



Columbus Advisory Committee on Disability Issues

Minutes of Meeting December 7, 2017

Attendees:

Karen Kostelac
Tricia Kovacs
Nick Popa
Marlene Stewart
Lois Barin
Bill Stepp
Jay Favuzzi
Tiffany McClain
Wayne Cocchi
Deb Wood
David Cameron
Elizabeth Sammons
Paul Walker

Election of Officers

Although we did not have a formal nomination process, we had several unopposed candidates for office who were unanimously elected to serve the 2018-2019 term. Our new officers are Patricia Kovacs for chair, Deb Wood for co-chair and David Cameron and Wayne Cocchi as co-secretaries. David and Wayne will share the responsibilities of secretary.

There is some question as to whether the current members are “official” and Tricia will check with Zane Jones to verify that all of our memberships have been renewed.

David Cameron asked about attendance issues at our committee meetings. We have not been enforcing the by-law that members who have 3 unexcused absences should not remain on the committee. We do usually receive regrets from members when they cannot attend a meeting.

Karen Kostelac has offered to help us with lining up speakers for future meetings. Marlene Stewart has offered to assist Deb if she needs any help.

New Business

Karen thanked Katie Frederick for leading our October meeting.

COTA CEO

Karen is a member of the committee to appoint a new CEO for COTA. She shared with that committee that she is chair of CACDI and the mission of our committee.

She was impressed with the candidates for CEO, in particular one who was successful in advocating for sidewalks in an area of the city. Karen also shared that COTA buses are going to accommodate strollers better in the future.

Vehicle For Hire

Tricia and Zane Jones attended the Vehicles for Hire Accessibility meeting organized by Kelly Castle, Columbus license manager. This committee is working towards the goal of adding more accessible taxis and training taxi drivers in driving customers with disabilities. There is a need to collect data to determine the need and demand for accessible transportation in Columbus. MORPC did collect data in 2010 which we will evaluate. We discussed what is currently available for accessible transportation in Columbus, including COTA fixed route and Mainstream, taxi companies such as Yellow Cab and independent operators such as Lyft and Uber. We will be coordinating with Smart Columbus so that we are not duplicating effort on accessibility of mobile applications. Kelly will also reach out to ODOT, ODPS and COTA to collaborate with our committee.

Tricia shared with the Vehicle for Hire Accessibility committee the concerns that CACDI members have raised regarding guide dogs, dependability of service and ease of use (e.g. Mainstream scheduling rules).

Paul Walker related an incident when a Lyft driver wanted to carry his guide dog in the trunk. We discussed that this should be a police or attorney issue. We should also call the operator to complain about incidents such as this.

Future Meetings

We discussed topics for future meetings. Tricia has contacted Smart Columbus for an update on the project. We could meet at their facility which is the Idea Foundry on State St in Franklinton. Other topics are a presentation by Dr. Lois Barin, audiologist, and Nick Popa on planned pedestrian projects. We discussed where we should meet for our meetings in 2018. MORPC has offered their location (Liberty St in the brewery district) for our meetings.

Braille Mentors

Elizabeth Sammons is looking for participants for a NFB Ohio project to train adults in braille. She needs adult students and also braille mentors. They will attend a weekend training in Columbus and the training will be for 10-14 weeks. Please share this with others and have them contact Elizabeth if they would like to participate.

Individual Concerns

Marlene is moving from the Deco on Indianola apartments because they are not accessible, even though they are a 55+ senior housing apartment. She asked who would evaluate buildings for accessibility. This would be the Building and Zoning Services Department. Marlene also noted that there are no traffic signals between Oakland Park and Arden Rd (at Weiland's Market).

Elizabeth shared greetings from her Bulgarian visitors who found Ohio residents “shockingly friendly”. Elizabeth will be traveling to Bulgaria in May with her daughter.

The meeting adjourned at 2:27pm.