

MINUTES
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUE

September 24, 2008

The meeting was called to order by Elizabeth McNally, Chairperson, at 1:50 pm. Ms. McNally regretted that the meeting was delayed due to the para-transit RFP meeting which ended at 1:00 pm. Introductions were done. The agenda and the minutes were accepted.

Chairperson's Report: Ms. McNally welcomed everyone back from the summer. She reported that she attended the August 12th STS Oversight meeting and expressed her displeasure that the riders group have not been approached by the Chair so he might hear their concerns. The Chair of the STS Oversight Committee has met with other interested parties but has not return calls to meet with STS riders. She also said that a pattern exists of County departments and Commissioners not informing CODI of issues that they are working on that affect people with disabilities. Often CODI only finds out after the fact. She and Ms. Valkema attended the TD conference where they met with vendors. She also attended the Para-transit RFP meeting that was held earlier in the day.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE: Ilene Hyams spoke briefly about the Outreach Intern Program.

Motion made by Alan Rigerman and seconded by Ronald Fulton to write a letter to the Commissioners and the Mayor expressing their sorry that the program's funding has ended but also highlighting the success of the program. Motion passed unanimously. Questions followed. Damian Gregory asked Ms. Johnson Wright about the funding source for the program. She said that she would get him the answer quickly. Mr. Gregory announced that there was a job fair from 6:30-8:30pm at the Colonnade in Coral Gables.

OLD BUSINESS: Denise Valkema asked Ilene Hyams to read the letter that was written by the Transportation subcommittee of CODI and signed by the CODI Chair. There was some discussion on the ¾ mile issue. Ms. Kane, Para-transit Section Chief, explained that there is an existing resolution R-1396-91 passed in 1992 establishing the ¾ mile corridor. The County Commissioners recently voted to table the discussion on this 3/4 mile corridor. The Commission had asked Transit to develop a distance base fare system and in order to do this either the resolution needs to be rescinded and a new resolution needs to pass with different ranges or a directive needs to be established by the Commissioners to implement the 1992 resolution. A question was asked about service to Broward; Ms. Kane reported that a Commissioner had ordered her to stop providing services within Broward and only provide service to the one transfer point within Broward. Since the regular transit fare has gone up, Mr. Gregory asked if Ms. Kane will ask for an increase in STS fares. Ms. Kane said that she looks forward to working with CODI to look towards the future. Dr. Kohlenberg asked about oversized wheelchairs which led into a discussion about Mr. Fulton's use of para-transit. Ms. Kane expressed concern since she was not able to discuss his personal situation because of privacy. Ms. McNally asked that this was a personally matter and should not be discussed at a CODI monthly meeting. However, members of CODI continued with the discussion. Mr. Fulton stated that he has asked to be in the forward position and this has been denied. He also stated that he was asked to sit sideways. Mr. Gregory said that people using motorized devises don't have the choice of devises; often the insurance companies are the ones that make the decision. It was decided that some of these issues like size of wheelchair and space occupied can be discussed at the next CODI Transit Committee meeting. Mr. Wood said that our STS system was not created under ADA so any discussion about ADA requirements is irrelevant. Ms. Kane said that STS is not a social service it is a transit comparable service. She also reported that a person using STS can now get traffic alerts as a text message and soon a voice alert message will be available. A person must sign up via Transit website. Ilene Hyams mentioned that the 18th Floor bathroom now has electric doors. There is still signage that needs to be displayed.

New Business: Ilene Hyams reported that CODI and the ADA Office had previously worked on recommendations for the audible pedestrian signals. She read a 2005 official opinion from CODI concerning the various sounds that were recommended to Public Works. Recently when some of the Audible Pedestrian Signals were reprogrammed by Public Works the staccato sound was eliminated. Now Public Works would like CODI to decide if they are okay with this new sequence.

The 2005 motion has these recommendations:

A voice for the wait portion beginning when the activator button is pushed and stating "wait, wait, wait to cross _____ street," and repeating that message until it is safe to cross.

A loud staccato ticking sound beginning when it is safe to cross and continuing until a countdown message begins.

A voice countdown beginning ten seconds before it is no longer safe to cross and continuing until it is no longer safe to cross. The gently ticking locator sound to continue until the activator button is again pushed.

Background: on the staccato sound

In a field test the staccato ticking for the safe to cross portion of the signal was clearly audible at the center of the street despite traffic noise and despite the units being located a considerable distance behind the sidewalk.

There was some discussion. Val Schmidt said that a lot of thought had gone into the original recommendation and she thought CODI should continue to support the use of the staccato.

MOTION was made by Damian Gregory and seconded by John Miller to request that Public Work continue to use the staccato ticking. Motion passed unanimously.

Ilene Hyams reported that Public Works would like CODI's help in prioritizing Public Works projects as they relate to accessing sidewalks and bus stops. Ms. Hyams also said that a list could include state and municipal roads and those projects will be sent to the proper jurisdiction. There was some discussion about White Cane laws and the need for education. Ms. Hyams reported that the Office of ADA Coordination is doing education on White Cane and Mobility-Impaired Pedestrians laws. The office has flyers if anyone would like them. Mr. Wood made a suggestion concerning the South Dade Busway. He would like to see "short cuts" across the busway at 132 Street and 186 Street similar to 152 street. Further he feels the second priority would be to make all bus stops accessible.

Ms. Heidi Johnson-Wright brought CODI up to date concerning ordinance 081945 brought to the Commission by Commissioner Sally Heyman. This ordinance states: Amending section 30-388.2 of the Code of Miami-Dade County; providing that consistent with state law parking charges may be imposed on vehicles displaying a disabled parking permit or license tag at any county airport or seaport under specified circumstances....The Ordinance has gone through the Transit committee and Airport and Tourism Committee and will be brought to the Commission for 2nd reading on October 7th. There was discussion. Mr. Gregory felt that the Airport could mitigate the abuse by monitor the employees. Mr. Miller asked about the letters concerning placards that went to the Governor and to the local municipality's police chiefs. He also said that he felt they, the Airport, would not be able to manage enforcement of employees since most are not County employees. A representative of the Airport was present and he was asked about enforcement and he said that it is very difficult because staff can't say who is disabled or non-disabled. Mr. Wood said that it was a local option that the County doesn't have to harmonize with the State. There was further discussion.

Some CODI members said they would speak with their Commissioners.

Ms. McNally expressed her concern about the Single Family Rehabilitation program which is now funded through CED, Community & Economic Development, and administrated through CAA, Community Action Agency.

Motion made by Damian Gregory and seconded by Alan Rigerman to have CODI write a letter to the Acting Director of CED and Executive Director of CAA and their Assistant County Managers asking for information on this program. Motion was passed unanimously.

OPEN DISCUSSION: Mr. Rigerman spoke about his activities. He has been taking pictures of unauthorized vehicles parked in spaces reserved for people with disabilities. He has gotten Costco to fix their parking and will be perusing other places of public accommodation.

Mr. Wood commented that CODI isn't serving what he feels are the needs of people with disabilities. He was upset that he doesn't find out when items are going to the Commission. Mr. Wood was reminded that all Commission agendas for general and committee meetings are posted on the County's website. Ilene Hyams also said that anyone can sign up to receive emails of the upcoming meeting's agenda from the County.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.