

September 21, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Disability Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, September 20, 2016

The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) met on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 1:30pm at the Cowlitz County Conference Center. The meeting agenda is attached.

Attendees were:

Regina Beer, Cowlitz County Elections
Ardell Burns, Department of Services for the Blind
Carl Cecka, Goodwill
Judy Chamberlain, Community
Kathleen Chilson, Goodwill
Steve Cooke, Housing Opportunities for SW WA
Nina Davenport, Agency on Aging and Disabilities of SW WA
Linda DeCost, DSHS, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Carolyn Fundingsland, Cowlitz County Elections Manager
Kay Gunter, Cowlitz Community Network
Breoni Harkleroad, DSHS, Developmental Disability Administration
Suzann Isaacson, Catholic Community Services – Volunteer Services
Mike Karnofski, Cowlitz County Commissioner
Elizabeth Kelly, DSHS, Developmental Disability Administration
Tim Krueger, Cowlitz County Ombudsman, Mental Health
Maggie Lund, Human Services Council
Susan Marion, Housing Opportunities for SW WA
Mary Kate Marthaller, Director Disability Support Services, Lower Columbia College
Susan O'Connor, Wahkiakum County Elections
Marjorie Pitcher, Community
Susan Schwartz, Community
Jennifer Shaffer, DSHS, Developmental Disability Administration
Carolyn Shepard, SHIBA
Sybil Sides, Cowlitz Community Network
Kristina Swanson, Cowlitz County Auditor
Doreen Wadsworth, Cowlitz County Health and Human Services
Linda Wilson, Disabled American Veterans
Sharon Weinhold, Disability Outreach Coordinator

Welcome. Attendees were welcomed and thanked for their attendance and participation. This was the thirty-second meeting of the Cowlitz County Disability Advisory Committee and included a celebration in honor of the great work of the Disability Advisory Committee members.

Our speaker, Mr. Toby Olson, traveled from Olympia and was running a little late, so the order of topics presented on the agenda were shifted.

Election Updates:

Carolyn gave an update on the Primary, General Election and MyVote.

- **Primary Turnout.** A total of 4,102,624 voters turned out for the WA State Primary, a 34% turnout. Cowlitz County's turnout was 32%, slightly less than the state average but a consistent trend for Cowlitz County.
- **General Election Information.**
Cowlitz County has hit a record high of 61,500 registered voters. This is a gain of 2,200 from this time last year. This number is expected to continue to increase as the General Election approaches. We anticipate the General Election turnout will be 83% or higher, exceeding our 82% turnout in the 2008 General/Presidential Election.

The 2016 General Election ballot contains a record 44 races and measures: 6 Initiatives; 2 Advisory Votes; 1 Proposed Amendment to the Constitution; 26 races, including the President of the US; and 9 local propositions.

- **MyVote Upgrades.**
The WA Secretary of State's Office has made many enhancements to MyVote in the last year to ensure the pages are optimized for broad readability and usability for everyone to see, understand, and navigate the website efficiently.

New features include:

Mobile friendly

Online ballot marking option

Consistent, uniform appearance that is easily viewed by those with visual impairments

Sufficient color contrasts to be viewable by those with color deficits

MyVote now works with all common screen readers.

Recognition of Disability Advisory Committee.

Kris Swanson thanked and recognized the Disability Advisory Committee members for their dedication, recommendations and hard work over the last 11 years to make sure voting is accessible to all voters, including those with disabilities. The award given by the Washington Secretary of State in June 2016 to the Cowlitz County Auditor and Cowlitz County Elections staff. Kris reflected that the Disability Advisory Committee members were key participants and thanked the members for their wonderful support and work. The Secretary of State's award to Cowlitz County reads:

In appreciation for your outstanding efforts to promote accessible voting for people with disabilities, we recognize you for your dedication to increase opportunities for all voters to vote privately and independently.

Presented by Kim Wyman, Secretary of State, June 2016

Introductions. To give our speaker an idea of who was in the audience, attendees were asked to state their name and organization or group they are affiliated with.

Presentation.

Mr. Toby Olson, Executive Secretary of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, provided information about an Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (ACAC). The Accessible Communities Act provides resources for counties to promote better disability awareness and access for people who have disabilities. The resources, generated from fines for unauthorized parking in a spot designated for people with disabilities, include:

- Reimbursement for travel, per diem, sign language interpreters and other accommodations
- A competitive grant program to fund local projects to improve awareness, acceptance, inclusion and access for people with disabilities
- Technical assistance and training
- A website to share best practices and other information
- A searchable database of access features of local businesses and other public accommodations

To gain those resources, a county must establish an ACAC and send a letter of assurance to the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment stating it has established the ACAC. The letter of assurance is good for 2 years and then has to be renewed. There are several ways for a county to establish an ACAC. One way is to transition their Disability Advisory Committee to an ACAC.

In reviewing the resources, questions were asked about the projects. Mr. Olson said the projects can be anything related to improving access, awareness, acceptance and integration for people with disabilities. Community members and those who serve persons with disabilities are in the best position to determine the best projects for their community. He said projects are currently underway in Spokane, Pierce, Jefferson and Wahkiakum Counties. Other counties have expressed interest and are developing projects. One approved project is access mapping of restaurants and other public places, with a goal of creating a database with disability access information. Another project involves upgrading an old schoolhouse that is used for meetings and events to make it accessible. There are other smaller projects in process. Matching of funds is not required. The average grant amount is \$50,000, but there is no limit. Mr. Olson said it took four years to get the funding. About \$100,000 - \$120,000 is generated each year statewide. The goal of the Governor's Committee is to spend the dollars well and to be able to tell the story of how the funds were used to benefit people with disabilities.

Steve said our DAC membership is growing and DAC members are already working to expand accessibility for other than voting. He suggested our DAC is in the right place to transition to an ACAC. Other members expressed agreement. Carolyn asked if anyone objected, and no one indicated any objection. Members agreed that we should prepare an assurance letter for our County Commissioners to sign. Carolyn said an invitation would be extended to all to attend the Board of County Commissioners meeting when the letter is presented and signed.

Bernie Altman.

Meeting participants took a moment to remember Bernie Altman, who passed away on September 8 at the age of 92. Bernie was an amazing advocate for mental health and seniors in our community. He also was a longtime member of our Disability Advisory Committee. He first participated in the DAC meetings in May 2009 and was a regular participant in the meetings. We are very sorry about his passing and recognize him for his strong support for our committee and the wonderful work he did in our community.

Opportunities and Happenings.

- Mary Kate invited all to a presentation on Depression at Lower Columbia College on October 5, at noon.
- Marjorie said the Kelso Senior Center was having a Rummage Sale on October 1 and a speaker on Estate Planning on October 29.
- Linda Wilson said the Quarterly Veterans Briefing will be on September 28.

The meeting adjourned at 2:37pm.

Sharon Weinhold
Cowlitz County Elections

Disability Advisory Committee – Meeting Agenda
New Location for this Meeting
Cowlitz County Conference Center
1900 7th Avenue, Longview WA 98632
Tuesday, September 20, 2016, 1:30 – 2:30PM

Welcome

Introductions

Presentation, Representatives from the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment

- What is an Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (ACAC)? What is the benefit of being an ACAC?
- What steps are required to become an ACAC?
- What resources are available for ACAC's?

Election Updates;

- Primary Turnout
- General Election Information
- MyBallot Accessibility Updates

Recognition of Disability Advisory Committee

Opportunities and Happenings A-Round the Room