

City of Duluth  
Commission on Disabilities  
Monthly Meeting  
Wednesday December 2, 2009

Melissa Booth	P	Francis McGee	P
Clara Borrell	P	Patti Nadeau	P
Debra Burmeister	P	Tony Rubin	P
Roberta Cich	P	Cindy Stratioti	A
Claire Jasper	P	Beverly Strongitharm	P
Sara Junge	P	Karin Swor	E
Durbin Keeney	P	Glenn Tridgell	P
Lars Kuehnow	P	Randall Vogt	A
		Bob Grytdahl—staff	P

Guests: Shane Lueck, concerned citizen; Amanda Gigliotti, Center for Independent Living; Randy Overbee, Duluth Airport Authority; Luke Lane, Pathways to Achievement; Sarah Lear, Hands on Duluth Volunteer Committee.

1. Agenda Approval/Review of Minutes
  - a. November minutes approved as stated; agenda approved as stated.
2. Signage requests – None today.
3. Public comment – None
4. Correspondence
  - a. Tony shared what was in the correspondence file. The information was previously announced and stated in the November meeting and minutes.
5. Parks and Recreation Report
  - a. The Master Plan meeting schedule was passed around. Patti will also send it out to commissioners in email. Encourage everyone to complete a survey and attend a meeting for public input.
6. Accessible Taxi Information and Discussion
  - a. Clara shared her research on three transportation companies in the Duluth area: Call Me a Cab, Sunburst Carriers, and Freedom Transportation Services. Fran researched Northern Access and Stride. They shared information regarding service hours and area, cost, w/c accessible spots and whether they offer a discount for frequent service. To summarize, Call Me a Cab is a taxi that requires a person to transfer into the cab and stow their wheelchair in the back and charges taxi rates. The other transportation companies charge a pick-up fee starting around \$20 one-way, as well as a per mile charge and are classified as ‘special transportation services.’ STS provides rides for medical appointments only. Stride mirrors public transit and charges \$2.50 per trip and requires a seven-day notice/reservation.
  - b. Discussed the city taxi transit ordinance and clarified the definitions of special transit service (STS) and taxi service.

- c. Under the Duluth Ordinance, an STS company can only operate for medical transport. A special Transportation service (STS) is licensed by the state to primarily provide transportation for people with disabilities generally to medical appointments and paid with funds from state or federal govt. Under current Duluth Ordinance STS would be required to acquire a taxi license for charge for non-medical transportation services.
- d. Discussed the question of high cost. Rates for non-medical transport are not feasible for many individuals.
- e. The state license for STS meets the higher standard of the two. Is there room for an exemption to exempt an STS company from having the follow a city's taxi service ordinance?
- f. Luke from Pathways stated that there is a conflict with STS companies being able to comply with taxi service regulations. He shared his company services: They are an STS provider that charges a pick-up and per mileage fee, and offer a discount if the fare is paid within 20 days.
- g. Clara and Shane Lueck shared that wheelchair accessible taxi companies do exist in other cities and operate at the same rates as regular taxi service.
- h. **Durbin Keeney made a motion to exempt STS companies from the taxi cab ordinance in the City of Duluth.** Patti Nadeau seconded. Discussion followed:
  - i. The recommendation would state STS companies would have to continue to adhere to their current statuses.
  - ii. This would put another transportation option on the table for people with disability.

**The motion was called to a vote and carried with a majority vote.**

Further discussion:

Does the commission want to pursue this issue further and form a subcommittee? The ADA guidelines state that used vehicles purchased by a taxi company are not required to be accessible, but federal law requires that new vehicles be accessible.

Can we work with Shane and utilize his knowledge and research?

Claire stated that PDC will not do a survey on this topic.

**Claire made a motion that the commission makes a recommendation for better transportation options for people with disabilities. Glenn second.**

**The motion was then withdrawn. Roberta suggested forming a task force regarding this issue and took volunteers to participate.**

*Clara agreed to chair this task force and Shane Lueck would like to be involved.*

#### 7. Other business/New Ideas

- a. What is the involvement of the Commission in the homelessness project in the city and is it addressing homeless people with disability? Durbin followed-up with the Wilder survey and the St. Louise County HUD survey. He stated he

will look into the information further and bring it back for discussion. Perhaps a future task force project?

- b. MAC-V thru the Department of Veterans receives donated medical equipment such as wheelchairs and walkers. Should we develop a resource list for people in the community to access this equipment?
  - c. Melissa shared information from the Believe in Abilities brunch. A very well done video was shown and the topic addressed person first language and the 'R' word. Bob and Melissa will look into showing this video at a future meeting and maybe even airing it on PAC-TV.
  - d. Roberta passed out a handout on general information regarding universal design.
8. Strategic Planning
- a. Next month elections for chair, vice chair and secretary will take place. Please talk to Roberta if you're interested in holding an office.
  - b. We will also be reviewing our goals from the year and developing a year-end report for the City Council. We will also be developing our goals for 2010. Bring your ideas to the January meeting.
  - c. There was a request to reschedule the January meeting from January 6 to January 20 due to both Roberta and Tony being unavailable. Bob will check on meeting times and space.

Bev moved to adjourn the meeting. Lars seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Junge  
Commission Secretary