

**Frederick County Commission on Disabilities
Monthly Meeting Minutes February 9, 2009**

Present:

Members: Linda Werner, Chair; Cassandra Gannon, Gil House, Steve Stoyke
and Ken Eidel

County Liaison: Miles Ward

Public: Chris Huckenpoehler

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm.

Reading of January 12, 2009 Meeting Minutes:

Motions were made to accept the January 12, 2009 meeting minutes, with the following amendments. Vote: unanimous

1. Page two, second paragraph: Delete "Since the Frederick News-Post is not sympathetic."
2. Page two, under "FFCOD Website", revise second line to read, "Jamey George and Cassandra Gannon volunteered to work with Linda Howard."
3. Page two, "Recruiting New Members" section revised to read:
"Linda Werner reminded the commission that we still have two open positions and it would be preferable to have candidates with disabilities. Linda said we encourage people with disabilities to apply, but membership is not limited to those folks. Linda said the county published a public notice of commission openings. Miles Ward suggested commission members should encourage people they know who would be good to volunteer."

Old Business:

Update – County Commissioners Annual Report:

Linda Werner said the commission's annual report to the County Board went very well. The Board expressed its appreciation for all of the fine work that its members have done and are doing, and for all of the results the commission has achieved for the disabled community in Frederick County. Items that the Board asked about included putting information about transit services and for people with disabilities in the next edition of "Keys to Independence", whether there was any feedback on the sign language interpreter shown during telecasts of the Board's public meetings, and whether the commission had heard any reports about the Browsealoud software that speaks the text contained on the County's website. Linda reported that Ashley Andyshak, a reporter with the *Frederick News-Post*

who covered this meeting, is very interested in helping publicize commission matters.

Update – Tri-State Liquors

Steve Stoyke reported that he went to the liquor store in Brunswick that is the subject of this disability discrimination complaint. It's owners live in Virginia. The store is very crowded and located in a strip mall. Narrow aisles, all jam packed with goods of all sizes and descriptions. He spoke to the manager, who knew about the incident. The manager confirmed that the clerk has a nasty disposition, and has been told that treating customers this way is not permitted. The manager said that what he learned was that a woman in a wheelchair came in right before Christmas when the store was crowded with merchandise and customers. She was reaching for bottles on the shelves, and the bottles were tipping. Some customers tried to help her, and the woman in the wheelchair was rude to them. The manager saw it and told her, "Stop it! Can't you see we're busy?" The woman in the wheelchair started to cry and then left the store.

Chris said he knows the family who owns this store and they are decent and reputable, and also own a liquor store in Urbana. Cassandra reported hearing that this store has a good reputation in Brunswick. Based on his investigation, Steve will draft a response letter to the Campbells and circulate it among commission members before sending it. Cassandra will check on who owns the building and draft a letter asking the owners to install a disabled parking sign.

New Business:

Website:

Cassandra reported that she and Jamey are currently looking into updating the website. The domain name has expired and there will be a cost to renew it, perhaps \$70. They are looking into how much it will cost for someone to update the content on the website, which is out of date. Miles reported that he had been contacted by Robin Santangelo, the Frederick County Public Information Officer, after the commission report to the Board. She placed an electronic copy of the "Keys to Independence" booklet on the County website, and asked why the commission was using its own website and wasn't on the County website, as some other commissions are. While this may turn out to be a good option for the commission, Miles said that one item to consider is cost, and whether moving to the County website would save money. Cassandra will contact Robin Santangelo to find out what options and services the County offers, and how much the County would charge the commission.

Frederick County Public Works – ADA operating procedures:

Miles reported that the County Office of Project Management, which is responsible for constructing county buildings and facilities, recently adopted operating procedures that require all building plans to be submitted to the commission for review. The procedures establish a timeframe for the commission's comments to be considered and evaluated. This reflects the County's appreciation for all of the hard work that Gil and Richard have performed, and their expertise in building issues and the ADA.

"Keys to Independence" distribution

Copies of the booklet were available for members to take and distribute. Linda encouraged everyone to carry out their assignments. It appears that the supply of 200 booklets recently printed will soon be exhausted. Consideration was given to ordering a new supply, since there is money in the budget. Linda said that before another order is placed, the commission needs to consider adding some materials to the booklet on other services, such as: support groups, respite care services, the commission website, a taxi voucher program with local cab companies (if that can be started), the sign language and text reading features on the County's website, and information about transit programs including "Transit Plus". Ken asked if the commission should look into asking the local cab companies to create a taxi voucher program. It was mentioned that Blaine Young, a local radio personality, owns the local Yellow Cab franchise, and might be willing to come to a meeting and discuss this.

Recruiting new commission members; recruiting a high school student to attend meetings

Linda said that it would be a good idea to recruit members with a disability since their perspective is very important, and while the majority of our current members have backgrounds in agency work they are not disabled. Gil said he would be interested in asking a high school student with a disability to come to a commission meeting and speak. Chris suggested contacting the VFW and asking a Vet to come and speak. There was general agreement that these were all good ideas.

Gil House's Updates:

Gil has heard nothing more about Marilyn J. Phillips and her complaints about disabled access in New Market. Gil said he reviewed accessible parking at the recreation Center at 2nd and Benz, met with the property managers and reviewed striping and signing. Gil said there is a snack shack where sodas are sold for park

events. There's no sidewalk to it, and the counters are all too high. Gil is going to contact Parks and Rec about fixing that.

Joe Darcy with Sen. Mooney called Gil, and it sounds like Sen. Mooney may introduce a bill on the minimum width of disabled accessible parking spaces.

County website – sign language interpreter and Browsealoud software

Miles said that during the commission's annual report, several commissioners asked questions about efforts the County has made to make its website more accessible. Specifically, they asked if the commission had received any reports, comments or feedback from the disabled community on the sign language interpreter that appears in a small box during the televised portion of meetings. Is the box big enough for people to see what the translator is signing? They also asked if the commission had heard any comments from people who had used the Browsealoud software that speak the text contained on pages of the website. No members reported hearing any comments about either feature. Members were encouraged to bring any reports they may hear to future meetings.

Ft. Detrick Equal Employment Opportunity Office Conference

Linda reported that the commission received an invitation to this conference which will take place on March 19, 2009 at Dutch's Daughter Restaurant. We would be given a table to set up an information booth. Members said this would be a good way to distribute the "Keys to Independence" booklet and other informational brochures. Mention was made of a large vinyl banner that the commission might be able to use, if it can be located. Miles is to RSVP for the conference. Ken, Steve and Miles said they believed they would be able to attend. Linda asked if the commission would be interested in ordering rubber jar openers, imprinted with the commission's name and information, to give away at resource fairs like this.

Developmental Disabilities Waiver

Steve asked if anyone was interested in signing up to attend a free training from the Frederick County Health Coalition to become certified as a support services coordinator to handle the grants from the state that support DDA waiver clients. Ken and Linda said they were familiar with this training, and while it would ordinarily be a very good idea, it looks like the money has run out and the need for certified coordinators has ended. No members indicated they wanted to sign up.

Distinguished Service Award – April 2009

Linda said that she would like to present a distinguished service award to Eric Zimmerman in April, during a public meeting of the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Zimmerman is the founder of the Buddy Project, which auctioned pies this past summer to raise money to purchase refurbished computers to give to people with disabilities. Linda said a vote would be held on this at the commission's March meeting. If the commission votes to do this, Miles will order the plaque, contact Mr. Zimmerman to confirm, and get the presentation set on the Board's agenda. Linda is not available during the evening on the third Tuesday of the month.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.