

April 5, 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Accessible Communities Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

The Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (ACAC) met on Thursday, April 5, 2018, 2:00 – 3:00pm at the Cowlitz County Administration Building, 3rd floor meeting room. The meeting agenda is attached.

Attendees were:

Louise Brown, Cowlitz Community Network
Steve Chapman, Lower Columbia College
Linda DeCost, DSHS DDA
Jennifer Fenton, Longview Accessibility Advisory Committee
Carolyn Fundingsland, Cowlitz County Auditor
Lisa Gaynor, Lower Columbia CAP/SHIBA
Kay Gunter, Cowlitz Community Network
Jeremy Heffernan, Cowlitz County Elections Manager
Donna Hughes, Work Source
Tim Krueger, Cowlitz County Ombudsman, Mental Health
Joanne Laurent, Services for the Blind
Brian Loos, City of Longview HR/Longview Accessibility Advisory Committee
Susan Marion, Housing Opportunities of SW Washington
Lucy Meyer, DSHS DDA
Mary Kate Morgan, Lower Columbia College
Jennifer Neal, Cowlitz Indian Tribe
Ben Nolen, River Cities Transit
Susan O'Connor, Wahkiakum County Auditor's Office
Allan Rudberg, Longview Accessibility Advisory Committee
Susan Schwartz, Community
Ray VanTongeren, Cowlitz Community Network
Sharon Weinhold, Cowlitz County Elections
Carla Jo Whitson, Brain Injury Alliance of Washington
Linda Wilson, DAV Van Transportation Network

Meeting participants were welcomed to the first ACAC meeting of 2018. Since several people were attending for the first time, introductions were made around the room. A special welcome was extended to the members of the Longview Accessibility Advisory Committee members.

ACAC Annual Plan.

The proposed 2018 ACAC Annual Plan was reviewed. Revised Code of Washington (RCW) directs that an ACAC create and approve a plan each year and specifies much of the work that an ACAC should do to improve accessibility in their community. While improving access to voting is no longer the only focus of an ACAC (as it was with the

Disability Advisory Committee), it remains an important area of work. Many actions are in progress concerning voting, including system modernization and implementation of legislative changes.

Update on Elections System Modernization Project. Carolyn provided information about Cowlitz County Election's ballot and tabulation system. The system is eight years old, there is new and better certified elections technology available, and the Cowlitz County system needs to be replaced. She said new system enhancements have been made to the accessibility unit, which would replace the eSlate. The system will be replaced in late 2018 or early 2019, and before the 2020 Presidential Election. Carolyn plans to invite and rely on ACAC members and/or their clients to test the available systems and get their input as Cowlitz County decides which system to select. The goal will be to provide the best system for Cowlitz County.

Legislative Changes to Voting.

Jeremy announced ballots were just mailed for an April 24 election that involves a school bond issue for Castle Rock. Candidate Filing Week is May 14-18. Offices open for election are posted on the Cowlitz County website.

Jeremy gave an update on legislative changes that have been or will be implemented in 2018 or 2019. State wide procedures on these changes are being developed and more specific information will be available as work continues and is completed.

-In 2017 the law required that each County have a ballot box for each 15,000 voters or in a census designated area. As a result, a new ballot box was installed in Ryderwood during 2017. There are currently nine ballot boxes in Cowlitz County, including those in the Auditor's and Election's Offices. Jeremy reported that 70-80% of all ballots are returned through the ballot boxes. ACAC members agreed that the ballot boxes and vote by mail have been important accessibility improvements for voters with disabilities.

-In 2018, the Automatic Registration Act was passed which expands the Motor Voter requirements starting in July 2019, to include automatic registration for commercial and enhanced driver's licenses unless the person opts out.

-Starting in July 2019, the Future Voter Program allows people to pre-register to vote starting at age 16. They will remain in a pending status and automatically activated at the next election when they are 18.

-2018 legislation also extended the period for voter registration. Beginning in 2019, voters will be able to register to vote in person at a County Auditor's Office or Elections Office up until 8pm, the night of an election. Current law cuts off in-person registration eight days before an election.

ACAC members approved the ACAC Annual Plan as written. They reflected there is a lot happening in Cowlitz County to improve accessibility for voters with disabilities. ACAC members will be updated as the details of the modernization project and legislative changes become available.

ACAC Grant Proposal.

A presentation in late 2016 by Mr. Toby Olson, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, and information about the great work being done by Access4All Spokane peaked ACAC member interest in developing a project to promote greater awareness of disability issues with an education campaign to improve access, acceptance, involvement and inclusion for persons with disabilities and seniors in Cowlitz County. An ACAC subcommittee comprised of Steve Chapman, LCC; Evelyn Marquez, Cowlitz County Health and Human Services; Allison Orton, DSHS DVR; Donna Hughes, Work Source; Jennie Bergman, Life Works and Sharon Weinhold, Cowlitz County Elections conducted research and developed an ACAC Grant Proposal - Awareness and Education Campaign for presentation to the ACAC. The goals of the project are to: Understand and address barriers encountered by persons with disabilities and seniors, and Improve access, acceptance, involvement and inclusion.

The proposal calls for: Outreach to understand and address barriers to accessibility, acceptance, involvement and inclusion; Development of a website or app that will provide useful information and list of resources available for persons with disabilities and seniors, organizations that serve these persons and businesses; Building relationships and showcasing accessible businesses and places in the community; Several events, including an event in conjunction with Disability Employment Awareness Month in October 2018 and a Town Hall meeting in November 2018 in partnership with the Governor's Committee.

After discussion, questions, ideas and suggestions regarding the proposal, ACAC members agreed this work is needed in Cowlitz County, would be beneficial for the community and the proposal should be submitted for consideration for funding. If funding is approved, ACAC members will be invited to participate on various committees that will develop the details of project implementation.

ACAC members expressed their appreciation to the committee for the thoughtful proposal and agreed to be actively engaged in project development and implementation.

Upcoming Events.

-April 23, Information Panel on Small Businesses, Longview Public Library, 6-7pm.

-May 8, Senior Expo, Cowlitz County Event Center, 10am – 2pm

**Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (ACAC) Meeting
County Administration Building 3rd Floor General Meeting Room,
Thursday, April 5, 2-3pm
Meeting Agenda**

Welcome and Introductions

ACAC Annual Plan

- Update on Elections Modernization Project
- Legislative Changes to Voting

ACAC Grant Proposal – Awareness and Education Campaign

2018 ACAC Event(s)

Thank you all for your participation!!