

Present at the March 24, 2016 meeting of the Columbus Advisory Committee on Disability Issues were:

Elizabeth Sammons

Tiffany McClain

David Cameron

Rolland Coldwell, COTA Superintendent of transportation, guest speaker

April Williams with COTA

Katie Frederick

Tricia Kovacs

Mary Hiland

Karen Kostelac

Chair Karen Kostelac began the meeting by thanking everyone for attending the February meeting at the Franklin County Board of Elections office. She realized she failed to adjourn the meeting, so a motion was made and approved to do so. Concerning old business, Tricia mentioned the city of Columbus website and that our information is not being updated accordingly on the site. There was some frustration from those present that city officials have been unable to attend the meetings as of late.

Karen then invited the guest speaker to tell the group about his roles and responsibilities at COTA. Roland is the superintendent of transportation at COTA. His responsibilities include making sure drivers comply with ADA laws, investigating customer complaints, and addressing performance issues. He has been with COTA for approximately seven years. There are approximately 600 COTA drivers and

the agency is looking to hire more. There are approximately 350 busses in the fixed-route fleet. Karen mentioned an issue she had where strollers were placed where her scooter needed to park on a bus recently. Rolland stated COTA released a new stroller policy last year, stating the seating at the front of the bus is reserved for people with disabilities. Riders are not required to collapse strollers, and may sit in the front seats of the bus as long as a person with a disability does not need the seats.

A question was asked about recording activity on the bus. There is audio and video recording on each bus, and if a complaint is filed the recordings are reviewed. The recordings are stored for approximately thirty days at a time. A question was then asked about the timeliness of bus information when calling the (614) 228-1776 information number. Rolland explained technically, a bus is late if it's five minutes past its scheduled arrival time. If someone calls 228-1776 customer service representatives have real-time access and can let the passenger know exactly where the bus is at a given time. A final note about using the 228-1776 number is COTA wants to hear feedback so they can continually do their best to improve the services they offer.

An issue was brought to COTA's attention concerning the visual display of a driver's badge number. For now, if a customer is riding and has a compliment or complaint but is unable to identify the specific driver number, they just need to let COTA staff know what bus they were riding and when. Rolland said he would take back the feedback to COTA about finding a way to make the driver's badge number more accessible to passengers.

The new bike lane configuration on Summit Street was an issue addressed with COTA. Due to how the lanes are laid out, if a passenger does not know of the changes, they could easily be disoriented, due to the bus dropping them off on an island away from the normal curbside stops on most routes. Making bus stops more consistent is another issue COTA's trying to address so passengers can locate the stops more efficiently. A question was asked concerning when the bus reaches the end of

its line and turns around, can a passenger remain on the bus; the answer is yes, if the passenger's heading in the opposite direction they do need to swipe their card or pay.

The C-Bus, the free downtown bus, honored its one million rider and is still a very popular featured route. Next year, COTA will launch the C-Max service, running from Polaris to downtown. In May, 2016, COTA plans to launch an airport connector service operating from the airport to downtown. The bus, with limited stops, will run from 5:00 AM-10:00 PM between downtown and the airport.

New business for the committee was then discussed; specifically speaker suggestions for the remainder of 2016. Suggestions include contacting the airport community relations person to discuss the recently completed airport renovations. It was suggested to contact MORPC (the Mid Ohio Planning Commission), to discuss transportation around the central Ohio region. Tiffany McClain mentioned another ADA celebration is planned for July; it will not be as large as last years, but she did want to mention it to CACDI folks. Other speaker suggestions include city council and continuing with inviting neighborhood commissions. The meeting was then adjourned.