

# **COLUMBUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ISSUES**

Minutes of the Meeting—September 26, 2019  
Columbus State Community College, library

## **ATTENDANCE**

Tricia Kovacs, chair	member
Bob Roehm	member
Nick Popa, City Engineer	guest
Karen Kostelac	member
Wayne Cocchi, co-secretary	member
Paul Walker	member
Steve Spain	guest
Sarah Kelly, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD)	

Our October meeting was a tour of the Blindsquare application at Columbus State Community College. Sarah Kelly presented the tour.

Blindsquare is an application which provides navigation service for people who are blind. The application runs on Apple iPhones. It is not currently available on Android but “has been promised for years”. The application was developed by two people in Norway and Canada. Regular software updates are available.

Blindsquare was installed at the CSCC with the support of OOD. There are outdoor and indoor notes in the “geofence” (the area of the navigation network). Indoor beacons are located in Columbus Hall, Aquinas Hall and Ebeling Hall. Our group met at Columbus Hall, where Sarah explained the features of the application and then demonstrated it with a walk to Ebeling Hall. Luckily, we had nice weather for our tour.

The application is available in 37 languages. Navigation information can be presented in metric or feet. The directions can be provided using clock directions (e.g. 10 o'clock) or compass directions (NSEW). The navigation relies on GPS, so accuracy is within approximately 16'. Sarah walked with us using Blindsquare on her phone so we could hear the instructions. We entered Ebeling Hall and saw the locations of the indoor beacons. The beacons provide information about the building and where things are located. Unfortunately, the indoor beacon at Ebeling was not working.

OOD will be working with the Ohio Statehouse to install Blindsquare there. Franklin University will also be installing Blindsquare. Other cities which have used Blindsquare are Charlotte, NC in their downtown area, and in Boston transit (called Blindways).

The cost of the CSCC Blindsquare application was approximately \$10K, most of the cost for the contractors' time. There are 100 nodes and 25 beacons. There is an annual network access fee of \$300. The phone application costs \$40. You can find other information available from Google and Foursquare such as food and nightlife. You cannot track the usage of Blindsquare.

Sarah told us about what3words, a navigation tool which associates 3 words with every 10'x10' location.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Thursday, October 24, 1PM at State Library of Ohio

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Tricia Kovacs, Chair