

MINUTES  
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUE

October 10, 2007

The meeting was called to order by Elizabeth McNally, Chairperson, at 1:40 pm. Introductions were done. Mr. Wood asked why his tabled parking items were not included in this agenda. Ms. McNally stated that the agenda was only focused on transportation issues. The agenda was accepted. The minutes from the August and September meeting were approved with one correction for September: Mr. Wood stated that the "Fire Administrations parking configuration" and the South Dade Government Center should be tabled. He is requesting the full schematic drawings. This will be added to the September 2007 minutes.

**Chairperson's Report:** Ms. McNally has attended a variety of meetings: at the Association of Agencies Serving People with Disabilities (AASPD) there was discussion on volunteerism and how to get students with disabilities into volunteer positions, also discussed were emergency management issues. The organization looks to sharing resources. She reported that she had contacted the various Commissioners about the three people who are awaiting approval and hopes their appointment are forth coming. She announced that the next meeting will be an all day retreat. The meeting will be on November 6 in the Clark Center. CODI members are asked to invite their commissioners and aides for a light breakfast from 8:30 -9:30. CODI members are asked to be present at 8:00 am. She asked for volunteers and Ronald and Denise said they would help in the planning

**Access- Transportation Committee:** Denise Valkema reported that there was a committee meeting at 12:00. The placard issue was discussed and it was decided to recommend to CODI that a letter be written to the Governor and the Mayor expressing the need for better enforcement and asking the Governor to revisit the process of how placards are issued.

**MOTION: Made by Denise Valkema and seconded by Ronald Fulton to write letters to the Governor and the Mayor concerning the disabled parking program. Motion was passed.**

**Old Business:**

Mr. Wood in a previous meeting brought information to CODI about an ordinance he has brought to the County Commissioners concerning raising the fine for people who are illegally stopping, standing or parking a vehicle in a place where there is handicapped access and increase the fine and require the MOVN committee to include this ordinance as one of their main initiatives when reaching out to the community. There are several commissioners that have signed on to this proposed ordinance and the Mayor has indicated he would not veto this if it comes across his desk.

**MOTION: Made by John Miller and seconded by Marie Schmidt to send a letter to the Mayor and the Commissioners thanking them for their support. Motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Lessne suggested that this as well as other disability access traffic laws be advertised on the County's website.

**MOTION: Made by Ronald Fulton and seconded by Dr. Sam Kohlenberg to support the proposed ordinance allowing individuals to take pictures of vehicles parking illegally and to send those pictures to the police for enforcement. Motion was passes.** There was discussion. Mac Glasgow brought up the idea of STS drivers writing tickets and Rita Kane brought up the possibility of people digitally enhancing the photos. Mark Mitros from Miami International Airport asked CODI to support the Airport in their plan to change the free disabled parking for people who use placards.. They would provide three free hours of meet and greet to everyone with disabled parking identification but after that everyone except cars with Florida Toll Exemption ID and cars with specialized equipment would be expected to pay for parking. There was some discussion. Mr. Wood said that he has some Commission support for an ordinance that would prohibit employees from parking in the public parking garages at the Airport. He would also like to reduce the time a vehicle can park for free from 60 days to 30 days. There was discussion and no vote was taken.

**New Business:**

Harry Rackard from Miami-Dade Transit was asked a few questions concerning fix route transportation. Jose Martinez asked if bus drivers during their training could be instructed to ask people who use mobility devices how they prefer to be secured rather than assuming they know how to do it and started to secure without listening to the rider. There was discussion on drivers not stopping to pick up people with disabilities that are near but not exactly at the bus stop due to inaccessibility of the bus stops. Mr. Rackard indicated that bus drivers are instructed to look around ( within around 100 feet or ½ block) to see if there is someone there that might be waiting for the bus but not directly at the bus stop and if there is someone there, to ask if they are waiting for the bus. It was said that some bus drivers are not stopping at stops. Mr. Rackard said that people should complain if that is happening. There was also discussion about what to do if a person who is blind or visually impaired calls in complaints when they don't have a bus number. Customer service is programmed to ask for the bus number and won't take the complaint if a number isn't give. Mr. Rackard said he would consider this problem and see if he can come up with a suggestion. Robert Lessne said that a camera at the bus stop would give that information. There was a question about bus drivers who say their lift is broken. Mr. Rackard said that the policy is that if a bus has a manual backup then that is utilized and if not then they need to call Central Control and if it is over 30 minutes before another bus comes than Transit will send another vehicle to pick up the rider. It was noted that the bus schedules changed as of October 21, 2007. Denise Valkema made a comment about the number of times schedules change. Often, once someone get used to a schedule the schedule changes. Mr. Rackard said that by policy every three months the schedules are reviewed. Ms. McNally told Mr. Rackard that she would speak with him later about the timing of announcements; on some routes the announcement comes too late for the rider to indicate their stop.

Rita Kane, Paratransit Director, was asked if Transit is thinking about going to a feeder program. She indicated that was not the case and changes such as that would have been brought to CODI. A question came up as to how complaints are investigated. Ms. Kane said that complaints are investigated and if it has merit the contractors are fined. A letter is requested from the provided to explain the complaint and if the County isn't happy with the response they send it back to the provider for more information. A question was asked about negotiating an appointment time; it was said that there wasn't any negotiated time when a rider is making an appointment time. However there can be negotiations of one hour up or down when a person request a pick up time. Ms. Kane was asked about time planning and she said the best way to figure out timing is to go to the bus time planner and if there is no bus service than use 12 miles per hour with 10 streets approximating 1 mile and 12 avenues approximating 1 mile.

Mr. Fulton asked about drives who say that they have no memory of the incident. Mr. Naiditch, General Manager of Advanced Transportation Solutions, said that they might be able to say it once or twice but after the third serious complaint they are sent to an eight hour training and if they receive 2 more complaints they are fired. By contract all drivers have a yearly training. A question was asked about the purchases of the Mobile Data Terminals. Ms. Kane suggested that she will have more information about that in 90 days. The last question for Ms. Kane concerned the STS Oversight Taskforce.; she said that they had requested a meeting and asked if Mr. Azor, Vice- Chair of the committee, would be allowed to call and chair a meeting.

Ms. McNally brought up the possibility of changing the date of CODI's meetings so they don't conflict with Commission meetings. Ilene Hyams was directed to look into the feasibility of the fourth Wednesday of the month.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.