

Knoxville Mayor's Council on Disability Issues

July 13, 2022, Meeting Minutes, Zoom

I. Meeting was called to order at 4:03pm.

II. Roll Call:

Members: Alexander, Barber, Briggs, Childress, Colebrooke, Cox, Jenkins, Landfather, Lowe, Maxwell, Mull, NeSmith, Orr, Ross, Saxton, Simmons, Spangler, Villanueva, Welch

City of Knoxville Staff: Cook, Dziubak

Present: Alexander, Barber, Briggs, Jenkins, Landfather, Lowe, Mull, Ross, Saxton, Shimmin-Orr, Simmons, Spangler, Villanueva, Welch

Absent: Childress, Colebrooke, Cox, Maxwell, NeSmith

Guests: Melissa VanDyke, Regis Borsari, Sandy Booher, Carly Pearson

Interpreters: Jessica Brackeen, Haile Stewart

III. Approval of June Minutes: Shimmin-Orr amended the spelling of DeafBlind and Simmons made the first motion to approve minutes with the amendment. Mull made the second motion, and the motion carried.

IV. Washington DC and the passing of the ADA – Sandy Booher

- Sandy Booher had a ruptured aneurysm in 1968 and though not paralyzed, did lose her vision due to a severed optic nerve. She has regained partial vision in one eye and does have a closed head injury from the hemorrhage.
- Booher moved to a farm in Tennessee in 1970 and did not do much for the next 5 years. She then applied for service with Vocational Rehabilitation, and they helped her to learn mobility with a white cane.
- She also started sewing and using a pottery wheel and Vocational Rehabilitation helped her set up a home business. She decided that was not enough to support herself and her five children and decided to go to school, attending the University of TN where she received her B.F.A. and was introduced to Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Booher then discussed ADAPT, The Crawl, and sit-ins that were occurring before the ADA and how they paved the way for laws to be enacted. She said that discouragement from others just encourages her to keep going, and that the challenges of others should not stand in the way of what you want to accomplish.

- Booher shared some difficulties she had encountered in the early 1980's when the World's Fair was in Knoxville and how she contacted Wanda Moody with the city who took down her information and would later be instrumental in Booher becoming so active in the Knoxville community.
- She shared how she went into Social Work, once again fighting the ideas that others had of her capabilities.
- Booher inquired of how many current CODI members have a disability; Dziubak reported CODI is about 50/50 at the moment concerning those with and without disabilities being on the board. Booher asked those with a disability if they have felt the need to defend themselves against the misperceptions others may have, and Briggs agreed it is a hard thing to overcome. Simmons chimed in that he has been disabled twelve years it took him about a year and a half to stop caring what others think.
- Cook shared that Booher had been on a number of advisory boards and CODI over the years.
- Landfather asked for more of an explanation of the white cane training.
- Booher also discussed having guide dogs over the years, though she does not currently have one. She shared that the two biggest obstacles for the blind are transportation and the written word, but that technology has helped with the written word, and here in Knoxville there is a good foundation and open communication to improving transportation.
- Carly Pearson, Knox County ADAC, shared that Booher serves on the DAGWOULD advisory board for the County.
- Barber then asked where we go from here, and Booher mentioned the Olmstead Act and Medicare expansion, and that just being active in different organizations and keeping up with advocating for those who need it is a good way to continue on.

V. New Member Introductions

- Kezia Cox and Aquayla Maxwell will introduce themselves at the August CODI Retreat.
- Mark Ross has lived in Knoxville for two years, works in the construction industry with lighting, started working with the Special Olympics in Pensacola FL, and works with Wounded Warrior Project. He feels his skill set and desire to help those with a disability will serve him well on CODI.
- William Saxton goes by the nickname Sax and has lived in Knoxville for two years. He moved from Chattanooga when his wife got a job opportunity in the Knoxville area. He served 23 years in the military, and part of that time was as a drill sergeant. He currently works for the State of TN serving veterans, and feels he excels in his position as he has some of the same disabilities.

VI. Member Advocacy and Information

- No New Business

VII. Committee Reports:

Bylaws:

- Did not meet in July

Membership:

- Did not meet in July

Community Engagement:

- Dziubak reported that we are waiting on more information from DIA about Parking Day, which is the third week in September. Once CODI knows if DIA will be able to participate this year, it will be revisited.
- There was no update from the Chamber of Commerce.
- John Barber is now the Chairperson of the group and Dennis Landfather is the interim secretary.

Transportation:

- Welch reported on KAT's public hearing and reduced route services starting on 8/29, and the WBIR article about it.
- There has been discussion about the Greyhound Bus stop being at an unsafe location. The Marathon gas station where it is currently is not 24 hours, so this stop may be moved in the future.
- Stephanie Cook shared that a meeting took place between KAT and City Engineering to discuss the mall setup.
 - There are new "watch for pedestrians" signs at the Gleason stop.
 - An inside bench may be possible in Belk for riders to have a place to wait not in the elements, and an outside bench is also being discussed.
 - KAT has been very active in their collaboration with the City and West Town mall, and while no solution is perfect, KAT is trying to come up with workable solutions while also dealing with staffing shortages and lower ridership.
- Welch mentioned that the I-640 East paving project has started and that the speed limit change to 25 miles per hour on unmarked roads has now taken effect.

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VIII. Strategic Plan Reports:

Livability:

- Mull reported that there has been progress made on the Accessibility Checklist, and the training PowerPoint presentation.
- The group is hoping to be able to share the presentation with the full CODI body at the August retreat.

Universal Design:

- Dinner and Design is on hold until Universal Design can find out if there is going to be enough interest from the builders in Knoxville.
 - Simmons reported that speaking with from the Home Builders Association (HBA) is the biggest hold up, as an inside track is preferable to just cold calling companies.
- Simmons mentioned Hopeful Housing is going to be building affordable housing in the Inskip and North Knoxville area, and we may want to try to talk to them about accessibility as well if we can.

IX. New Business:

- Dziubak reported the arrangements for the August 12, 2022, CODI Retreat:
 - It will be in the City County Building 4th floor room 461 from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.
 - City County Cafe will provide catering for both breakfast and a light lunch, with water, sodas, and coffee available.
 - A Keurig brewer will be available for coffee, and K-cups will be provided, but if someone has a preferred brand/flavor of K-cups, they may bring their own to use.

X. Announcements & Public Forum:

- Daniel Alexander shared that there will be an Open Gym day in August and a Wheelchair Tennis Expo in October and he will email out more information.
- Carly Pearson shared that the disability advisory meeting for the County (DAGWOULD) is on August 18, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. at the Disability Resource Center and everyone is invited.
- Regis Borsari mentioned that the Three Rivers Co-Op round up for the month is benefiting Catalyst, and that the program benefits a different non-profit every month.

XI. Meeting was Adjourned at 5:15p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Karen Lowe, Secretary, and Misha Dziubak, City Liaison