

Mayor's Council on Disability
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Meeting Minutes
October 06, 2008

Sandra Booher, Chairperson
Bea Lyons, Vice chair
Katy Jones, Secretary
Jill Hindman, Parliamentarian

Council Members:

Dr. Rick Rader
Jim Queen
Mary Ann Schenk
Tommy Gates
Gina Turley
Carolyn Boyd
Carol Martin
Phillip Stevens
Karl Epperson

Meeting called to order by Chairperson, Sandy Booher.

In attendance:

Sandy Booher
Bea Lyons
Jim Queen
Mary Ann Schenk
Carolyn Boyd
Carol Martin
Phillip Stevens
Tommy Gates
Karl Epperson
Jay, Piercy, Office of Multicultural Affairs
Kathie Fulgham, Mayor's Office

Excused Absence:

Jill Hindman
Dr. Rick Rader

The meeting began with three presentations. Susan Henderson from Best Buy shared discount program to be offered at Go-Fest 2008. Best Buy will be present at Go-Fest with technology to share, the Tennessee-Georgia game will be playing on big screen, and "Guitar Heroes" will be on Wii. Home theater section will showcase what can be done in the home; touch screen computers, track ball mounts, and something called a "sling-box" that allows person to view television from your own home computer from anywhere will be shown. Geek Squad will be there in their cute Geek mobile, a little black and white VW. Best Buy is a big person's toy store. Members of the Mayor's Council on Disability and the Go-Fest Team expressed their thanks and appreciation to Best Buy employees for all the company has done to assist with Go-Fest this year; discount coupons were distributed among the Council members and are available on the Go-Fest web site. People are already using the coupons in both the Gunbarrel and Hixson store locations.

Philip Elliot, counselor with the Veterans Administration Vet Center, thanked Chairperson Booher for reaching out to the V. A. She also requested that he be considering a veteran to nominate to serve on the MCD. Beth Coleman from the Chattanooga Area Brain Injury Association has already met with Mr. Elliot to consider providing resources to returning veterans so that they may achieve a better quality of life. Mr. Elliot began his presentation with a brief history of vet centers. Vet centers, established by Congress in 1979, recognize that many Viet Nam era veterans were still experiencing readjustment problems; 232 vet centers across the U S are community based and operated under the auspices of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Veterans from the Persian Gulf War, Iraq War, Afghanistan War, and conflicts in Granada, Panama, Somalia, Kosovo and Bosnia are eligible for services. Family members are eligible for services and bereavement counseling to surviving parents, spouses, children and siblings who have died in activated reserve and in the National Guard. Most centers are staffed by combat veterans. In describing readjustment counseling, Mr. Elliot said counseling included a wide variety of services to make a satisfying transition from military to civilian life. Many vets now are coming to the centers with a combination of post traumatic stress

disorder and traumatic brain injury that may have numerous side effects, including physical, emotional and cognitive problems. TBI is considered the signature wound of this war. Any considerations that the Mayor's Council on Disability can make to assist veterans with additional education benefits, scholarships, jobs, or other opportunities would be greatly appreciated. Mr. Elliot closed his remarks by thanking the Council for the opportunity to share the latest news of the vet centers and the V. A. In response to this presentation, Jim Queen offered assistance from CARTA to veterans who may have difficulty obtaining transportation within the city limits. Vet center also plans to set up a booth at Go-Fest to share information with the community.

Dr. Byron Kluesner and Michelle Rigler from UTC Office of Student Disabilities announced that UTC will be placing Braille maps on the campus in approximately three weeks. The maps, two large and ten smaller folding ones, will be tactile, Braille and large print and will make the campus more accessible to citizens and students who are blind or have low vision. Maps will be placed in four or five strategic areas across the campus; UTC will be one of the few Tennessee universities to have tactile maps available for blind students. October is Disability Awareness Month; and UTC is doing its part to promote disability awareness.

Dr. Kluesner also announced an exciting international travel opportunity for UTC students with disabilities: a trip to a part of the world that is most accessible, that being the South Pacific, and in particular to Hawaii with visit to the University of Hawaii, Sydney, Australia with visit to the University of Sydney, and to New Zealand and Fiji; New Zealand's second national language is sign language. Thirty-five students will travel in summer 2009 making this a disability research trip where students may receive academic credits and will have film documentary of the project produced. A theme basket silent auction will be held soon with information posted on-line at www.utc.edu/osd . For more information contact Dr. Kluesner at 423/425-5251.

Phillip Stevens and Kathie Fulgham provided last minute update on preparations for Go-Fest 2008, to be held Saturday, October 11, 10:00am -3:00pm. Newspaper coverage and advertising is showing on News Channel 9, WTCI and Comcast; word is spreading far and wide. Team members have been working hard to make Go-Fest educational, informational and entertaining. Activities includes K-9 Unit, Touch a Truck, Chattanooga Ducks, Flying Disc Dogs, wheelchair basketball in parking lot, and more. Art Expo has nine artists participating, mural activity ready to go Saturday morning, red panda and cougar doing art work, great band from Nashville that benefits the Michael Foundation for Children with Genetic Disorders will play; volunteers may contact Barbara Ridenour or Pat Clark. Volkswagen is a \$5,000 sponsor thanks to MCD member Carol Martin; we're proud that the MCD is one of the first places in Chattanooga to receive funds from VW. They will have two cars at Go-Fest.

Chairperson Booher asked about nominations process and procedures for slate of officers and new members of Mayor's Council on Disability; the committee has not received any word on when new members will be appointed and needs to know from the Mayor what to do next.

Phillip Stevens and Bea Lyons reported that the MCD web site has been very active with six-to-ten inquiries this month, mostly Art Expo related questions. Phillip and John Jackson (and Chrissie, too) have responded to those inquiries.

For the Disability Awards Luncheon to be held on Oct 16, the Mayor's Office is sponsoring a table for the MCD members. Members should let them know if you plan to attend.

Jim Queen gave update about CARTA Care-A-Van: with diesel fuel costs down, CARTA is in better condition financially this month and thus saved entire transportation system from having to cut some routes. CARTA has prepared a grant application to the Easter Seals Foundation, and the MCD chairperson wrote a letter of support for the proposal. If CARTA receives the grant funding, they plan to put

in a new route, one primarily for purpose of getting individuals to and from work, but also to be used mid-day for transporting riders to dialysis, work trips and some casual trips.

Mayor's Council on Disability minutes for September 08, 2008, were distributed via email prior to today's meeting; copies were also distributed to Council members at the beginning of the meeting. Minutes were approved as prepared and will be placed on the MCD web site.

Karl Epperson brought up a wheelchair user incident that happened at Seventh & Market Streets on Saturday, October 04, when a woman was hit by car; fortunately she wasn't seriously hurt. He requested that the MCD submit a letter to the Chattanooga Police Department to ask officers to pay closer attention to people in wheelchairs crossing our streets. This concern will be discussed further once details can be obtained.

Announcements:

Go-Fest Volunteers Meeting: Thursday, October 09, 5:30-6:30pm, in the Education Building at the Chattanooga Zoo

UTC Office of Student Disabilities Open House: October 31, 2008; all day at UTC Frist Hall location

Times Free Press article 10/06/2008, Mental Health Parity Bill passed...wonderful news!

Amy Roloff, "Little People, Big World", speaking at University Center Auditorium, November 06, at 3:30pm

ARC of Tennessee Annual Mega Conference: May 2009; call for papers and proposals due in November; visit ARC of Tennessee web site for more information

November meeting will be held Monday, November 03, 2008, 3:00-4:30pm, at the DRC.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Katye Jones, Secretary
Mayor's Council on Disability