

**Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board**  
**March 26, 2008 Meeting Minutes**

**Revised & Approved**

A meeting of the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board was held on March 26, 2008 in the Conference Room of Building 158, North County Complex, Hauppauge at 2:15 pm. Chairwoman Beverly Cody presided.

**PRESENT:**

**GROUP A**

Bruce G. Blower	Representing County Executive Steve Levy
Gerald Andreus, RA	S.C. Department of Public Works/Building Design
Alice Young	S.C. Department of Labor
John Murray	S.C. Department of Public Works/Transportation Division
Tom Harkins	S.C. Department of Parks

**GROUP B**

Beverly Cody	Member, Secretary & Acting Chair
Debbie Epple	Member, S.C. Department of Civil Service/Public Info.
Valerie Lewis	Member
Kleo King, Esq.	Member United Spinal Association

**GROUP C**

Teresa Strum	Member, Western Suffolk BOCES
Ingo Gloeckner	Member, VESID

**GROUP D**

Glenn Campbell, Esq.	Member
Jim Sorrentino	Member
Frank Krotchinsky, Esq.	Member

**Guest Speakers:** Ivan Young & Tom Knobel from the Suffolk County Board of Elections are here to talk about the new Sequoia voting machines that will be used in the November Presidential Elections.

**STAFF:** Heidi Zeitler, Clerk Typist, Suffolk County Office of Handicapped Services

**EXCUSED:** Legislature Presiding Officer William Lindsay, Legislator Elie Mystal, Judy Record, Joseph Sanseverino, Edward Ahern, Paulette Bartunek, Cliff Hymowitz, Roy Probeyahn, Mitchell Shapiro, Linda O'Donohoe, Barbara Falkman

Ivan Young introduced himself as representing Commissioner Anita Katz from the S.C. Board of Elections and Tom Knobel also introduced himself representing Commissioner Geier, S.C. Board of Elections. They discussed the new Sequoia voting machine which will be used in Suffolk County in the November 2008 Presidential election every Suffolk County polling place. They handed out a flyer displaying what the new machine will look like. Under the Federal Court Order S.C. Board of Elections purchased 400 of the optical scan machines which are manufactured by Sequoia voting systems. Tom mentioned the flyer he handed out with the picture of the voting machine on it. On the back of the flyer, it has two lists, one side mentions the features of the voting machine and other lists how people with disabilities will be able to use it. The new machine that tabulates the vote attached to this sequoia system is exactly the same as the one everyone will be using in 2009 elections. Valerie asked if there will be any trained individuals at the polling places to help the disabled voters if they need it and will there be instructions on how to use the machines in a variety of formats. Ivan answered that each polling place will have a coordinator and an assistant coordinator who will be trained in using these ballot marking devices. They will also do a voter outreach campaign plan to inform the disabled voters. Tom said prior to the November 2008 election, N.Y.S. Board of Elections will have instructions posted on-line. Valerie asked if they would also inform them not to have it in Portable Document Format (PDF) because it is not accessible to many blind people, Valerie suggested that it would be best in HTML or Word format. Ivan said that he would make a note about it. Beverly wanted to know if in years to come will we be using the lever machines and one optical scanner. Ivan said this year November 2008 will be the last year for lever machines. Next year in 2009 elections everybody will be using all optical scan machines in every election district throughout New York State and throughout Suffolk County. Beverly also asked if all other counties will be using the same machine. Ivan said this year the majority of the counties did choose the Sequoia and all the machines that were chosen by other counties do meet HAVA requirements. Ivan said the disabled population will be the only ones to use this machine this year. Ingo asked if this machine was brand new to the market. Tom said this machine is new, Sequoia has manufactured voting machines for many, many years but this is a new style because New York has specific requirements that other states lack, particularly the full-face ballot. Dominion is a Canadian company that designed the machine and they are in partnership and a part of Sequoia voting machines. Beverly asked if before the election they would have another demonstration on how to use the voting machines. Ivan said because the population of people who are going to use this machine is limited, only the disabled community will be able to use them this year. Ivan said if there are any organizations that would like a demonstration they would be able to arrange it. Valerie asked if they have the resources to work with different organizations to set-up a demonstration. Ivan replied yes and Bruce said last year Board of Elections set-up a machine in their offices in Yaphank so that disabled people could try them out before Election Day.

Valerie said L.I. Talking Books Library in Yaphank has a big auditorium for demonstrations if they need it. Glenn offered the same of Suffolk Independent Living Organization (SILO) in Coram. Bruce asked if there is an audio on the Sequoia for blind individuals. Tom said audio component is very necessary because it gives you the instructions on how to use it. Valerie wanted to know what the time difference was with the audio and Tom said it is lengthy to go through the entire ballot. Valerie said last time she tried the machine it took a long time to get through it, so she asked if this would turn a lot of voters away. Ivan said if they use this machine next year, one of the neat features of this voting machine is if a person with a disability is having difficulty with it, it won't tie up the machine and people can still continue to vote and the ballot can still be scanned at the same time. Beverly thanked Ivan and Tom for taking the time to come to our Advisory board meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF February 27, 2008**

Beverly asked if there were any changes to be made to the minutes as distributed. There were none. Teresa made a motion to accept the minutes and Debbie seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were unanimously approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Bruce mentioned the request OHS received from a structural engineer in Austin, TX about a month ago in regards to a ramp to the ocean beach that was built at Suffolk County's Cupsogue Park. Bruce had some pictures Tom Harkins supplied of the ramp and passed them around for everyone to take a look at.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:** None

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Architectural Barriers** – Gerald mentioned that at the last meeting the ramp at West Sayville County Park was discussed. Gerald spoke to SCDPW Architect Steve Astuto about it because he worked on that building a while back and from what Steve remembers about it, that was the ramp they were able to produce given the historical nature and restrictions of that area. They are planning to go back to see if there is anything else they can do to make it work a little better.

Gerald also mentioned in the Labor Building #17, N. County Complex, one of the old breezeway's that was enclosed had a single interior step which is a hazard, so they will be taking care of it by replacing the awkward step with a ramp.

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Another issue in the N. County Complex is Building #151; the first floor is not accessible so they will be producing some plans to provide a walkway from the Legislature parking lot down to the first floor.

Gerald also mentioned they are finally getting the signs put in for the stalls in the DSS employee parking lot at 200 Wireless. Gerald said hopefully by our next meeting the ramp from the parking lot to the employee's entrance will be installed.

**Community Partnership** - None

**Education** - Teresa brought along an article she wanted to share which has to do with public health risk. Teresa said lately they are hearing more and more about the growing number of parents resistant to having their children immunized. This article talks about the concerns of this topic. Teresa said New York State will only accept medical or religious reasons as to why a child can enter school without an immunization. Schools are meeting with their attorneys to make sure they have the proper procedures in place to screen those students whose parents claim that they have valid exemptions. Teresa said they are seeing more and more parents claiming religious exemptions when what they really have is a philosophical or political agenda, which doesn't give their children the right to enter school without immunizations.

Valerie wanted to know if there were any educational programs available for parents of pre-school children about the immunization process. Teresa replied no, they do have a procedure in place so that when a parent pursues an exemption, medical or religious, the parent comes to the school to meet with the administrator and the school nurse. The school provides documentation from the Dept. of Health to make sure they are fully educated to make that determination. Valerie said it might be helpful to start education about immunizations on the pre-school level.

Bruce asked how a parent would make a religious argument. Teresa said it is a lot easier because there is a form available which you can download. The parent would state on the form that they have a very real, serious religious conflict with what they believe and the immunizations.

Beverly said if these instances are increasing what kind of risk is being put on the other kids and the community. Teresa said that is why she brought the article because clearly there is a greater risk for everyone.

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Teresa said if an immunization exemption is denied, the parent must be notified in writing and they have 30 days to fight it. But, at the same time when a medical or religious exemption is approved they send a letter out informing the parent they have been excused, however reserving the right not to let the child enter the school should there be an outbreak.

**Housing** - Vacant.

**Legislation** – Frank had nothing new. Bruce mentioned he was in Washington, DC last week and he had the opportunity to meet with Andy Imperato who is the president of the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD). Bruce has been talking to him for a couple of months now about the progress of the reauthorization of the ADA to overcome court findings to diminish the worth of the ADA. The reauthorization Act would restore some of these issues and make them clearer. Progress is being made. Andy had met with a group of attorneys from some of the big businesses that have been opposing this. Bruce said some of the lead congress people who have been trying to get this bill through turned to some major business organizations lobbyists in Washington and said you guys have to stop stonewalling us, we want it done. There seems to be a different demeanor in the negotiations and they seem to want to work it out. Valerie asked what is the biggest negativity towards it, and Bruce answered they always say the definition of a disability is too broad. The discussion is the disability must affect a major life function which is now in the ADA.

**Transportation** - Cliff and Judy were excused.

**WOTC** – Alice spoke about the Resource Center at the S. C. Dept. of Labor “One-Stop” Employment Office in Hauppauge, their new target population are individuals with felonies combined with mental illness in their backgrounds. They have been trying to put together a new section for ex-felons. Through research, they have found that there are many resources available to ex-felons in New York City but not on L.I. Ex-felons come with their own issues that need to be resolved. The One-Stop has a booklet called The Prime Objective - A Guide to Preparing a Job Seeking Ex-Offender, Alice said they can't keep enough of these booklets on the shelf. Alice passed around some new booklets which explain about the certificates of relief, disabilities and good conduct. Alice mentioned that Michele Del Monte from OHS made a presentation at their strategic planning meeting with handouts and information about what OHS offers. Sometimes VESID or CBVH will interview candidates at the One-Stop. Alice also brought the new Social Security Red Book for everyone to take a look at. This book is a summary guide to employment support for individuals with disabilities under the Social Security disability insurance and supplemental security income programs.

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Alice also spoke to a gentleman in Social Security/Patchogue in charge of Public Affairs; he gave her an information sheet called "What You Can Do On-line" because they are encouraging everything to be done on-line today. Social Security also will be sending a representative to the One-Stop once a month to meet individually to speak about SSI, SSDI who want to return back to work. Alice also brought information about all the government web-sites people can access. In June the One-Stop will be doing an Outreach for Employers to utilize the One-Stop.

Beverly asked if Alice had any figures on how the job placement is working for ex-felons. Alice said she personally didn't have that information but she would look into it.

### **COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:**

**Suffolk County Office of Handicapped Services** – Bruce mentioned progress that OHS will be participating in the Homeless Veterans Stand Down on April 11, 2008.

**Suffolk County Parks** – Tom reported this weekend they will be having their half marathon 5K event. Stay clear of Nichols Rd. North of the expressway and Highway 347 this Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, from 8:30 – 12pm. 350 people are already signed up but they are expecting about 700 people. Tom also reminded everyone they do have the handicapped golf cart available at the West Sayville Country Club.

**S. C. Department of Social Services** - Linda was excused but e-mailed Heidi earlier. February had 308 CDPAP active cases.

**S. C. Office of Public Information** - Debbie reported that the Suffolk County Dept of Health Services will be holding a Public Hearing on May 12, 2008 at Health Department in Hauppauge. She will email everyone with all the information.

She also mentioned that the Public Information office can help promote the upcoming SCAT Paratransit Public Hearing when all the information is available.

**Old Business** Debbie reminded everyone that she is working on the 2007 Annual Report and if anyone has any information that they would like in the report to please send it to her ASAP.

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**New Business**

Debbie asked if SCDAB could send a thank you letter to Corey Lynch who received an Eagle Scout award for planning and building an accessible ramp at the Long Island Maritime Museum in West Sayville which is managed by the Parks Dept.'s Division of Historic Services. All agreed and Bruce asked Debbie to get an address for Corey Lynch to Heidi.

**S.C. Department of Health/Division of Children with Special Health Care Needs-**

Barbara was excused.

**S.C. Department of Public Works/Transportation Division** - John Murray reported the following figures:

**SCAT PARATRANSIT** - 2007 had a 25% increase in rides over 2006

	<b><u>February 2008</u></b>
<u>Total Trip Requests</u>	35,865
<u>Requests Approved</u>	34,968
<u>Trips Denied</u>	897
<u>Percentage of Denial</u>	2.5%

**Glenn/SILO** – Glenn brought in information about the Nursing Home Transition Waiver.

Glenn also had a policy question about SCAT. Glenn used SCAT yesterday for the first time in 10 years but he was stranded when the bus left without him. When he called SCAT they said he wasn't there so they left. It was a he said, she said situation, Glenn wants to know what the policy is when a person is left stranded.

John said he doesn't handle the complaints but in the past drivers would be instructed to return and pick up a rider if they were inadvertently left behind. So, some type of policy is in place, but John said he would ask Bob Shinnick about it. Bruce said normally they do send another bus to get the stranded person. Bruce said sometimes when a stranded person calls SCAT after hours they get a menu with prompts to talk to a live person, but a lot of times they are too upset and miss the correct prompt. Bruce said if there isn't a policy there should be. Valerie said we have to be really careful of what we expect the policy to entail. There is a lot of he said, she said and there are also a lot of people who don't show up for the bus. Bruce said in the long range they will be installing GPS in all the SCAT buses so they know where all the buses are at any given time. Bruce also said all phone reservation conversations are automatically recorded. DPWI Transportation Division will listen to those recordings to hear what was actually said to reservationists.

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Bruce also mentioned the SCAT Public Hearing will be held on May 7, 2008 (3pm-6pm) in the Media Room of the H. Lee Dennison Building, Hauppauge. Bruce said we encourage anyone to come and make comments. Valerie suggested that we put a message about the hearing on the (631) 738-1150 SCAT Reservation telephone number because if they post the information on the buses not everyone can read them. Bruce said he has already suggested the same thing to Kevin Darcy in DPW Transportation.

Bruce has been getting estimates on mailings to be done to notify SCAT active riders when there are any major changes to SCAT. Bruce said once we get the money and resources to do that we could certainly use it once a year to announce the public hearing by mail and to update the SCAT riders address database.

**S.C. Human Rights Commission** - Paulette was excused.

**S.C. Community Development** - Joseph was excused.

**S.C. Library System** - Valerie brought flyers about the Assistive Technology and Resource Fair for people who are blind or visually impaired. Free Admission, Friday, May 16, 2008 10am-4pm. It will be held at Long Island Talk Book Library Suffolk Cooperative Library System in Bellport. They will have vendors with software equipment, reading machines, etc. The S.C. Dept of Labor and the Commission for the Blind will also be in attendance. If you know anyone who would benefit from the Fair please let them know.

Valerie also wanted us to know that the Suffolk Cooperative Library has some computers set-up that have Zoom Text which is software for visually impaired and for people with a variety of different disabilities. They are looking for someone to learn the programs and teach it to other people. Valerie also wanted to remind us to make materials available in alternate format for people who have disabilities.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Valerie made a motion to adjourn and Tom seconded the motion. All were in favor to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:25 pm. The next meeting will be held Wednesday, April 30, 2008 at 2:00pm in the conference room, Building 158, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heidi Zeitler