

**Mayor's Council on Disability Issues**  
**August 18, 2023, Meeting Minutes (in person retreat)**  
Public Works Building, 3131 Morris Avenue

**I. Meeting was called to order at 9:14 am.**

**II. Roll Call:**

**Members:** Alexander, Ajinkya, Barber, Brooks, Cain, Carter, Childress, Eldredge, Lowe, Maxwell, Mathison, Mull, Robertson, Shimmin-Orr, Simmons, Spangler, Villanueva, Welch

**City of Knoxville Staff:** Cook, Dziubak

**Present:** Alexander, Barber, Brooks, Cain, Lowe, Maxwell, Mathison, Shimmin-Orr, Simmons, Spangler, Villanueva, Welch, Ziegler

**Absent:** Ajinkya, Carter, Childress, Eldredge, Mull, Robertson

**Resign:** Ajinkya (8/31/23)

**KCM Videographer:** Cain Blanchard

**Interpreters:** Monique Johnson

**III. Approval of July Minutes:** Motion by Lowe, second by Maxwell – motion carried.

**IV: Icebreaker:** Everyone broke into two groups of four and each participant took turns to be blindfolded to work puzzle pieces to complete a puzzle with guidance from other participants.

- This exercise simulated a person with a visual disability, the other participants gave verbal directions on how to put the puzzle together.
- What was learned from this exercise? We all take for granted having vision and the lack of information that may not be provided can be a barrier sometimes. The environment may not be communicated correctly, and some individuals may be separated or left out.
- This exercise also taught us how to communicate more effectively and give a voice to those that may not be able to communicate for themselves, and gave a greater idea of *"Inclusion."*

**V. Bylaws Update:**

- Dziubak updated the group on changes to the bylaws that had been discussed previously, taking out the wording *"and City Council"* from the bylaws. This is what allows us to meet via Zoom for meetings... changes will go before the City Council on September 5<sup>th</sup> to remove City Council from having to approve members, officers, and bylaws, and allow any

ongoing changes to be updated with approval from the Mayor without having to also be approved by City Council.

## **VI. Committee Breakouts**

- Each committee group met individually to discuss the Main Focus, Long Term and Short-Term goals for 2023-2025

## **VII. Committee Reports:**

**Membership:** Shimmin-Orr reported

- There were not enough members present to elect a secretary- Membership will still need a Secretary to be chosen.
- Main Focus: Making sure everyone is engaged and participating to retain membership numbers, and monitor attendance.
- Long Term Goals:
  - Strategic recruitment of members to make sure all disabilities are represented.
  - Have maximum number of members on CODI body.
  - Check attendance every 3 months for absences.
- Short Term Goals:
  - Ask about the max number of missed meetings.
  - Recruit at least one more CODI member for Membership committee.
  - Continue conducting member and officer interviews.
- Next Steps to Reach Goals:
  - Review attendance regularly and reach out to members who regularly miss meetings.
  - Conduct officer interviews for positions where more than one CODI member is interested and make recommendations for the selected officer position to the CODI body.
  - Ask Barber if he would be amendable to switching his committee from Bylaws to Membership.

**Bylaws:** Alexander reported

- Needed to elect a chair – Childress has been nominated by those in attendance, with Cain as a backup choice.

- Main Focus: To look over bylaws for inconsistencies in what CODI does in practice and what is written in bylaws.
- Long Term Goals: None given.
- Short Term Goals: None given.
- Next Steps to Reach Goals: Today the group looked over bylaws for any inconsistencies and found:
  - “His/her” should be replaced with “their” in section 3.06 and anywhere else it may appear in bylaws.
  - Also looked over section 3.05 – leave of absence “LOA” formatting.
  - Section 6.06 – needs to be reworded, change last sentence from “for” to “to” where it reads – “Once convened, the committee will propose a timeline for report to general CODI membership which will be subject to approval with majority vote.”

**Transportation:** Welch reported

- Needed to elect a secretary – Brooks will be the Interim Secretary

Main Focus: Help make the City of Knoxville more accessible to people with disabilities through transportation resources.

- Long Term Goals:
  - Provide travel skills training for all transport, ongoing education on current transportation options and resources with quarterly updates on transportation contacts.
  - Have CODI members regularly attending KTA meetings to help smooth out any issues between entities and people with disabilities.
  - Bi-yearly updates with KAT and City engineering departments to provide better understanding of current pedestrian infrastructure.
- Short Term Goals:
  - Stay informed and provide others information on updates to local resources which are no longer options or recently became options for Knoxvilleans to stay informed on transportation workforce issues.
  - Gather at least one success story from a person with disabilities on improvement of transportation issues.
  - Collaborate and compile transportation stories, successes/challenges and lessons learned from regional advisory boards like CODI.

- Next Steps to Reach Goals:
  - Research other disability groups similar to CODI
  - Add transportation resources to CODI website via link to KAT resource page.

### **VIII. Community Engagement Going Forward:**

- Voted to dissolve the Community Engagement Strategic Plan Group as a stand-alone group:  
Motion by Simmons, second by Alexander, all in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.
- Cook stated that “We all do community engagement every day!”
- Each committee and strategic plan group should include community engagement as part their monthly discussion.

### **IX. Member Information Updates: *Each member was given a member survey to fill out and an opportunity to make updates to personal contact information.***

Dziubak reported the survey results from member’s feedback.

- Zoom is still the preferred option for CODI meetings.
- Committee and Strategic Plan meetings: Possibility to change to every other month.
- Member cohesiveness: forgo a regular CODI meeting for a social outing.
  - Motion by Mathison, second by Villanueva – to move to a bi-monthly meeting for committee and strategic plan meetings for a 6-month trial – all agreed and motion passed.

Committees and Strategic Plan groups will meet every other month beginning in September with six-month check-in to gauge if it works better than meeting monthly.

#### ***Meetings:***

***\*Strategic Plan Groups will meet in September and every other month thereafter***

***\*Committees will meet in October and every other month thereafter***

### **X. Strategic Plan Group Breakouts**

Each group met individually – (Universal Design and Livability) to discuss purpose, focus, goals and next steps to achieve goals for 2023-2025.

### **XI. Strategic Plan Group Reports:**

**Universal Design:** Simmons reported.

- Purpose: Transfer information in “what Universal Design is” from the community to the Mayor.

- Main Focus: Trying to find affordable, accessible housing, accessible dwelling units (ADUs) could be a possible solution with amenities for all.
- Long Term Goals:
  - Have affordable and accessible housing for everyone.
  - Get people to build with “aging in place” in mind.
  - The Market will dictate it with 10,000 baby boomers reaching retirement age every day.
- Short Term Goals:
  - Gather data from Realtors Association on what people are looking for, and if people who need accessible features are purchasing non-accessible housing in hopes to make the renovations themselves.
  - Educate the CODI body as a whole as well as the Mayor with data to back up what is statically being seen as well as what is being seen in the local market.
- Next Steps to Reach Goals:
  - Talk to Realtors Association to ask questions regarding the market and housing needs, gather data and take information to the CODI body and the Mayor.
- Future Implications:
  - Revisit where Knoxville is with housing in 5 years with hopes of seeing a significant increase in the number of units for aging in place and accessible housing,
  - Have Knoxville be the most age friendly city.
- Impact on overall Strategic Plan:
  - Define target affordability and financial cut offs based on HUD specific breakdown for different income levels.
  - HUD income thresholds update every year.

**Livability:** Lowe reported.

- Purpose: To give Knoxvilleans access to information on accessible businesses and restaurants, to expand the knowledge in general.
- Main Focus: To expand access and knowledge of livability issues to general public in Knoxville.
- Long Term Goals:
  - Readily accessible catalogue of accessible businesses /restaurants available to the public
  - To have 10% of current restaurant list completed by end of the year
- Short Term Goals:

- To get more checklists completed at local restaurants,
- Cain will help with Google Drive accessible master list of restaurants as checklists are completed
- establishing guidelines for re-reviewing restaurants/businesses
- Next Steps to Reach Goals:
  - continue to tweak checklist completion and work on adding more locations.
- Future Implications:
  - Help businesses change their practices to be more accessible and try to get in at the ground level of new construction.
- Impact on overall Strategic Plan: Becoming a more disability and age-friendly city.

## **XII. Current Strategic Plan / New Strategic Plan 2023- 2025:**

- Discussed as a group – worked on the updates to the new Strategic Plan (see attached updated document).
- CODI body will not vote on the new Strategic Plan until typed into final format.

## **XIII. New Business:**

- No new business

## **XIV. Announcements and Public Forum**

- Dziubak mentioned the flyer for the event coming up Access Oak Ridge Fair on Oct. 7
- Cook mentioned positive feedback given by Mayor Kincannon on the Mayoral Forum- “One of the better organized forums”.

## **XV. Other:**

- Besides the rack cards, what other promotional items could CODI purchase to promote CODI? (suggestions were made for pop-its, chip clips, pens, etc.)
- T-shirts - CODI members are willing to purchase their own logo shirts if DSO will set up retailer with CODI logo for shirts. Blue was discussed as the best color to use as it is for disability awareness. Borderland Tees was suggested by Spangler and Maxwell.
- CODI members would like to cancel a regular monthly meeting this year in either November or December to meet for socialization in Market Square in order to get to know each other on a more personal basis in hopes it will lead to a more cohesive group with increased engagement of members.

- Cook suggested that when everyone gets together for the social to possibly bring 2 non-perishable food items to donate to a local food pantry.

**XVI. Adjourned at 2:42 pm**