

**Council for Community Accessibility
Meeting Notes for February 27, 2023, 4:00-5:30 p.m.**

The hybrid meeting was opened at 4:03 p.m. by chairperson Lesley Davis.

Members: Lesamarie Hacker, Lesley Davis, Chris Jackson, Karin Willison,, Marche Daughtery, Casey Guarino, Veronika Bardonner, Kenneth Bardonner, Nick Philbeck and Linda Crawford

Guest Presenters: Dr. David Geeslin, Superintendent, Indiana School for the Deaf
Holly Elkins, Indiana Association of the Deaf, Hannah and Angela, interpreters

City Staff: Michael Shermis

Guest Presentation: Holly Elkins and Dr. David Elkins spoke to the need of requiring TV's in all public places to use captioning. The current law reads that an individual must ask to have captioning turned on, but the guest presenters argued that it is time to revisit the issue. Having captions permanently turned on should be considered as necessary as wheelchair ramps and literature available in Braille.

Ms. Elkins and Dr. Geeslin are requesting help and support from Bloomington in getting this enacted into law. There are many people who would benefit from this legislation, not just the community of deaf and hard of hearing. Current Indiana legislators fear increased regulations; thus, three readings of proposed legislation have failed to garner enough support in the state legislature.

Three states (New York, Massachusetts and Washington) already have a state law requiring captioning on all public TV's whereas Indiana has only fifteen cities with ordinances requiring captioning. Michael reminded those present that it taken over a year and half in their attempt to get a transportation and accessibility principles proposal into an ordinance in Bloomington (and it's still not quite done).

Holly will send Michael a list of ways that Bloomington can support this effort for captioning. Perhaps the captioning requirement could be added to the accessibility survey check list and complaints sent to the CCA.

Holly commented that the ADA federal law is outdated and perhaps when it is updated, captioning could be added at the federal level. It would take several states to require public TV captioning Chris suggested that maybe this suggestion could be included in the city's and

county's best practices and that a personal connection be made with the City Council. CCA is in agreement with this effort as it fits in with their 2023 goals.

Minutes: January minutes were accepted as printed and distributed.

Financial Report: Michael reported a balance of \$750.89. He is putting a budget together for the Breaking Down the Barriers event which includes \$500 for dinner at Red Robin and approximately \$100 in thank-you gifts for businesses that have earned the AccessAbility decal.

Partner Organizations Awareness and Outreach:

Mall (Mobility Aids Lending Library) is making progress for checking out some mobility aids with a library card. MALL is open from 1-3 on the last Sunday of each month in Room 2B at the Library. Lesley said that extra help on that day is always appreciated.

Report from the City: As ADA coordinator for the city, Michael has been busy with several projects. With outside dining on Kirkwood to resume in April, there are some concerns about the parking barriers on the street. Although there are regulations for placing the barriers, half of the parking spaces normally designated as accessible spaces are not accessible. A group comprised of two attorneys, head of the Engineering Department, and the leads of the project from the Economic and Sustainable Department are working on the outdoor dining policy and agree on a policy of failure to comply by restaurants.

In the future, changes to traffic patterns on Walnut and College will result in changes, including changes to accessibility parking. Michael is working with the Planning Department to get observational walks with people with disabilities set up.

The City's Urban Forester has inquired about making Arbor Day accessible to all. Grates for some tree pits on College Ave. have been ordered so that they are in compliance with accessibility standards.

It has been recognized that application to use BT Access is a very long and challenging process. Michael has been discussing a new application with Bloomington Transportation GM, John Connell, that will be made available online eventually.

Michael mentioned that people accessing the city's website have difficulty reading the PDF images so training is being provided for at least ninety-three city employees to improve the situation.

The committee in charge of the March 30th forum for the mayoral candidates asks that questions to be directed to the candidates be submitted to the committee. Michael will send out the link.

Michael reported on the training he received by attending a webinar relating to issues in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. The webinar provided him with a repository of training and resources.

New Accessibility Concerns from Members/Visitors: Casey reported that the entrance to the computer repair shop, formerly Pygmalion's, is not accessible. Chris will complete a survey on the business. Also mentioned was the water that is collecting in certain curb cuts in the City parking lot. Michael will report it.

Committee Reports:

Accessibility Committee: Chris reported that the Xfinity business is fully accessible and that there are now enough sites for being recognized at Breaking down the Barriers event.

Transportation and Mobility Committee: The committee has focused on the Transportation and Mobility Principles to be accepted by the City Council. The committee has welcomed new member Corinne.

Activities and Events Committee: Breaking down the Barriers will be held on May 8th from 4:00 to 7:00. Decals and small gifts of thanks will be distributed, followed by participants dining at Red Robin. Michael will include a registration form in the April communication.

Report from the Chair: Lesley mentioned that some of the questions arising from the Lego Ramp project concern whether the ramps will be permanent, the ratio of being 1:6 rather than 1:12, and whether they extend too far out in the sidewalk so seen as a tripping hazard. If the project gets legs, there will be a need for donated Legos.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Crawford, Secretary