

Mayor's Council on Disability Issues (CODI) RETREAT Minutes
September 15, 2017

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members Present: Allan, Austin, Booher, Brewer, Brookshire, Davidson, Huang, Johnson, Neely, Newman, Petty, Sawhney, Secrest, Shilling, Shipley, VanDyke and City Liaison Cook

Members Absent: Houston, Kerry, Lemak, Loebner and Moore

Motion to approve June Minutes made by Secrest, seconded by Sawhney and the motion passed.

Ice Breaker Activity: Johnson distributed several “random” items to each of three CODI “teams” and asked them to consider what the items may be used for and then to present the items to the group with a “sales pitch”. After much buzz and hilarity over the products’ function, everyone agreed that creativity won out for the team that created the “OH SH*T EMERGENCY KIT”.

Overview of Disability Services and the ADA: Cook gave a brief description of her role in the City as the ADA Coordinator and who oversees the “disability services” provided by the City. In addition to what is required by the ADA, Cook engages with the community when a question or complaint arises. For more than 19 years, Cook has been the sole employee of the City focused on matters important to the disability community and has tracked every request for information or assistance since joining the City in 1998.

This “request” information will be helpful in showing “patterns of need” over the years, and can be combined with the data being collected as part of the Most Disability Friendly City initiative to show areas where the City should continue to focus. One thing that is needed is for a true “Disability Services Office” to be created at the City, giving folks a location to come when they need information or assistance. Additional staff to focus on matters relevant to the disability community are needed as well.

CODI will further discuss this need and devise a plan to submit to the City for consideration of expanding Disability Services—this needs to happen by end of the year, in order to request any budgetary changes that may be needed by the next City budget cycle.

The Next Two Years: two years remain in Mayor Rogero’s Administration, so now is the time to consider what impact has been made or still can/should be made in the disability community. Two groups formed to discuss what the focus of the next two years should be. A listing of initiatives developed that include the following:

- Re-boot the Disability Friendly City survey with specific action steps by 12/31/17

- Increase community engagement by:
 - Updating CODI website
 - Providing a social media presence
 - Meet monthly and take quarterly “field trips”
 - Develop CODI FAQ
 - Seeking timely speakers to come to CODI meetings
 - Better attendance at CODI meetings and events (by members and the community at large)
- Focus on LIVABILITY
- Increase awareness of and commitment to Visitability
- Expand the reach of the Disability Services Office by creating an actual office and adding staff (plus a space for volunteers)
- Steer clear of special committees. Instead, all of CODI can work together on the issues that develop and at each monthly meeting, will be given the opportunity to do so. Standing committees such as Executive Committee, Bylaws, Nominating and Transportation will remain, in accordance with the bylaws.
- Focus on recruitment—consider the disabilities that are represented on CODI and any areas where representation is lacking. The nomination form will need to be updated and can be put on the City’s website. A description of the time line for nominations and expectations of members should be included.

City Council Forum and “Meet and Greet”: the date is October 11th, which is the second Tuesday of the month and in conjunction with a regular CODI meeting date. Location will be the Small Assembly Room in the City County Building. Members reviewed the questions that had been posed to mayoral candidates at a CODI forum in 2011 and edited them to work for the City Council forum. Cook will finalize the questions and send invitations to all candidates, as well as work with Communications on a press release. Members are encouraged to invite as many people as they can. Questions for the candidates are:

1. Please tell us about you. Do you have a personal or professional connection to the disability community and the issues unique to them?
2. What would you do to make Knoxville more accessible and inclusive for citizens and visitors with disabilities and seniors?
3. Would you support the allocation of City resources to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities?
4. Knoxville’s aging population is growing. (Every day in the U.S. 10,000 people turn age 65.) What are your plans to address the “livability” of Knoxville? (Please see the eight domains of “livability” at <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>)
5. In Knoxville, people with disabilities have several accessible transportation options, including KAT, KAT LIFT, CAC Transit and ETHRA. Each of these programs work in collaboration with each other, but sometimes still can’t meet the needs of people to get to their destination. How would you work with the existing transportation providers to improve transportation as a whole?

Refreshments will be light and consist of tea and/or lemonade, water, fruit, nuts and cookies.

Monthly Meetings: Given all of the great work CODI is involved in and that there haven't been any "burning" issues on which to do a taping, Secrest made a **motion** to resume a monthly meeting schedule to keep CODI momentum going. Neely seconded and the motion carried.

The meeting was concluded at 3:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judi Brookshire, Secretary and Stephanie Cook, City Liason