

MINUTES
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUES

January 27, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Damian Gregory 1:45 pm. Introductions were done. Agenda was accepted and minutes for October 2009 and November 2009 were accepted with a spelling correction on the November 2009 minutes.

Attendance: D. Gregory, R. Fulton, J. Granda, A. Rigerman, D. Valkema, J. Martinez , M. Olivera, S. Kohlenberg, J. Miller and S. Hix.

Chairperson's Report: Mr. Gregory asked that his chairman's report be tabled to later in the meeting pending time.

Old Business: At the last meeting there was discussion on the inadequate crossing time at some cross walks. It was felt that people with disabilities and the elder need more time to cross large intersections. John Miller asked which department is responsible for checking these crosswalks to see if more time could be allotted for people with disabilities or the elderly to cross. Ms. Gonzales from Transit said that they could always send the location of the crosswalk to the ADA Office, which in turn can send it to the Public Works Department, who is ultimately responsible for traffic lights. It is important to first let the ADA office know so they are able to followed up with Public Works. Even if the cross walk is in another jurisdiction, a person first could send it through the Miami-Dade Office of ADA Coordination. Ms. Hyams also said that timing of lights, Audible Pedestrian Signals and other concerns in the public right-away could also go to them. Mr. Rigerman suggested that announcements boards could be used to educated the public; Ms. Hyams mentioned the State's White Cane and Mobility Laws and suggested better education and enforcement is needed.

New Business: Mr. Gregory brought up the issue of the STS program. He was waiting for Ms. Llort, the Assistant County Manager for Transportation to come to the meeting and to speak on behalf of the Mayor. Ms. Llort stated that there was a lot of miss-information circulating and did understand the concerns of people using para-transit and their desire to be kept informed. She emphasized that para-transit service is NOT going to be cancelled and that people must understand the difference between STS and ATS. She went on to say that there has been a police investigation and some arrests following the investigation in the present para-transit program. She isn't at liberty to explain everything to CODI because of pending litigation but she would share what she could. She asked for CODI's help in assuring the public that on March 22, 2010 people will be picked up and dropped off at their destinations. She said there might be some bumps along the way but everyone is working hard to minimize these bumps. Mr. Miller asked about the RFP that CODI members had been working on with the County. Ms. Llort stated that right now three things are happening: the present provide is providing service, an interim or bridge service is being put in place to cover after March 22, 2010 and the Miami-Dade Procurement department is working on a long term 5 year contract. The bridge service might be as long as two years The RFP which CODI members helped to develop was always for the 5 year contract. For a rider, the bridge service will be just like the present contract. The County is trying hard to keep the same reservation number so riders will have continuity but the number belongs to the present provider and they are negotiations for the number. What will be different in the bridge contract will be

County will be providing the call center instead of the provider. Ms. Llort said that the police had suggested this action. There was general confusion about the call center and 311 operators taking reservations. It was explained that former 311 operators will be specially trained on Trapeze and a separate call center would be established. The center will be on the 11th floor of the OVT building and be run by the Miami-Dade Government Information Center (GIC). Ms. Hyams from the Office of ADA Coordination said that she has been approached to do some training of reservationists and hopes some CODI members will help her with the training as they did with the training of the bus drivers. Mr. Kapoor discussed the technology which will be provided and the easy card which will make tracking

rides much easier. The Easy Card's October 2009 introduction will be part of the 5 year long contract and hopefully part of the two year bridge contract but right now it is still in negotiations. Mr. Martinez thanked both Mr. Kapoor and Ms. Llort for coming to CODI but said he wished they had come earlier. Many riders of the system feel that they have been deliberately kept in the dark. He asked if the County is prepared to make this change. Ms. Llort apologized and said that keeping people in the dark was not the intent of the County but she asked CODI to remember that there was an active police investigation and the filing of litigation which made it hard to explain all aspects of what was happening. She went on to say that the County is committed to service and will be ready. Mr. Kapoor spoke about the restructuring of the para-transit staff. A question was asked about the selection committee for the 5 year contract. It was said that the selection committee has not yet been assembled because the solicitation has not reached the final bid date when all bid packages must be received by the County. Because of the nearness of the bridge contract there was an emergency bid process and an emergency selection committee had to evaluate the bridge proposals. As of now, the County is in negotiations for bridge service.

Dr. Lessne spoke about misplaced justice. He asked why the County is punishing a company that self reported and told the County about the problem. He wanted to know if it was a political decision not to include the present provider. Ms. Llort said the position that the county is taking is based on the police investigation and report; she said it would be remiss if the County forgets that they have an obligation to the tax payers of Miami-Dade County. She understands many riders are very happy with the present provider; that they have had good customer service but if the County ran the service it can be better monitored. She stated that the fraud isn't an allegation but supported by the police investigation and report as well as the State Attorney's office. Dr. Lessne said it felt like double jeopardy. Ms. Llort said they had a difference of opinion. Mr. Wood stated that the system isn't broken and it doesn't need fixing. He then mentioned the problems with the buses. Ms. Llort said that the present system is broken and as far as the buses, she hopes everyone can work together to make the system better. Mr. Gregory said that para-transit service is very intimate and personal since many of the drivers become friends to the people they serve. Ms. Llort said she understands because her parent uses the system. There were several statements made from the audience mostly clarification of statements that were made earlier but many said that riders need to be in the process since it so affects them. Mr. Fulton asked about complaints and said nothing is usually resolved. It was said that people need a complaint mechanism especially if there are bumps in the road. Mr. Gregory asked when the drop dead deadline for using the bridge service would be; when will they "hit the wall". It was said by Ms. Llort that they are assessing different scenarios and will have a meeting with the County Commission soon; she feels they are weeks away before they "hit the wall". Mr. Gregory said he sees the wall. Ms. Llort said on March 22, 2010 there will be service; she thanks all of them for allowing her to speak. Mr. Gregory thanked her and Mr. Kapoor.

Elections: CODI members voted to have a closed vote with only two members voting for an open vote. Ms Hyams explained the choice of the nominating committee as well as the new ordinance allowing a person to serve more than 8 years. Mr. Gregory asked if there were nominations for the floor. Mr. Rigerman nominated himself for Chairman. He said that since he has been at CODI nothing seems to be resolved. As Mr. Rigerman was talking, Ms. Hyams passed out the ballot for members to write on. Mr. Rigerman became upset when he saw Mr. Granda collecting the ballots because he, Mr. Rigerman was still talking. **Motion made by John Miller and seconded by Ron Fulton to postpone elections until the March CODI meeting. Motion passed with one no.**

Meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm but everyone was invited to demonstration on new securement equipment.