

Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board

October 26, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Approved

A meeting of the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board was held on October 26, 2011 in the Conference Room of Building 158, North County Complex, Hauppauge at 2:05 pm, Chairperson Beverly Cody presided.

PRESENT:

GROUP A

Frank Krotschinsky, Esq.
Jack Caffey
Barbara Falkman

Representing County Executive Steve Levy
Representing Presiding Officer William Lindsay
S. C. Dept. of Health Services/Div. Services for
Children with Special Needs
S. C. Department of Social Services
Representing SCDPW Transportation Division
Representing S.C. Department of Public Works,
Design & Construction Division

Linda O'Donohoe
Chris Chatterton
Lew Johnson

GROUP B

Beverly Cody

Member Secretary & Acting Chair

GROUP C

Teresa Strum

Member, Western Suffolk BOCES

GROUP D

Clifford Hymowitz
Glenn Campbell, Esq.,

Member
Member

GUESTS: Bruce Blower, Sharon Garcia/Clubhouse of Suffolk, John Mikochik/SCAT consumer, Judith Weiber, L.I. Council of the Blind

STAFF: Heidi Zeitler-Senior Clerk Typist, Suffolk County Office for People with Disabilities

EXCUSED: Terry Maccarrone, Kleo King, Esq., Carolyn Bossert/Donna Passin, Debbie Epple, Leg. Kate Browning/Timothy Rothang, Mitch Shapiro, Roy Probeyahn, James Kokindo, Jodi Nicastro, Roy Probeyahn, Garrett Hulett, Valerie Lewis

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 26, 2011: Beverly asked if there were any changes to be made to the minutes of September 21, 2011 as distributed. There were none. Lew made a motion to accept the minutes as distributed and Cliff seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were unanimously approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT: Beverly told everyone the sad news that Roy's wife Arleen passed away last week. A sympathy card is being passed around for Roy and his family. When we find out the details, Heidi will forward the information to everyone. Bruce said that he spoke to Debbie Epple, she is doing very well and she thanks everyone for their well wishes.

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Beverly mentioned in October's ABLE Newspaper and in last month's handouts there was an article about Frederick Fay. Fred, who was paralyzed in a backyard accident as a teenager, became one of the country's most prominent advocates for the rights of the disabled. On October 27, 2011 there is going to be a documentary on PBS featuring Fred's life story, check your listings for times.

Beverly mentioned that Mike Stolz, who is the Executive Director of Clubhouse of Suffolk, is being honored with an 'Outstanding Advocate Award', which will be held on November 3, 2011 at The Meadow Club in Port Jefferson, 6-10 p.m.

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. Cliff said the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) along with the NYSDOT will be having an Educational Forum on the New Freedom Grant and Job Acts vs. Commute Grant. It will be held on December 6, 2011 at the H. Lee Dennison Building in Hauppauge. Cliff would like this information to be distributed as well and will get this information out to Heidi.

Transportation - Vacant.

Employment - Carolyn Bossert/Donna Passin were excused.

COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:

Suffolk County Office for People with Disabilities - Frank mentioned in regards to the budget there are proposed cuts to the S.C. Office for People with Disabilities. There are two neighborhood aides on staff and one position in the office is proposed to be cut. The difficulty our office is going to have is that one of the neighborhood aides is going out on maternity leave shortly. He has informed the Legislature the problem the department is facing. If these cuts do go through it's going to make it very difficult to provide the services to the public that we are required to provide under the ADA. The issue that may arise is if the county doesn't provide certain services, they are liable to be sanctioned by the Federal Government.

Suffolk County Parks - Terry was excused.

S.C. Department of Social Services - Linda had nothing new to report.

S.C. Office of Public Information - Debbie was excused.

Old Business - None

New Business - Beverly brought up ADA non-compliance issues on Eastern L.I. Attached to the Agenda you will find the article 'Failure to Enforce', by Richard Rosenthal. Richard was past Chairperson of the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board before Beverly. Beverly has been in touch with Richard through emails and he gave her some updates on the non-compliance issues that he has been looking in to. Jack suggested the Richards letter be sent to town Supervisor, Bill Wilkenson, as well as to Legislator Schneiderman.

Cliff announced that on November 22, 2011, the Town of Brookhaven will be having an ADA Awareness Day, and they will be honoring HANDS and posthumously Rev. Minard. Cliff asked Frank if the Suffolk County Office for Public Information might be able to distribute this information in their flyer. Frank said he would look into it. Cliff will send the information to Heidi.

S.C. Dept. of Health/Division of Children w/Special Health Care Needs - Barbara reported that the Division of Services for Children with Special Needs is in the process of planning a full-day conference on December 7, 2011. The topic will be, Coaching and Mentoring Parents: From Principle to Practice. The guest speaker will be Dr. Philippa Campbell. Barbara will send Heidi the information to bring to the next meeting.

S.C. Department of Public Works/Transportation Division - Beverly read the letter which the board sent to Legislator Schneiderman requesting that a public hearing be held to address the possible policy changes regarding SCAT Transportation.

Chris said transportation is not looking for the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board to develop a plan of attack to address the SCAT denials, but what they are looking for is specific comments on the proposed policies.

Chris said the Transportation Division is looking to hold public hearings late next month with advance notice to all board members, scat riders and the public. At this time they are not looking for the legislature to get involved.

Bruce said it really doesn't matter if a motion was passed or not to send the letter to Legislator Schneiderman, because this board was set-up by local laws to advise the County Legislature and the County Executive on all matters pertaining to the disabled. Beverly as Chairperson has the right to set the Agenda. Chris said the above point is noted, but he just wanted to let us know that SCDPW Transportation Division will be having a public hearing, which would make Legislator Schneiderman's hearing unnecessary.

Chris said SCDPW Transportation Division reviewed all the comments that were submitted by the board regarding proposed policy changes and reported the following:

SCDPW Transportation Division will be looking at the performance of the contractor as well as the responsibilities of the rider. They will better define what a missed trip is by the provider and take advantage of their recording capabilities. It was recommended by Bruce and Garrett to use a new '***Missed the transport***' category. Chris said he would provide a memo for everyone that describes the new category to make sure coding of the trip is correctly done. Right now riders can make advanced cancellations 24/7, but transportation might need to advertise this information more so riders are more informed.

Beverly asked Chris that when they send out the information on the proposed changes, to make sure it is well noted that one of the policy changes is to change the reservation period from 7 days down to 3 days. Chris said they plan on making both the change in the reservation period and the no-show policies more pronounced bullets in the proposed changes.

Sharon said SCAT paratransit buses now have 'Comment forms' on the buses for riders to share their comments regarding their bus service. Judy wanted to know if these forms are in accessible format for blind passengers.

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Chris said they are welcome to make any comments or complaints by calling SCAT reservations at (631) 738-1150. Chris asked that the board provide them with suggestions on how to make them available in accessible format.

Judy, who just left the meeting early wanted it noted in the minutes that when a person calls up SCAT and is put on hold, instead of listening to music while on hold, SCAT could be announcing important hearings, changes etc. instead. Also added, what the passenger's responsibilities are as well as informing riders of the automated system.

Chris wanted to let everyone know the sad news that Jennifer Freeman has resigned from SCDPW Transportation Division.

The board discussed briefly all the critical issues that the county is facing right now such as the budget, layoffs and possibly the closing of County Health Centers.

Bruce asked Chris if he could get statistics on whether there was an increase in ridership to the Federal VA Clinic in the County Center Bldg. on the North/South forks. Jack suggested that Chris call Tom Ronayne, Director for County Veterans Dept. Beverly asked Chris to get statistics on how many scat riders utilize the East End, East of Riverhead heading out to the forks.

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

S.C. Community Development - Vacant.

S.C. Library System - Valerie was excused.

SILO - Glenn said about 2 weeks ago he was about two miles from his home when his van broke down, he called scat for a pick-up but was told they don't do same day service. Because Glenn wasn't able to get a trip home he had to ride his wheelchair home in the dark, on the side of Route 112. Glenn recently spoke to Legislator Schneiderman on a separate issue but brought up what had happened to him with SCAT. Legislator Schneiderman feels that if we can't make same day service a policy change, maybe they could make a change in policy in the event of an emergency.

ADJOURNMENT: Jack made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Frank seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m. **The next meeting combines the November & December meetings and will be held on December 7, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. in the Conference room, Building 158, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge.**

Respectfully submitted,
Heidi Zeitler