

MINUTES
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUE
June 25, 2008

The meeting was called to order by Elizabeth McNally, Chairperson, at 1:40 pm. Introductions were done. The agenda was accepted however the order was changed to allow the Director of the Office of ADA to give a report before she left for another meeting. The minutes for May were accepted with one correction: "Announcements were read after the minutes" was changes to "announcements were read."

Chairperson's Report: Ms. McNally reported that she attended two commission meetings and a transportation subcommittee meeting. She also attended an emergency disaster conference on May 17 sponsored by Center for Independent Living and a two day Hurricane Expo sponsored by Miami-Dade County and the Red Cross. Ms. McNally had some concerns relating to a pandemic and thought CODI might invite a representative of the Health department to come to a CODI meeting for further discussion. She also attended a conference on blindness.

Old Business:

There was discussion on the proposed STS application. There was concern over the question of weight. It wasn't clear if they wanted everyone's weight or only people using wheelchairs. That got into a general discussion about the standards for a wheelchair and total weight. People seemed to want to know the standards for the size of a mobility devise and total weight. There was no place to put the need for a personal attendant. Denise Valkema said that getting a doctor to write a letter now is hard and costly. Many doctors don't have the time and some charge to prepare a letter; she was concerned about people who will find it hard to get the documentation need to submit with the application. She thought more questions needed to be on the application. Mr. Lessne asked about the appeal process. He was told that the Transit Office of Civil Rights does the appeals. Ilene Hyams will prepare the comments for Rita Kane.

Ilene Hyams read the letters from April. She read the letter sent to Chief Judge Joseph P. Farina. She read the letter that went to the police chiefs of all the municipalities and to the police chief of Miami-Dade County. She also read the letter that went to Commissioner Seijas concerning the universal symbol of disability being put on the baby stroller sign. She also said that Mr. Rigerman had called her and said that the Commissioner is going to bring this issue forward. Another issue brought up at the last meeting was the type of information that was given to people who bought baby stroller placards. Ilene Hyams showed CODI the flyer that is given out which clearly states in bold letters that people who are disabled may also park there with their placard. Ms. Hyams read the information that she, Rita Kane, and 311 staff worked on concerning emergency transportation for use by motorized wheelchair users. She then read a letter that was sent to Elizabeth McNally in response to the police chief letter. The letter was from an officer in Hialeah; she was distressed that judges are not giving full fines to violators of the disabled parking laws. In fact she sent information on a possible fine of \$103 which became only \$20 to the violator.

Mr. Wood asked a question about hearing officer and if they have the right to lower a fine. There was some discussion and it was acknowledged that sometimes the fine is lowered if the person complains or says they can't afford the fine. Someone recommended that community service be imposed if a person can't pay the fine. It was suggested that another letter go to the Chief Judge with that recommendation and maybe an invitation to a CODI meeting.

New Business:

Ms. McNally reported that Paratransit fares will go up by 50 cents a trip and they will have to do an addendum to the contract so the 50 cents will go to the providers as a gas surcharge. There is no date yet when this will take effect. Transit is looking at the 2010 contract to include the denial or extra payment of a trip which is outside the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from bus stop cutoff. GIS positioning will be programmed into the Trapeze software within the month. There was a lot of discussion concerning this. It was stated by a participant in the meeting that they didn't want the ADA standards to be

used to roll back services to people with disabilities. A CODI member stated that he didn't want CODI to be used to slit our own throats and that Transit was deliberately attempting to get CODI to get on board with Transit. It was also said that fix route needs to get a lot better before you can expect people with disabilities to adequately use the service. It was also said that maybe it was time to protest.

Ilene Hyams read the announcements on the agenda. Ms. McNally announced that the City of Miami was taking applications for Americorp workers. She also stated that 34 million dollars have been earmarked for the Talking Book library to make the conversion from analog to digital talking books.

General Discussion:

Mr. Wood Had a few issues he asked to bring up.

1. He asked CODI to take a stand on the 18th Floor of the Clark Center. He said that the food counter was too high and the water fountain wasn't compliant. He also felt that the signage was inadequate.
2. He was concerned that some of the general population shelters didn't have accessible bathrooms.
3. He said that after the last storm season the sidewalks took a long time to be repaired. He was told by the County that they were waiting for FEMA funds. He asked CODI to look into this issue.
4. He was concerned about the idea that Public Works was doing a transitional plan for sidewalks. Why was it being done now? That people should just send in their complaints.
5. He also mentioned the county's ADA Grievance form. People should be using that format.

Mr. Lessne brought up the lack of public bathrooms in the downtown business area. He said that it is a violation of the health department that bathrooms are not open to the public.

Ms. McNally reminded those present that at the July 23rd meeting at 3:00pm there will be a demonstration of the smart card equipment.

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

NOTE: two agenda items that were left out of the minutes: Please note this was at the start of the meeting

Heidi Johnson –Wright updated CODI on what is happening in the ADA office. She would like to transfer the construction aspect of our work to GSA. She also said the funding for the internship program was likely to be eliminated in this new budget. Clearly both of these items are pending the budget process. Damian Gregory had a question concerning the transfer of construction to GSA. He asked if it would negatively impact the work. Ms. Wright said that our office would continue to pick the priorities of barrier removal and we would be a customer of GSA.

Ilene Hyams showed CODI the new stationary that CODI must use when sending out official opinions or letters. The County has branding of their stationary and requested that CODI's stationary be branded