



Office on the Disabled
City of Saint Louis
Advisory Council Meeting
Room 305, City Hall
May 29, 2013



Minutes

Gina Hilberry called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. Members present included Kerri Morgan, Gina Hilberry, Mike Keller, and Bill Sheldon. David Newburger and Kim Kreitner were also present. Absent were Jane Thomas, Wendy Sullivan and Willie Kimbrough, Jr. Linda Baker participated through conference call.

Minutes from the March 11th meeting were adopted.

The next meeting for the advisory council is scheduled on June 24th at 9:00 A.M. in Room 305.

Overview of the Office on the Disabled:

Mr. Newburger went over some of the activities of the Office on the Disabled.

- The All Ready Campaign—Funding is being worked out. We will continue to have public communications component. Possibly sub contract things like train to the trainer out to someplace else. NOAA radio or bed shaker could be device used as an incentive after completing trainings. Mr. Sheldon brought up that the Lion's Club could possibly provide devices. Ms. Baker mentioned that the Hearing Loss Association could possibly raise money as well. Mr. Newburger pointed out that this money is coming from Homeland Security so it has to be on a regional basis not just city based.
- Real Estate—The effect of the better economy is more businesses opening up. The Office on the Disabled works regularly with applicants who are trying to obtain occupancy permits in order to open businesses in the city. We concentrate on what is readily achievable for them in regard to accessibility. Most of these do not involve major construction. Usually involves paint, moving cabinets, and other cosmetic changes. This means the 20% aspect of the ADA does not usually kick in but rather readily achievable does. Ms. Hilberry would like this aspect of the office to be more robust. Ideally, if they have to get a building permit they have to get sealed drawings and go through to plan examiners. Through the years we

are collaborating more and consulting with plan examiners and the building division on new construction. Mr. Newburger pointed out that a new restaurant that used to be an antique store has restaurant space on the main floor and in the basement. They will have to put in a lift so that everyone can access dining in the lower level. They have been fighting it tooth and nail. All relevant players in the City – the Building Division Commissioner, the chief Plan Examiner, the head of the Building Inspectors, the Mayor’s Office, the Associate City Attorney, and the Office on the Disabled (Mr. Newburger) are all agreed.

- New Treasurer—Mr. Newburger has been coordinating with Tishaura Jones, the new treasurer for the city. They are working very hard right now. It takes time to build back up after a change. They recently re-stripped the spaces in the Alderman parking lot and did it correctly. Focus has come on them recently after a blog post by Steve Patterson highlighting the need for access to a credit card machine in a downtown parking lot. The Treasurer’s chief of staff described their solution and said that the solution was “a reasonable accommodation.” Mr. Newburger met with them to explain what they can and can’t do legally.
- Transition plan for police—Mr. Newburger has put forward a memo that describes what we have done in regard to this transition plan and a long list of questions in hopes of creating the framework of a new police transition plan. Mr. Eddie Roth, Director of Operations for the city, will be making the decisions on how to proceed. Mr. Roth said he will look at this after helping the police transition to city control. Ms. Deacon, Director of Public Safety for the city, has directed the superintendent of the Corrections Division explore what they need to do to write a transition plan and prepare to implement it.
- Corrections—Mr. Sheldon asked if all corrections facilities have video phones for inmates who are deaf. Mr. Newburger informed that they have TTY’s, not video phones. Mr. Sheldon replied that TTY’s are outdated and that the inmates need equal access. Only providing TTY’s makes the assumption that anyone deaf can use one. There are prisoners who are deaf who do not know how to type and read, and may only know ASL as opposed to the English language. Mr. Newburger feels that it would be more effective for a prisoner’s family to make a complaint against the the state prison system in order to affect change. Ms. Baker received a complaint from the county about a video phone for an inmate to communicate with his father in ASL. They (the county) are working on getting one provided for him.
- Reasonable accommodations—Mr. Newburger relayed a conversation he had recently with a supervisor in corrections who was under the impression that no accommodations can be made for an employee unless

they were on FMLA. Mr. Newburger explained that while essential functions of the job have to be taken into consideration that there are often times accommodations that can be made in order for the person to be successful. The Office on the Disabled is often unsuccessful assisting people with job accommodations, Employees often come to us when their disability has got to the point that there is little they can do.

- Deaf Interpreting Agency Contract—The Office on the Disabled had recently put out a request for proposals for deaf interpreting agencies to bid on for the upcoming contract time period. At this time, three agencies have put in proposals, Deaf Way, Deaf Inc, and Deaf Interlink. [Editor's Note: A selection committee unanimously selected Deaf Way.]
- Steve Patterson—City resident and blogger, Steve Patterson, raises many issues regarding accessibility across the metro area. While he can make valid points, he is not always correct in his observations. Mr. Patterson raised issue with a medical arts building that has stair issues and photographed it. Mr. Newburger went and looked at the property and deemed it unreasonable to make this fully accessible. Mr. Patterson feels that Mr. Newburger sees things in a different light because he uses a power wheelchair and not a manual one. Mr. Newburger has reported his findings to the Building Division.
- Emergency Management—In 2009 and again recently, the Office on the Disabled and St. Louis Chapter of the Red Cross sent to all of the Emergency Management Agencies within the region reviews a review of how their Emergency Operations Plans included effective planning to respond to the needs of people with disabilities. Between 2009 and early 2013, the reviewers found that two counties greatly improved and the remaining four counties and the city have not done much to improve. The All Ready campaign is now deciding whether to try to train the Emergency Management Agencies how to get rid of their deficits, whether to make a big publicity campaign about the deficits or some combination. This office, the Red Cross and others are working through that issue.
- Permeable Surface Video—Mr. Newburger spoke to Jack Catlin, former chairman of the U.S. Access Board, at the Universal Design Conference about pavers. Mr. Catlin does not recommend pavers in the City Arch River situation. On his recommendation, Mr. Newburger sent the permeable surface video to the Access Board.

After relaying the above information, Mr. Newburger would like input from the advisory council on what the Office on the Disabled should be focusing on next.

Mr. Sheldon—how many people with disabilities are working for the city?

Mr. Newburger—the city is not currently hiring many people at all. And there are many people with disabilities working for the city.

Mr. Sheldon—can we ask prisoners with disabilities if they are satisfied with services in the prisons?

Ms. Baker—this would have to be asked through the Department of Corrections. It's been quite awhile since she's had a complaint from an inmate. When she does, it's usually from inmates who have mental illness.

Mr. Keller—how does the Starkloff Disability Institute find the people they have assisted in finding employment?

Mr. Newburger—many of the people assisted in finding employment have come from Rehab Services for the Blind.

Ms. Morgan—it may be worth finding more about the Occupational Performance Center at the Rehab Institute at Washington University. Mr. Newburger will look into this for the Starkloff Disability Institute.

Mr. Newburger—it's essential to teach people to tailor their resumes for the position they want. Job seekers' learning how to sell themselves successfully is key. It's hard for some people to stop sending fifty resumes to the company they want to be hired at but SDI works to teach best practices for applicants. Both the students and the companies are learning beneficial information.

Ms. Hilberry—the transition plan for the city is something that needs to be focused on regularly. The council should have a role and will hopefully be useful. While the council can't do day to day tasks for the office, the members can provide input and make recommendations.

Mr. Sheldon—What about collaborating with the county on disability issues? This met with general agreement from the council and Mr. Newburger will contact Pat Dillon of the county about the possibility of having joint meetings.

New Business

No new business at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 A.M.
Respectfully submitted,


Kerri Morgan, Secretary