

Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board
September 30, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Approved

A meeting of the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board was held on September 30, 2009 in the conference Room of Building 158, North County Complex, Hauppauge at 2:15 pm Chairwoman Beverly Cody presided.

PRESENT:

GROUP A

Frank Krotschinsky
Jack Caffey

Representing County Executive Steve Levy
Representing Legislature Presiding Officer William Lindsay

Lew Johnson

Representing S.C. Department of Public Works, Design &
Construction Division

Alice Young
Barbara Falkman

S.C. Department of Labor
S.C. Department of Health Services/Div. of Services with Special Needs

GROUP B

Beverly Cody
Kleo King, Esq.
Debbie Epple

Member, Secretary & Acting Chair
Member, United Spinal Association
Member, S.C. Department of Civil Service/Public Info.

GROUP C

Teresa Strum

Member, Western Suffolk BOCES

GROUP D

Roy Probeyahn
Jim Sorrentino
Jodi Nicastro

Member
Member
Rep., Ingo Gloeckner, Member, VESID

GUESTS: Kevin Darcy, SCDPW Transportation
Douglas King, Representing Congressman Steve Israel and Erin King

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

EXCUSED: Leg. Kate Browning, Judy Record, Joseph Sanseverino, Valerie Lewis, Linda O'Donohoe, Mitchell Shapiro, Glenn Campbell, Esq., Terry Maccarrone, Paulette Bartunek

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 12, 2009: Beverly asked if there were any changes to be made to the minutes as distributed. There were none. Frank made a motion to accept the minutes as distributed and Jack seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were unanimously approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: Beverly mentioned our board sent Valerie Lewis a sympathy card because her mother-in-law and mother passed away within a couple of months of one another. A get well card was also sent to Bruce. Bruce had to have a kidney removed about a month ago but is doing quite well. Frank said he received an e-mail from Valerie indicating that she would be unable to attend today's meeting and October's meeting as well due to conflicts with her schedule.

Frank said he received official notification from the Office of the County Executive today appointing him to the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board – replacing Bruce Blower, Director of Handicapped Services.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT: Beverly had nothing new to report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Architectural Barriers – Lew had nothing new to report.

Community Partnership – Frank had nothing new to report.

Education –Teresa had nothing new to report.

Housing – Vacant.

Legislation – Vacant. Jack said the Legislature is preparing for the budget which is coming up in October.

Roy mentioned that Albany’s budget looks bleak with a \$3 billion dollar shortage in the current year and a greater shortage projected for next year. Roy said the governor is requesting that all agencies, Dept of Health, Office of Mental Retardation etc, submit their budgets to him now for next year, so if anyone wants to do any advocating now is the time to weigh in on issues. The governor will be announcing the budget in January and tremendous cuts are expected. There was a chart in Newsday recently which laid out the number of state workers in various departments and the numbers of people that have been excised or who had buyouts. Roy just came from the Office of the Director of LIDDSO and they are hoping to avoid direct staff cuts to the people who directly care for the individuals who need the services.

Beverly mentioned the article from last month’s hand-out pertaining to the “News Release” that the County Executive has secured over \$1.6 million in funding for the purchase of 28 new paratransit vans. These new vans will allow for increased transportation services for the disabled population.

Transportation - Cliff was absent. Beverly asked what was going on with Cliff. Frank said he has given recommendations to the County Executive’s Office and all names on SCDAB have been submitted with their resumes.

Roy said he recently spoke to Cliff who works for the Town of Brookhaven. Cliff said due to continuing transportation issues, he hasn’t been able to attend SCDAB meetings. Kevin Darcy said SCAT is available to Cliff, or if he chooses he can take public transit bus #71 to the #58 into Hauppauge.

Employment - Alice mentioned that October is Disability Awareness month. Alice brought some information sheets, www.LawHelp.org/NY which is a website that helps low-income New Yorkers solve their legal problems. The other information sheet was from the Partnership for Workplace Mental Health, a Mental Health Resource Guide sheet. Alice told Barbara that she has the Cody Center workshop series if Barbara is interested in seeing it.

COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:

Suffolk County Office of Handicapped Services – Frank gave a presentation last week to the Rehab Council about what OHS does and they discussed SCAT, medical certification policy and the door-to-door policy.

Our office (OHS) is having problems with some of the medical certifications that are being returned with the SCAT applications. They are certifying that the person has a disability but they don't say how the person's disability functionally prevents them from using the fixed route bus service. Frank addressed this topic with the Rehab Council because these agencies deal with the disabled individuals who are applying for SCAT. Frank suggested travel training to them to help the individual learn how to use the fixed route system. Kevin Darcy said maybe it's too much to ask from a doctor. Maybe the licensed professional could check off a box instead asking them if they believe the person is unable to use the fixed route buses. Frank and Dr. Lou Gallagher (S.C. Health Services) discussed that it should be more than a stamp and check off because there are different levels of disabilities. Frank read what the SCAT application asks the licensed professional to fill out. They need to fill in what the functional limitation is. On a separate line they need to describe the physical and/or cognitive condition and how it functionally prevents the applicant from using the fixed route bus service. Jack said he recalls when we discussed this at earlier meetings, because of confidentiality and legal issues doctors can't reveal too much information. It was Jack's understanding that the committee basically said if a doctor recommends a person to use SCAT it should be granted. Frank said if we receive a medical certification that only gives us a diagnosis and doesn't state how it prevents the applicant from using the fixed route bus, we don't deny them outright, we return it to the applicant asking them to have the physician fill out the second part of the question. Kleo and Teresa suggested maybe splitting up the two questions on the SCAT application so that the doctor is aware of another specific question that needs to be answered. Dr. Gallagher suggested that maybe we ask the doctor to give us a one paragraph explanation, such as what is it about this person's disability that makes it very difficult for them to use the fixed route buses. Jodi from VESID said they get a lot of questions from parents whose children are classified as learning disabled, they're not seeing a medical doctor for this, but they do have documentation for the functional limitation. VESID tells the family to go to their family doctor and explains to them what they are looking for.

Frank also attended a meeting of the Long Term Care Committee of NY Connects and they discussed what is provided on a long term basis for individuals and what gaps there are in service. Frank said it was an interesting discussion and a lot of these issues are not being discussed in the healthcare debate today. Frank said a lawsuit was brought by Disabled in Action, which was a post Olmstead case. It determined that New York is discriminating against people with mental disabilities by placing them into adult homes when they could instead be placed into supported community housing.

In the handouts there is a summary of a survey which was done by the US Government Accountability Office (GAO), about voters with disabilities and polling places. Progress is being made, more voting places are accessible with more voting machines but there are still some problems out there. Frank said OHS has received a couple of phone calls about the difficulties some people have had with voting facilities. One issue has been school board elections. Frank will be looking into these issues.

Frank also attended a meeting last week at OMRDD located at Oser Ave. Hauppauge. OMRDD has an emergency plan in effect and this meeting was organized by an inter-agency committee. They had people from DPW, Fire & Rescue and the JEEP Program was discussed. Roy said he is concerned for his family and other people who live in group homes and that they aren't left out. Frank said they need to register with JEEP.

Suffolk County Parks - Terry was excused.

S. C. Department of Social Services – Linda was excused.

S. C. Office of Public Information - Debbie brought to the board's attention an article she saw on the Town of Brookhaven's website regarding proposed legislation that gives incentives to developers to build homes incorporating basic design features to make homes accessible to the disabled population. The legislation was introduced by Councilwoman Kepert. Debbie will make copies of the article for everyone.

Roy mentioned that all the Towns offer Community Development Block grants, which can be used for accessibility issues. Beverly asked what the eligibility requirements were. Debbie said she would check with the Town of Brookhaven.

VESID – Jodi had nothing new to report.

Old Business – Frank mentioned that Mitch Shapiro was not able to attend today's meeting but he wanted everyone to know that he will be repelling down a six-story building in Garden City to raise funds for his foundation. If you would like more information about this fundraiser check out Mitch's website at Mitchsdreams.org.

Jack spoke to Kevin Darcy earlier about the Braille signs for the bus stops. Jack has reached out to the unions and they have contacted their companies and they will get in touch with Kevin. Kevin said he spoke to the Union on 9/14/09. Jack told Kevin that if nothing happens to let him know.

New Business – Long Island Family Support Council will be having their Legislative Breakfast on October 30th and all elected representatives from town, counties, state and federal levels are invited. Some of the guest speakers include a parent of a child with a disability living at home receiving Family Support Service funding, the Commissioner of the Office of Mental Retardation Developmental Disabilities and Assemblyman Jim Conte. They usually get between 400-500 people in attendance and they don't charge parents and families. Roy will send Heidi the e-mail announcements which she can pass along to everyone. The theme is Hard times, Hard Choices.

Roy mentioned that Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi held an event on Autism yesterday, 9/29/09. It was well attended and well received with about 100 families being represented.

S.C. Department of Health/Division of Children with Special Health Care Needs - Barbara said they are having their Transition Workshop for Children transitioning today for children who will be turning 3 years old. They offer this workshop 2 times a year for parents/guardians whose children will be transitioning to school age services. They sent out about 730 invitations and they usually get a consistent turnout of about 25 parents in the morning and about 60-65 parents in the evening. They have someone from their Early Childhood Direction Center come as a parent trainer and they do a power point presentation. This teaches the families the practice of going from early intervention services which is part C and then transitioning over to school age which is part B. One workshop was held this morning and another will be held this evening and a future one will be scheduled for February 2010.

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S.C. Department of Public Works/Transportation Division - John retired.

Glenn/SILO - Glenn was excused.

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

S.C. Community Development – Joseph was excused.

S.C. Library System – Valerie was excused.

ADJOURNMENT: Jack made a motion to adjourn and Roy seconded the motion. All were in favor to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m. The next meeting which was scheduled for **Wednesday, October 28, 2009 was cancelled.** The next meeting is our combined meeting for November and December and will be held on December 2nd at 2:00 pm in the conference room, Building 158, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge.

Respectfully submitted,
Heidi Zeitler