

**Mayor's Council on Disability Issues (CODI)**  
**December 9, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Lemak called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Allan, Austin, Booher, Brookshire, Dockery, Getino, Hector, Hunter, Johnson, Jones, Lemak, Moore, Newman, North, Sawhney, Secrest and Shipley

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Davidson, Neely, Payne and Shilling

**CITY STAFF:** Stephanie Cook

**GUESTS:** LaKeitha Jackson, Melissa Van Dyke, and Joyce Brumbaugh (representing Pellissippi State's Universal Pathways to Employment Project, or UPEP) came to observe the CODI meeting.

**ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION:**

**October minutes:** A motion to approve the October 14<sup>th</sup> minutes was made by Allan and seconded by Austin—motion carried.

**Livability Summit debrief:** Cook related that the Summit was the result of a partnership between CAC's Office on Aging, the TN Commission on Aging and Disability, and the City of Knoxville. There were approximately 400 attendees and numerous vendors who provide a product or service to seniors or people with disabilities.

**Anti-bullying "Be a Friend, Not a Bully" Festival:** Moore reported that the dRC is hosting a festival to spotlight bullying in September/October 2016 and wants CODI to be a partner. All agencies are invited to participate—there will be speakers, food, music, etc. A planning meeting will take place at the dRC on January 12<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. All are welcome to attend!

**Employment Committee:** Collaboration with KAEC (Knoxville Area Employment Consortium,) is going well. They are working with the Chamber and intend to create some educational materials, including short videos, to be used to increase awareness about people with disabilities, diversity/inclusion, the ADA and other topics. There will be a contest to create a sticker to recognize employers who are committed to the employment of people with disabilities as a result of the Community Conversation. It is hoped that those businesses will be recognized at the annual DMD Recognition Breakfast.

**Transportation Committee:** Booher reported that during KAT's outreach efforts to obtain input about the trolley routes, there have been over 400 survey responses, which KAT is compiling. The National Organization on Disability has released a policy statement about driverless cars and that discussions need to include people with disabilities. It is stated that unemployment rates for people with disabilities is going up and transportation continues to be a barrier. White Cane Day was a success—about 12 people participated in the walk at West Town Mall. On January 19<sup>th</sup> there will be an aging and disability webinar called "Two Sides of the Coin." The next KAT Community Advisory Committee (KCAC) meeting will be on January 12<sup>th</sup>. If there are any issues or questions to raise, please let Booher know.

Secrest added that the KCAC used to be a "complaint body" but that complaints have dropped off significantly since KAT installed cameras on their vehicles. The Transportation

Planning Organization (TPO,) gave a presentation on transportation to the Administration and it was very impressive. AAA, the City and CAC Transit have recently solved a problem with providing accessible transportation to wheelchair users who need wrecker service. CAC Transit and KAT have met with the Chamber regarding transportation options for people to the Forks of the River.

**Most Disability Friendly City Committee:** Sawhney reported that when the committee was formed, the intent was to take a strategic approach and define “most disability friendly city” by Knoxville’s standards. Early on, the committee researched the definition and came up with a rough draft of a survey that may work for Knoxville. That draft was distributed to CODI in November and input is needed to make it Knoxville’s survey. It will also be emailed to the membership.

**Draft “Disability Friendly” survey:** Members are encouraged to review the draft survey and provide input on changes/edits needed. Rather than spend time today talking about the survey, it was agreed that there would be a special called meeting in January to go over the survey as a group on the 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

**HR 3765:** Cook read the draft of the bill aloud. Summarized, the bill will direct that training on how to promote accessibility will be delivered to state and local governments as well as property owners; prohibited acts are for complainants to send demand letters or letters of alleged ADA violation to a company or potential defendant agency if they have not included specificity about the alleged unequal or discriminatory act, to include the exact section of the ADA to have been violated, whether the barrier to access was temporary or permanent, and whether a request for assistance in removing the barrier was made prior to bringing an official complaint. In essence, this bill repeals a lot of the freedom guaranteed to people with disabilities to assert their civil rights under the ADA as allowed in Title V. Cook encouraged members to consider their position on this bill and to let their elected officials know their thoughts about it—as individuals, not members of CODI.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Moore distributed a “rack card” to everyone which gives a brief description of the programs offered by the disability Resource Center and includes some pictures of staff and initiatives. dRC was able to have 1,000 cards made for under \$200 and this is the type of material that CODI wishes to create to share with the community as events. The Disability Awareness/PR committee will work on a similar card.
- Getino stated that it is concerning what is going on at UTK regarding the Office of Equity and Diversity and that it is important that UTK not get rid of or reduce the scope of this office.

**Announcements:** None

**Public Forum:** None

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Stephanie Cook, City Liaison