



City of Portland
Portland Disability Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2017

Haley Pass, Vice Chairperson of the Committee, and staff liaison Mandy Levine, the City's Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Specialist, convened the meeting of the Portland Disability Advisory Committee (PDAC).

- **Sign in**

- *In attendance:* Mireille Kabongo, Jennifer Ladd, Carol Schiller, Jim Devine, Zoe Miller, Ken Shapiro, Steve Leighton, Haley Pass, Derek O'Brien, Karen Perry, interpreter Lisa Masure, Jessica Russell, Jill Johanning, Michelle Ames, and John LeMieux.
- *Absent Committee members:* Bill Campbell, Jr., Hanna Aistrop, and Bud Buzzell.

- **Minutes of the October meeting.** Karen Perry moved to approve the minutes of the October 4th meeting and John LeMieux seconded. Michelle Ames abstained from approving because she was not present at the last meeting. The remaining committee members in attendance voted unanimously to accept the minutes. No corrections were noted.

- **Guest speaker: Jon Jennings, City Manager, City of Portland**

Jon thanked the committee for the opportunity to meet, noting that since he joined the office 2.5 years ago, we have undertaken looking at the ADA in a more systematic, comprehensive fashion. He just came from a meeting with the

Permitting and Inspections department, who recently received an ADA compliance training from Jill Johanning of Alpha One (who was present in the audience). Alpha One has also done work with the Planning department. We are making progress but more remains to be done.

Michelle Ames from Disability Rights Maine (DRM) shared that DRM has already done ADA training with a few police departments outside of Portland as well as nursing homes and homeless shelters. She shared that DRM has an advocate who provides trainings about what it means to be deaf, how to approach individuals who are deaf, the processes for hiring and utilizing an interpreter, the use of visual aids for communication, and other matters. She indicated that she would share information about those trainings with Mandy Levine.

Jon expressed his interest in the City of Portland's police, fire, public works departments and the Oxford Street shelter receiving DRM's training. Michelle indicated that DRM has not previously done trainings with fire departments but she'd be happy to have it provided. Michelle also indicated that she has experience working with the Portland Police department: they are doing a fantastic job and are very sensitive to deaf and hard of hearing individuals. They and our EMT's seem to have an increased understanding than in the past.

Jon discussed the progress that we've made on repairing sidewalks. The City has put a lot of money into sidewalks and made progress, but we are not yet where we want to be. We are trying to do as much as we can with limited resources. He mentioned that the Oxford Street shelter is a major priority for the City and the City Council and we are moving quickly to replace it.

Re. the closed captioning proposal:

Michelle shared that the deaf community believes that closed captioning in private businesses should be a law or a rule and that the educational campaign may be perceived as a soft approach. Mandy shared the communications she had with Jon, the Chamber of Commerce, and Portland Downtown that led to the proposed educational campaign. Jon indicated that he certainly appreciates the concerns being raised and that if we find that private businesses are not cooperating, we can revisit the issue. The City and Committee will send out a letter and palm card to private businesses, sooner rather than later, asking them to comply with the stated recommendations and he will ask health inspectors to seek data about who is willingly complying. In terms of scope of the letter and palm card, Jon

recommended that it focus on closed captioning but other ADA requirements/issues could also be included. Mandy will prepare a draft for Jon to review, and then the PDAC members can vote on it.

Jill Johanning mentioned that the Age Friendly group is seeking a business certification that includes acoustics and hearing – perhaps a “disability friendly” certification could also be created. [Mandy will follow up with Michael Russell from Permitting and Inspections to determine what the health inspectors are reviewing during their inspections.]

Re. LED lights: Jon shared that the City is buying street lights and using LED lights in them to make our city brighter, safer and easier to navigate, particularly in areas like Cumberland Avenue. Many of the checked lights were not at 100 percent capacity. We’re also pursuing other “smart technologies,” such as sensors to measure health outcomes. Sensors measure noise sounds and air quality; they are not cameras. He’s asked the public health department to put together annual assessments of the health of the city.

Jon also shared that Spectrum has agreed to do public service announcements for the City that air on regular programming. This may be an area in which PDAC could do 30 second public service announcements around ADA-related issues.

- **Guest: Zoe Miller, Project Manager, Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG)**

Zoe shared that her role at GPCOG is largely about public engagement. She joined GPCOG in January 2017 after 18 years at Opportunity Alliance after creating many relationships with community groups. GPCOG does urban planning for 26 towns in Cumberland County and is also a sister agency to PACTS, which does the transportation planning for the urban part of Cumberland county. They do planning and help the transit agencies on decisions on the expenditure of millions of federal dollars coming into the area. She wants to do a better job of having more voices and perspectives at the table, and get up to speed on accessibility of planning, public meetings, surveys, outreach to the community.

She wanted to share information regarding two different groups that PDAC members and attendees could participate in:

- **The Transit Advisors Group** (see provided one pager) does regional planning with transit providers in the area, including METRO, South Portland bus service, Amtrak Down-easter, Casco Bay lines, RPT, shuttle bus Zoom. GPCOG would love to have representation from PDAC on this advisors group. They hold bimonthly meetings and they are still building participation in that group, including folks from public housing authority, from downtown and neighborhood groups, from health care systems. The group is an opportunity to provide input on projects that are happening and to provide representation for your peer group. The next meeting will be sometime in December.
- **Transportation and Community Well-Being Group** (see provided one-pager) is a group that will eventually be more “doers,” rather than meetings at which you share feedback like at the advisors group. The group is looking very broadly at transportation barriers in the community and determining how can we work together on situations. GPCOG received funding from the National Center for Mobility Management and they bring a lot of expertise to what other communities are doing to address similar challenges. The group just met last week to discuss the interest in having a comprehensive online mapping service on all of the alternative transportation systems in Maine.

Zoe shared her contact information: zmiller@gpcog.org and 774-9891 extension 227.

- Upcoming meeting dates, all from 11 am to 12 pm in Room 24 in the basement of City Hall: 12/13/17, 1/3/18, 2/7/18, 3/7/18, 4/4/18, 5/2/18, 6/13/18 (***will be held in the State of Maine room on the 2nd floor of City Hall**); 7/11/18, 8/1/18, 9/5/18, 10/3/18, 11/7/18, 12/5/18

- **New business**

Carol Schiller, President of University Neighborhood Organization (“UNO”) shared that she produced a You Tube video, “Longfellow Park in the Dark” regarding a disabled individual trying to use the park in the evening. She shared her belief that Steven Leighton should not be a member of the PDAC.

- **Adjournment:** the meeting concluded at 12:05 p.m.