MINUTES
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUES
January 28, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Elizabeth McNally at 1:45 pm. Introductions were done. The agenda was accepted with one addition: the inclusion of the membership committee report. The minutes for December 2008 were accepted with the correction of two spelling mistakes and one comment from Mr. Rigerman: He asked that when people bring a concern to CODI it shouldn't be called a complaint. .

Attendance: Ronald Fulton, Alan Rigerman, Dr. Sam Kohlenberg, Damian Gregory, Elizabeth McNally, Marie Schmidt, Jose Martinez, John Miller, Jose Granda, Jackson David

Presentation: Ilene Hyams presented an inscribed gavel to Ms. McNally from CODI and from the ADA Office for her tireless work on behalf of people with disabilities. Ms. McNally has spent 8 years on CODI and by the CODI Bylaws she must leave CODI but she can still serve on subcommittees. Rene Casellas from the Airport also thanked Ms. McNally for her representation on their Access Committee and for her availability whenever they called upon her. Dr. Marquard spoke about Ms. McNally's work on the Association of Agencies Serving Persons with Disabilities. He is forever grateful for her knowledge and dedication.

Chairperson's Report: Ms. McNally was very appreciative of the kind words and gavel. She said it was a privilege being allowed to work with CODI; she is proud of some of the accomplishments that she has seen. She recently had been in Disney World and found the park very accessible. She felt that the people she met during her trip seemed to have a better understanding of guide dogs and accessibility issues.

Membership Committee: Ms. McNally reported that the membership committee had met and that there were two applications for membership. She spoke briefly about the difference between advocacy and activism, each is appropriate but when people represent CODI they must remember they are advocates for all disabilities. She also said that CODI represents a body of people and when a member speaks they need to remember that. There were two applicants: Gregory Elden and Denny Wood. Both were seen as qualified by the committee however the committee did have reservations concerning Mr. Wood's application.

Motion made by Damian Gregory and seconded by Marie Schmidt to nominate Gregory Elden and send his name to an available Commissioner. Ronald Fulton yes, Alan Rigerman no but later changed his vote to yes to be unanimous, Dr. Sam Kohlenberg yes, Damian Gregory yes, Elizabeth McNally, Marie Schmidt-yes, Jose Martinez yes, John Miller yes, Jose Granda yes, Jackson David yes. Motion passed

Motion made by Alan Rigerman and seconded by Ronald Fulton to nominate Denny Wood and send his name to an available Commissioner. Ronald Fulton yes, Alan Rigerman yes, Dr. Sam Kohlenberg yes, Damian Gregory yes, Elizabeth McNally, Marie Schmidt-yes, Jose Martinez yes, John Miller yes, Jose Granda yes, Jackson David yes. Motion passed

Ilene Hyams mentioned that some Commissioners will only appoint people from their own district. Someone asked if it would be appropriate to have potential members visit the Commissioners. Ilene Hyams said yes but not until the Commissioner has received the paperwork from the ADA office.

ACCESS/TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: Denise Valkema was absent. Ilene Hyams read the minutes from the Access/Transportation committee which was held on January 22, 2009. There was no discussion on the report. David Naiditch from ATS asked for clarification on an item. He asked about the responsibility of a contractor when they work with subcontractors.

Ms. McNally spoke about Florida House Bill H187. This bill would increase the Transportation Disadvantage Trust Fund by increasing new or renewal tag fee from $1.50 to $3.00. Ms. McNally said that about 75% to 80% of the TD money goes to para-transit programs around the state. She encouraged all to support this bill which will be voted on in March. She also reminded CODI members that the eligibility of the TD program is different than the STS program and that people are asked where they are going. There was further discussion. Mr. Fulton asked for more information and Ilene Hyams asked him to call her and she could give him the information she has. She didn't have the actual bill.

Ilene Hyams gave the dates and places of the transit MPO community meetings which will be held for citizen input on long range goals for transportation. She also mentioned that the information was sent out by email a few weeks ago.

Ms. McNally reminded people that the next Rider's Meeting will be on February 3rd from 6-8 at 701 NW 1 Court.

Ilene Hyams briefly went over the 4th quarter transit report sent by Miami-Dade Transit to the U.S. Department of Transportation regarding the FTA assessment of Miami-Dade Transit's fixed route stop announcements and passenger/vehicle identification efforts. There were some questions and Ms. McNally suggested the report go to the transportation/access committee. Ronald Fulton mentioned a concern with route 75 and route 17; he felt that the tiedowns were not done properly. Jose Granda mentioned route 27 but Ilene Hyams will email him to get more information.

Old Business: Ilene Hyams read the email sent by Rita Kane concerning the housing of the para-transit program. She also explained that minutes would go out to the public after they have been approved by the CODI's board. Ms. Hyams said that she is waiting to receive a final draft of CODI's website. She asked if anyone had a different number or email to put on the web otherwise she would use the numbers she has originally.

Ms. McNally spoke about the state laws on white cane and service animals. She is on the board of the Florida Association of Guide Dogs and she would be happy to serve as a resource. Ilene Hyams asked everyone to take the handouts that she provided on service animals and Florida mobility laws. .She mentioned that a person who finds that they are being denied entry with a service animal can call the police, call the Equal Opportunity Board, the Department of Justice, or the ADA office. Refusal of service because a person has a service animal can be both a civil and criminal offense. Discussion followed. Mr. Rigerman mentioned that some people have approached him with their concerns.

New Business: Heidi Johnson Wright, Director of the Office of ADA Coordination, gave an update from the ADA office. Right now she is working on the operating budget for next year. The office is doing plans review on all county construction projects. They will be adding an ADA inspection function to the plans review function and both will be required on all county projects. She spoke about the 17 projects completed for Elections and she is presently waiting for them to prioritize the remaining projects. The office has two interns that will be updating the actual barrier removal list making sure that buildings are still part of the county and in need of barrier removal. The parking fine program has greatly been increase to include more municipalities. The office streamlined the process making municipalities more likely to request their money and use it for programs that would improve the lives of their citizen's with disabilities. The office has a few new initiatives. There is an initiative to improve the response of wheelchair accessible cabs. There is an employment initiative which is still in the planning stages. The office is looking to establish a relationship with Rochester Institute of Technology; this school has a large engineering program for people who are deaf. The office is working on the Single Family Rehab Program with CAA and OCED and will go to Fort Lauderdale soon to see Broward's program. The office is working with the University of Miami's Architecture program in a project called Freedom By Design. The office is helping the students to identify people who will benefit from small access projects in their home. Also the office will be meeting with two departments a quarter to go over their barrier removal projects as well as their policies and procedures.
Mr. Wood brought up counters at South Dade Government Center. Ms. Johnson-Wright said that in the County's opinion these counters are compliant but she will always be looking at facilities to see if they can be more accessible.

A question was asked about the new stadium that will be built in the City of Miami. Mr. Miller remembered that about two years ago he had written a letter for the Miami Lighthouse to the proposed contractor. Ilene Hyams said that she would go back to see what CODI had recommended but that this was a different site and most likely a new construction company was involved. She will have that information for the next meeting. Also asked of Ms. Hyams was feedback on the public works' initiative. Ilene Hyams reported that there were 5 or 6 people who had responded to her regarding Public Works' request. She will also have that information at the next meeting.

Mr. Rigerman asked a question concerning reporting building code violations. Mr. Wood started to give a name but Ms. McNally asked them to meet privately after the meeting or to take it outside since time was running short and elections still had to be done.

Ilene Hyams explained the need for CODI meetings to be accessible to all. The ADA office must be sure that program access is maintained. This means that for some one who is deaf there must be no interfere with a sign language interpreter and there is one conversation at a time so a person who is deaf will be able to understand what is going on. For someone who is hard of hearing the rustling of papers or having cell phones ring will make it difficult for that person to hear properly. She also asked that only the chair recognizes a person to speak so a person who is blind or visually impaired will know who is speaking. The ADA office staff will leave any meeting

where program access is denied. County staff can't be seen as condoning behavior that is abusive, or disrespectful, they will have to leave the meeting if this occurs. The secretary of CODI will be responsible for the remaining minutes if support staff leaves the meeting. She handouts the policy to those present.

Ms. Hyams reported that the new BCC committee assignments have come out. She has the information electronically if anyone is interested. She also reported that the Florida Council of the Blind is soliciting applications for their academic scholarship program. Please call Ms. Hyams for application or more information.

Elections:
Chairperson: Elizabeth McNally called three times if there were any nominations from the floor for Chairman: Hearing none a vote was taken for Damian Gregory as Chairman
Ronald Fulton yes, Alan Rigerman yes, Dr. Sam Kohlenberg yes, Damian Gregory yes, Elizabeth McNally, Marie Schmidt yes, Jose Martinez yes, John Miller yes, Jose Granda yes, Jackson David yes.

First Vice Chair: Ms. McNally asked three times if there were nominations from the floor. Denise Valkema had been the recommendation of the nominating committee. Mr. Fulton nominated himself.
The vote for: Denise Valkema: Ronald Fulton no, Alan Rigerman no, Dr. Sam Kohlenberg no, Damian Gregory abstained, Elizabeth McNally, Marie Schmidt yes, Jose Martinez no, John Miller yes, Jose Granda yes, Jackson David no.

The vote for Ronald Fulton: Ronald Fulton yes, Alan Rigerman yes, Dr. Sam Kohlenberg yes, Damian Gregory abstain, Elizabeth McNally, Marie Schmidt yes, Jose Martinez yes, John Miller yes, Jose Granda no, Jackson David yes.

2nd Vice Chair: Ms. McNally asked three times if there were nominations from the floor. Denise Valkema's name was submitted by Mr. Gregory. Jose Martinez had been the recommendation of the nominating committee.

Vote for: Jose Martinez: Ronald Fulton yes, Alan Rigerman yes, Dr. Sam Kohlenberg yes, Damian Gregory abstained, Elizabeth McNally, Marie Schmidt yes, Jose Martinez yes, John Miller yes, Jose Granda yes, Jackson David yes.

Vote for: Denise Valkema: Ronald Fulton no, Alan Rigerman yes, Dr. Sam Kohlenberg no, Damian Gregory abstained, Elizabeth McNally, Marie Schmidt no, Jose Martinez yes, John Miller yes, Jose Granda no, Jackson David no

Secretary: Ms. McNally asked three times for nominations from the floor. Hearing none by acclamation Jackson David was elected. He was the recommendation from the nominating committee.

Chair: Damian Gregory
First Vice Chair: Ronald Fulton
Second Vice Chair: Jose Martinez
Secretary: Jackson David

Ilene Hyams mentioned that Mr. Wood's item on the agenda was not able to be heard because of time. She suggested to Mr. Wood that he stay after the meeting and she would be able to tell him what she learned about the issue from Neighborhood Compliance.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.