

February 25, 2016 minutes of the Columbus Advisory Committee on Disability Issues

Present at the meeting were:

Marlene Stewart

David Cameron

Pam Makowski

Geri Cooper

Kay Grier

Sue Willis

Jay Favuzzi

Elizabeth Sammons

Tricia Kovacs

Paul Walker

Katie Frederick

Karen Kostelac

William Stepp COTA

Excused: Mary Hiland and Rajai Saleh

The February 25, 2016 meeting began and a motion was made by Elizabeth Sammons and seconded by Jay Favuzzi to approve the minutes from the January 28, 2016 meeting as distributed via email. Kay Grier informed everyone she would work with her subcommittee to

prepare a letter/information to distribute to Columbus city council. Tricia Kovacs informed the group of some things she found on the city of Columbus website, including council meetings can be watched live or later. It was noted, however, more contact needs to be made with the website administrator to post meeting minutes and the 2016 meeting schedule of CACDI. Tricia does want to write a letter, the committee could sign, showing our appreciation for the improved and ongoing accessibility of the Columbus website.

Upcoming speakers for CACDI meetings were then announced. The March 24 meeting will feature a COTA representative who can talk about fixed-route bus service; the meeting will take place at Franklin Park Indoor Adventure Center on East Broad Street. Fran Ryan is the speaker for the month of April to discuss senior services in the community. Elizabeth Sammons offered to reach out to her contact with the Franklin County Red Cross to speak at one of our upcoming meetings. Pam asked about the committee hosting an awareness day where individuals could learn about different disabilities; Kay informed the group there is a group in Dayton who does this, but interested individuals would need to go there to participate in the program.

Brett Harvage, ADA Coordinator for the Ohio Secretary of State's Office, was the February speaker. Brett distributed the latest edition of a voting guide to members. As the ADA Coordinator, Brett does his best to ensure Ohioans with disabilities have the same opportunities to vote as all other Ohio residents. The Ohio Secretary of State's Office works with all boards of elections in Ohio's 88 counties. Elizabeth asked Brett if he could comment on the recent case concerning absentee voting and the Secretary of State's website. Brett informed the group there has been tremendous improvement in the accessibility of the website. There was some discussion about ensuring possible online voter registration and future absentee voting systems are accessible to people with disabilities. Brett pointed out each county board of elections is independent. This means even if statewide training is produced, county board do not necessarily

need to use that material. Sue Willis asked who people should contact if they run into issues on election day; Brett suggested calling the local board of elections to get the most rapid response. A discussion occurred about the accessibility of polling places; it's difficult to ensure every location is completely accessible, and funding is always an issue for these projects. There was discussion about the lack of education of contractors and the public, concerning access issues and the ADA. Elizabeth also pointed out it's not only important to ensure a place is physically accessible, but that electronic materials are accessible to people with disabilities as well. Katie asked if there are opportunities for people with disabilities to work at the poles; if someone is interested, they should contact the local board of elections. A question was asked about how many people vote early/absentee; it was estimated about 30% of Ohioans choose to vote via the early voting or absentee method. The idea of voting by mail was mentioned, but there are a lot of concerns that would need to be addressed before such a system would be implemented in Ohio. The meeting wrapped up by Brett encouraging members of the committee to let him know of any issues experienced during election time; if he/the Secretary of State's Office isn't aware of issues, nothing can be fixed.