

September 24, 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Accessible Communities Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

The Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (ACAC) met on Monday, September 24, 2018, 1:30 – 2:30pm at the Cowlitz County Administration Building, 3rd floor meeting room. The meeting agenda is attached.

Attendees were:

Tiffany Ames, Life Works/The ARC of Cowlitz County
Carl Cecka, Goodwill
Steve Chapman, Lower Columbia College
Steve Cooper, Community Member
Kay Gunter, Cowlitz Community Network
Jeremy Heffernan, Cowlitz County Elections Manager
Melinda Johnson, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment
Beth Kelly, DDA
Brian Loos, City of Longview HR/Longview Accessibility Advisory Committee
Susan Marion, Housing Opportunities of SW Washington
Evelynn Marquez, Cowlitz County Health and Human Services
Terry McLaughlin, Cowlitz County Assessor
Leah McQuaid, Community Member
Mary Kate Morgan, Lower Columbia College
Susan O'Connor, Wahkiakum County Auditor's Office
Nikki Palm, Community Member
Ryan Palm, Community Member
Allan Rudberg, Housing Opportunities of SW Washington
Susan Schwartz, Community Member
Jennifer Shaffer, DDA
Sheila Sharp, Goodwill
Ryan Smith, Compass Career Solutions
Elaine Stefanowicz, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment
Breanne Swanson, Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of SW WA
Shannon Underhill, Sign Language Interpreter
Sharon Weinhold, Cowlitz County Elections
Carla Jo Whitson, Brain Injury Alliance of Washington

Meeting participants were welcomed and thanked for their attendance. Introductions were made around the room. A special welcome was extended to the guest speakers, Melinda Johnson and Elaine Stefanowicz from the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE), and to Brian Loos and the members of the Longview Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).

Town Hall Meeting and Leadership Breakfast.

Melinda Johnson provided some history and a description of the GCDE and the work they do. The Committee provides advocacy throughout the state to empower people with disabilities so they can gain equal opportunities and maximum independence. Melinda said the GCDE is currently recruiting members to fill three vacancies on the 27-member committee. The governor appoints new members to serve an initial three-year term, with an opportunity to be reappointed for a second term. Committee members can live anywhere in Washington State and must be a person with a disability, have family member(s) with a disability or work as an advocate for people with disabilities.

Melinda highlighted the Governor's Employer Awards Program that recognizes and promotes the achievements of employers and individuals who improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Cowlitz County's two Papa Murphy's Take and Bake Pizza stores were nominated for the award by an employee of Life Works. Award recipients will be recognized by the Governor in a ceremony in the Fall of 2018.

Elaine Stefanowicz shared information about the Youth Leadership Forum, a six-day residential leadership development program for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. The 2018 Youth Leadership Forum was July 22-27 at Evergreen State College in Olympia. The goal is for youth with disabilities to grow personally, socially and academically, and fulfill their potential. All costs, including housing, meals, interpreters, personal care assistants, transportation, and meeting space are paid for through fundraising, state agencies and corporate donations.

Melinda spoke about the Community Outreach Program that conducts outreach, information and advocacy events in communities throughout the state. Town Hall meetings are a part of this program. The Cowlitz County Town Hall meeting will be held on Thursday, November 15, from 5:30 – 7:30pm, in the Health & Science Building at Lower Columbia College. The Town Hall meeting will give Cowlitz County residents an opportunity to share local success stories for persons with disabilities, address challenges and barriers to success and propose ideas for positive change. ACAC members are encouraged to participate in the Town Hall meeting and invite others who may be interested, including organization leaders, co-workers and clients. Captioning Service and sign language interpreters will be provided. A Leadership Breakfast will follow on Friday, November 16, where community leaders will work on the issues and propose ways to alleviate the challenges and barriers identified at the Town Hall meeting.

City of Longview Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Brian Loos gave a description of the Longview AAC, which was established by city council Resolution in June 2017. The AAC is a nine-member volunteer committee with a goal of assisting and advising the City of Longview on the most appropriate ways to make its programs, services, activities and facilities accessible to all residents and visitors. AAC members are appointed by the mayor. Brian said the committee currently has all nine members and met for the first time in July 2018. The committee is developing a plan and creating a website. The committee is surveying the public for input

on things that should be considered for the plan and asked ACAC members to respond to the survey and invite others to respond.

Update, ACAC Store Front Project.

Jeremy Heffernan gave a brief description of the project that will make the doors to the Assessors, Auditors and Treasurers offices more accessible to persons with disabilities. New automatic doors will be installed. It is anticipated the project will be completed in October.

2018 General Election.

Jeremy spoke briefly about the Primary and the new requirement to include postage free ballot return envelopes. He said ballot returns by mail increased for the Primary. The 2018 General Election is on November 6; ballots will be mailed on October 19. Voters' Pamphlets will be mailed to all households between October 6 and 13. An online Voters' Guide also is available on the Cowlitz County Elections website.

Upcoming Events.

- Carla-Jo Whitson announced several support groups. Please contact her at carlajow@biawa.org for times and locations.
- Tiffany Ames said a "Together We Can" event will be held on March 14, 2019 at the Red Lion Hotel. A committee will be formed soon to begin planning for the event.
- Breanne Swanson announced several events, including a Seniors Prom. Contact Breanne at swansbm@dshs.wa.gov for more information.