



Columbus Advisory Committee on Disability Issues

Minutes of Meeting September 22, 2016

Attendees: Karen Kostelac – Chair

Tricia Kovacs – Vice Chair

Kay Grier – OSILC

Elizabeth Sammons – OOD

Pam Makowski – guest

Geri Cooper – guest

David Cameron – guest

April Williams – COTA

Bill Stepp - COTA

Rick Isbell – City of Columbus

Wayne Cocchi - guest

(This may be incomplete.)

Call to Order: Karen Kostelac, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1 pm.

Guest Speaker:

Shannon Hardin, Columbus City Council, Public Service & Transportation Committee Chair, Small & Minority Business Development Committee Chair

Mr. Hardin told us that the work we do is important. He told us the city is planning for the future and they can't do this work alone. He brought his ears because he wants to listen and learn.

We shared that Rick Isbell represents the city administration and Nancy Sully is our community liaison.

Wayne shared that we want to engage city council.

Mr. Hardin talked about the new Department of Neighborhoods. He also told us that he shares council responsibility for the 311 call center with Michael Stinziano.

Mr. Hardin works with the Economic Community Development Incubator, which is a Columbus-based small business lender.

<https://www.ecdi.org/locations/columbus>

Mr. Hardin shared the status of the Smart City grant. They applied for the grant in just 5 weeks. The grant is \$40M from the USDOT plus \$10M from Vulcan Inc, who develops electric vehicle infrastructure. An additional \$90M has been promised from local groups. But just because this is new technology does not mean local businesses cannot be involved. The project will be coordinated with the new Cleveland Ave CMAX bus rapid transit, and will include smart kiosks that will coordinate transit and other transportation options. Smart City has a

working group and there will be an upcoming community review. More information on Smart City can be found on the City website.

<https://www.columbus.gov/smartcolumbus/>

Other topics we discussed with Mr. Hardin were our concerns about transportation issues such as accessibility of roundabouts and traffic signals. We would like more pedestrian beacons and signs to direct pedestrians to accessible routes. We discussed COTA issues. The problems are not with the buses, but with how to get to/from the bus stops. CACDI would like to provide a program on 1 or 2 hours in the life of a person with a disability. We would like to invite City Council members to attend.

Mr. Hardin also discussed changes in the area commissions with the forming of the Department of Neighborhoods. Some areas do not have area commissions. The city will be formalizing how they operate. They need more influence, more power. We asked how the Transportation & Pedestrian Commission will be involved in the future. Mr. Hardin will look into this.

After Mr. Hardin left, David shared that Mr. Hardin's father, the late Oliver Hardin, worked in human resources at the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission. David said he was a great person to work with.

Approval of August minutes: Minutes were approved with minor corrections.

Old Business:

We had further discussion on our plans to have a disability awareness event. We would visit locations that have problems, but also locations that have good accommodation, such as well constructed curb cuts and audible pedestrian signals. Pam suggested that we could put together videos of pictures of inaccessible locations, such as poles in the middle of sidewalks. We would like to find funding for this, we could ask Emerald Hernandez from Smart City or MORPC.

Rick mentioned that the crowning of roads makes them difficult to travel with wheelchairs. Rick also mentioned that the process for road resurfacing has changed and the City of Columbus is not inspecting curb cuts as they previously did. Also, new pedestrian signals are not automatically getting audible signals. Rick has been reassigned from the Mayor's office to Human Resources. Members of the committee recalled 1997 when the City of Columbus was sued by OSILC about the lack of curb cuts when streets were resurfaced, which required installation or replacement of thousands of curb ramps.

<http://thelantern.com/2002/06/access-on-rise-ramps-near-completion/>

<https://www.columbus.gov/publicservice/Design-and-Construction/document-library/Curb-Ramp-Construction/>

Rick told us that the COTA route #6 will be changing the location of the bus stop for the VA medical center. The drop off will be on James Rd.

New Business:

We discussed the Homestead tax exemption for homeowners who are seniors with low income or disabled. For information, see:

http://www.tax.ohio.gov/real_property/faqs/homestead_exemption_faqs/tabid/3074/Default.aspx?QuestionID=304&AFMID=9554

Nathan Fernandez is leaving OOD to become the new "access coordinator" with the Secretary of State. Brett Harbage will continue to coordinate the physical accommodation, Nathan will focus on online issues. Nathan is a great addition as a braille and Jaws user.

Pam is involved in the Peoples Justice Project. People's Justice Project is a statewide collective of organizations, that organize low income people & people of color to lead the fight against mass incarceration. She is making sure that all rally routes are accessible. You can find more about the project at:

<https://www.facebook.com/OhioPJP/>

The White Cane Awareness Day sponsored by ACB Ohio and Columbus will be held on Friday, October 14 at the corner of Broad & High at 11AM-1PM. Members of ACB Ohio and Columbus will share information about the white cane law and their experiences using canes and guide dogs. Orientation & Mobility instructors will be on hand to help teach anyone interested in how people who are blind can navigate urban streets.

Pam has gotten a trike, which she is enjoying. But she cannot use the bike & bus because the trike does not fit on the bike rack.

The October 27 speaker will be Laura Akgerman, from the OSU AgrAbility program. This talk will include discussion on community gardens and patio gardens.

General Discussion:

Marlene Stewart had surgery. We all wish her a speedy recovery.

We discussed voting absentee and early voting. Pollworkers are desperately needed, contact the board of elections. The hours are 5:30AM until approximately 10PM, pay is \$100, the online training includes disability accommodations. We encouraged members to share voter registration forms with others. Rides to voting stations on voting day will be provided free of charge by uber.

Karen will be a member of the AgrAbility committee. She invited others to participate if you are interested.

There will be a Senior Festival at Hoolywood Casino on October 28 at 10am-2pm.
Seniors will receive a 50% discount on lunch.
<http://www.seniorlivingfestival.org/>

Next Meeting:

October 27 at Franklin Park Adventure Center

Speakers: Laura Akgerman, OSU AgrAbility program

Claire Jennings, MORPC Coordinated Plan including state of transportation for people who are elderly or have disabilities.

The meeting adjourned at 2:48pm.