



Commission for Person's with Disabilities (COPD)
January 19, 2010
Room 14 Governmental Center/Potomac Building

Minutes

Attendees: Susan Erichsen, Tomika Scriber, Cathy Zumbrun, Julie Randall, Christina Bishop

Guests: MaryAnn Coontz
Paula Andreas

Staff: Cynthia Brown

The meeting was called to order at 4:40pm by Chairperson Julie Randall.

Approval of the November 2009 minutes was deferred due to lack of a quorum.

Bylaws: Cynthia Brown updated the request for approval of bylaw revisions and submitted for County Commissioners' approval. The County Administrator's Office is requesting the red-lined copy. She will follow up.

Membership: Review of applications of potential applicants was tabled until next month due to lack of a quorum. The membership requested C. Brown to get clarification regarding county employees serving on advisory boards. The COPD needs representation from specific county departments like the Dept. of Public Works and Transportation. MaryAnn Coontz, who works in that department, applied but wasn't appointed.

The dynamics of the current budget cuts, lay-offs and workload of members have greatly impacted COPD momentum. The February meeting will focus on membership and C. Brown was asked to provide a list of members and terms of appointments. P. Andreas volunteered to recommend persons who could be asked to attend as Board of Education representatives and J. Randall agreed to follow up with phone calls.

Needs assessment: Several months ago the Department of Human Services hired a consultant to conduct a needs assessment for the disability community. At the conclusion of the contract, the membership determined there was still more information needed and deemed the work submitted as Phase One. A list has been created of additional items to be addressed. C. Brown is to confer with the DHS Director, Bennett Connelly, regarding next steps.

COPD priorities for 2010 were discussed. All agreed the scope, goal and objectives of subcommittees should be more clearly defined. Is there sufficient membership to cover all subcommittees? Areas such as transportation, housing, recreation and public/private accommodations should be covered by the Accessibility Subcommittee. Someone from that subcommittee should work with the Dept. of Public Works on accommodations in new buildings. The suggestion was re-visited to host a forum featuring universal design and accessibility as a means of increasing education and awareness. Subcommittee membership needs to increase in order to address all the issues identified.

Awards: S. Erichsen reported the awards presentations are going well. The charter and procedures have been written and the committee meets 3 or 4 times per year.

C. Brown was asked to confirm the due date of the annual report to the County Commissioners.

Employment: J. Randall reported the County Government's Draft Comprehensive Plan includes a chapter on Human Services. C. Brown was asked to confirm the schedule for submitting revisions and finalizing the plan.

The COPD can identify employment needs but it takes businesses to actually make the plan work. Examples include the County Government's job coaching program and Walmart's transition from school to work program. The goal of the Employment Subcommittee is to increase employment opportunities for adults with disabilities through helping to find grants, identify needs, encouraging businesses to hire, etc. C. Zumbrun suggested the COPD compile an annual report on what's actually being accomplished in this arena. M. Coontz stated STS is often aware of people with disabilities who take the bus. She offered to send a list to J. Randall of employers who hire people with disabilities.

Disability Awareness Day: P. Andreas reported flyers and letters are currently being mailed/e-mailed. She is delivering flyers to the public schools and inquired about contact information for elected officials. S. Erichsen agreed to assist. S. Erichsen also has identified college-age volunteers. Recreation and Parks staff is manning the tables along with community service workers for awareness activities. There was discussion about healthier food options for the events. P. Andreas agreed to ask C. Bishop to discuss this possibility with the Optimist. S. Erichsen suggested inviting the Good Earth Health Food Store to be a vendor. C. Zumbrun suggested including someone in the green building trade.

GOALS FOR 2010—It was decided goals for 2010 would include coordinating the following events: High Hopes for Everyone Disability Awareness Day, an event in July commemorating the 20 year anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and a symposium on accessibility focusing on universal design. The Dept of Land Use and Growth Management, the College of Southern Maryland, Patuxent River Naval Base and St. Mary's College will be asked to partner on the symposium. S. Erichsen volunteered to contact CSM on this matter.

S. Erichsen motioned to adjourn and the motion was seconded by C. Zumbrun. The meeting adjourned at 5:50pm.

The next meeting is February 16 at 4:30pm in Room 14 of the Patuxent Building.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cynthia Brown.