Welcome and Introductions

Paul called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and welcomed all attendants. Task Force members and members of the public introduced themselves.

Minutes Reviewed/Approved

The motion to accept October and November minutes was approved.

Treasurer’s Report

- John provided an overview of the CCTFD financial report.
- John suggested that the CCTFD contribute part of the \$3500 in leftover funding to ADA 30th Anniversary events planning and the Disability & Mental Health Summit in March.
- Paul would like to devote some of January’s meeting toward discussion of these events and possible CCTFD funding contributions.

Items of Discussion

Membership Update

Hillary provided an update on the status of City and County CCTFD candidates and answered questions about the process of appointment. All candidates are in the process of being reviewed by the offices of the Mayor and County Executive.

ADA 30th Anniversary Planning

Tina Calabro provided an overview of the planning process by members of the Pittsburgh disability community so far. There will be many opportunities for the Task Force to participate in the upcoming events set to begin with the Disability & Mental Health Summit and continue until the final events in July.

Area Agency on Aging Presentation by Kim Hall

- Kim Hall gave a presentation on the many services and programs offered by the Area Agency on Aging (AAA).
- The AAA is part of a nationwide network serving older adults, caregivers, social workers, and families who reside in Allegheny County.
- The AAA is a public agency mostly funded by federal, and state government sources.
- Services can be obtained by calling their “senior line” at: (412) 350-5460. AAA services include: personal care, home delivered meals, service coordination, caregiver support, health insurance counseling, enrollment assistance, legal counseling, volunteer opportunities, adult day centers, older adult protective services, senior companions, farmers market vouchers, housing and transportation assistance.
- Kim confirmed the availability of voter services in response to a question from Paul.
- Kim responded to Sarah’s question about qualifying age for services that seniors must be 60 or older.
- Rich and Chris asked about deaf services under Act 150; John and Kim clarified that services could be rendered for those under 60 through the Act. Kim also informed the group that the AAA is working with Deafstone to improve services. Paul suggested a partnership with the Deaf Club.
- Kim went over the transportation services offered by AAA, including: the medical assistance transportation program (MATP), Access 65, Access ADA, and free PAT services.
- AAA offers free health insurance counseling through the APPRISE program for older adults and the PA Health Law Project.
- Kim discussed AAA senior centers that provide information, education, nutrition, and activities for seniors.
- AAA offers a caregiver support program that assists those caring for friends or family through support services and reimbursement of some expenses related to caregiving.
- Kim talked about the senior companionship program that aims to curb isolation among older homebound adults by sending volunteers to their homes.
- Kim responded to a question from Chris about the county service boundaries. She confirmed that the AAA is limited to only serving those residing in Allegheny County; every county has its own aging services agency.
- The agency also offers a services coordination program to help older adults who meet financial and care needs eligibility standards. Services include personal care, home support, supplies delivery, and urgent care.

- The AAA offers “life programs” that provide community-based, skilled nursing alternatives to nursing home placement through waivers to older adults who meet the eligibility criteria. The two programs in Allegheny County are: Community Life and Life Pittsburgh. Seniors are assigned to either program based on geographic place of residence.
- The AAA is also mandated to provide older adult protective services to seniors in order to enforce protections against elder abuse. They will provide referrals for adult protective services for those 18-60.
- Other services include an ombudsman program, nursing home transition services, and an “adult foster care” service.
- Kim answered Richard’s question about employment and training services for low-income older adults, telling the group that the Urban League and JCC often step in to help in those cases.
- Kim left physical resources the group. Hillary later distributed AAA digital materials to the CCTFD.

Airport Authority Discussion with Samantha Stedford

- Samantha talked about the many entities that create the passenger experience beyond the airport itself, including the airlines, TSA, and customs and border control. She clarified that the airport does not have authority over those entities.
- The airport strives to become an accessible place and have recently taken steps toward meeting that goal. These include the installation of a sensory room for those with autism and a partnership with Carnegie Mellon University to create a cell phone app that helps blind or visually impaired people navigate the airport.
- Samantha discussed the fact that airlines are only responsible for managing passengers “from the ticket counter on.” This creates a gap in services for those with disabilities who may require assistance before that point in the process of air travel. Volunteer ambassadors who help to fill this gap do not fully suffice because they cannot provide physical support to travelers.
- Members of the CCTFD suggested employing a sign language service and a wheelchair service. The point was made that a Sighted Support Person (SSP) can be very helpful when a person with a disability is trying to find restaurants, restrooms, etc.
- Samantha discussed upcoming changes at the airport to make it more accessible including removing the train, reducing the number of levels passengers must traverse, and centralizing all parts of the air travel process.
- Chris recommended setting up a disability office at the airport to coordinate disability services between all the airlines.
- Samantha confirmed the accessibility of the shuttle system in response to a question from Ali Abdullah. Passengers can also use the accessible spaces in the parking lot for a reduced fee. The airport is reviewing options for hiring on staff who can help with physical support for passengers. Ali suggested reviewing an additional volunteer system.

Updates from November Meeting (Port Authority, “Small Differences,” and Voting)

- John provided updates on Port Authority. He is looking into grants and funding from the Federal Transit Administration and PennDOT to answer some of the CCTFD’s prior inquiries about transit. He will report back to the Task Force via email.

- Tina provided proprietary information for the short film, “Small Differences” in order to upload it to the Disability History Consortium website and YouTube. Tony Buba will be able to provide more technical information in January. There are still questions about the film’s ownership before distributing it. John will try to find the answers to these questions.
- Caylin is reaching out to the Division Manager of Elections for Allegheny County, David Voye, to provide updates about voter reach-out and registration.

Miscellaneous Issues/Concerns

- Rich asked Hillary if she could find a representative to talk to the CCTFD about a reduction in accessible parking spaces at a future meeting.
- Chris added that the Deaf Club has lost around 15 parking spots and would like to know how to get them back.
- Paul underscored that despite Complete Streets’ inclusion of accessible parking in their initiatives, accessible public parking seems to be reduced in and around the city due to competition with bike and bus lanes, particularly in the Forbes & Fifth corridors.

Adjournment

Paul made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:44 p.m. The motion was seconded by Chris and carried unanimously.