

## Meeting Notes for February 27, 2017, 4:00-5:30

Katie Herron called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Members: David Carter, Vicki Pappas, Casey Guarino, Nick Philbeck, Susan Russ, Rachel Guglielmo, Katie Herron, Chris Jackson, Zoe Waters, Barbara McKinney

Staff: Michael Shermis

Guests: Caroline Shaw

Introductions were made.

**Minutes:** Minutes from the January meeting were approved as printed.

**Report from the City:** Michael presented CCA finances. There is \$6,769.81 available to support CCA activities.

Michael asked for media reports/news for the website. He reminded members that he keeps the CCA webpages (<http://bloomington.in.gov/CCA>) updated, with information like the CCA Award Winners for 2017 and the “The Coupon Chief” – a useful resource for finding all kinds of discounts for people with disabilities. Members are also encouraged to “like” and “follow” the CCA Facebook page.

**Media:** David reported that there was a piece entitled “Helping legally blind people to see better” in the 2-27-17 edition of the Herald Times.

**Guest Presentation:** Caroline Shaw gave a presentation on the work of the City of Bloomington Human Resources Department, highlighting the department’s openness to working with the CCA to help make Bloomington more accessible.

She started by describing the principal functions of the department: recruitment, selection and onboarding of new employees; conducting background checks; overseeing development and dissemination of personnel policies; communication of policies; employee relations; labor relations; grievance procedures; compensation/benefits; staff training and development; affirmative action policy development and implementation).

With respect to affirmative action, one CCA member asked if the HR Department maintains records on the number of people with disabilities employed by the City. Caroline replied that this information is not collected or available. Barbara underscored that there are complications related to this kind of record-keeping due to issues such as whether a disability is visible or hidden, and whether a person chooses to self-identify as disabled or not. Records related to affirmative action are maintained separately.

Caroline shared that the City does have a process to accommodate people who identify as having a disability. They first talk with an employee to identify issues and needs, and then

work with him/her to generate creative alternatives for appropriate support. The Department puts a lot of emphasis on ensuring that these interactions are conducted with courtesy, respect and flexibility. She gave the example of an employee who was having trouble staying awake; the Department worked with him to install a buzzer which periodically goes off to help keep him from dozing off.

Susan asked about the City's approach to supportive employment. Caroline shared that the City has had a relationship in the past with Life Designs, and expressed interest in forming such a relationship with Stone Belt. She identified Vocational Rehabilitation as an additional employment resource. She stated that the mayor has been very supportive of these initiatives.

Zoe shared that the City Hall parking lot is not fully wheelchair accessible; the slopes and curbs leading in from accessible parking spaces are difficult to navigate. David stated that it would be important to ensure that City functions (or events to which City employees are invited) should always be held in an accessible location/venue. He cited the example of a recent event (which was a political event held by the Democratic Party) being held in Player's Pub, which is not accessible. Michael suggested that City Departments might confer with the CCA prior to events to ask about accessibility, adding that the "B Clear Open Data" resource lists all of the accessible Bloomington venues and is located under Health and Human Services section.

Katie shared that her son, who is 16, is now applying for jobs, and wondered if there is any flexibility within City jobs for disabled applicants. Can certain job descriptions be amended to accommodate what disabled applicants can do? Barbara stated that job descriptions are standardized for all applicants, but that making some accommodations could be possible, depending on the job. Susan shared that at some point in the past Stone Belt worked with the City to conduct a supportive employment audit, which resulted in the creation of a number of "niche jobs," all of which received financial support through Vocational Rehab. Caroline expressed interest in working with Susan to explore the possibility of reinvigorating this initiative.

Katie asked if HR conducts any training for Disability Awareness month, or on an ongoing basis, as a part of existing training programs, highlighting that this might generate possibilities for collaboration with the CCA in the form of a panel with people who have disabilities, possibly connected to a "breakfast/lunch-n-learn." Nick suggested a mental health provider forum. Nick expressed enthusiasm for the idea of incorporating disability awareness into ongoing staff training and development, possibly connected to continuing education requirements. Nick stated that it would be useful if staff could receive continuing education credits as an incentive to take this type of training. Caroline said she would be grateful to receive CCA support for the development of such a training session, and Katie stated that CCA would be happy to provide it. Michael highlighted the pamphlets recently produced by the Governor's Council as a possible staff training resource. One attendee noted that a large print version of the pamphlet would be useful, and Vicki shared that the Council also produced posters which could also be useful. Katie said that all of these materials could be incorporated into employee training. Caroline took a set of the posters to put in the HR office.

**New Accessibility Concerns:** Michael shared that he is now tracking CCA actions and activities, for the purpose of being better able to answer questions about what the CCA does. He is keeping a log of all external contacts – things people ask, and what response they receive – and will submit the information to the CCA on a regular basis. He gave the example of a complaint received from the Jackson Heights apartment complex regarding the lack of accessible parking, which the CCA followed up on by sending out a letter and working with the complex managers to address the issue successfully. He emphasized the importance of the CCA communicating its successes.

Katie asked for any new accessibility concerns. One participant raised a concern about the frequent misuse of disabled spaces in the library parking lot. Chris acknowledged the problem, but said that liability concerns prevent the MCPL from towing cars, which makes it more difficult to require patrons' compliance, though they are aware of the issue and actively engaged in trying to figure out how to address it. Barbara stated that she will look into whether/how the City can support the MCPL on parking enforcement.

Casey shared concerns about accessibility in local medical offices. She was able to come to a compromise solution with her dentist; though he did not agree to make permanent adjustments to the configuration of his office to ensure accessibility, citing space limitations, staff does move furniture when she has an appointment to make it easier for her to enter/exist the office.

Nick raised the issue of barriers to employment for people with disabilities at Indiana University, particularly with regard to health care positions. He asked CCA members to consider how the CCA might be able to support people with disabilities in particular areas of life at IU, such as classes, residency halls; he asserted that some people have felt they experienced negative consequences after asking for accommodations. Vicki suggested that the CCA identify someone from the IU Accessibility Committee to come and speak to the CCA, and volunteered to look into who that person might be, in coordination with Katie.

**Report from the Chair:** Katie shared that the speaker at CCA's March meeting will be from the City Parks and Recreation Department, and April's speaker will be from Public Works. She will aim to bring someone from IU in May.

Katie invited discussion of a CCA activity or event to mark Disability and Accessibility Awareness Months (in March and April, respectively). Vicki offered to share a document collecting all of the ideas that were generated at the previous CCA meeting. Katie volunteered to meet with Michael separately to collect other ideas and information that have already been generated to share with the group.

### **Committee Reports:**

- A. Accessibility Committee: Vicki shared a report from the Accessibility Committee. Eighteen Accessibility Decals were awarded in 2016. Three were approved today (Lil Bub's; Opie Taylor's, and the Buskirk-Chumley), and the Committee has a goal of awarded 10 by the end of April, and 18 by the end of the year. The committee provides various forms of assistance and support to local area businesses, including not only identification of the issues that need to be addressed, but advice on steps that could

be taken to address them. She stated that many of the “fixes” are relatively easy, though others are more difficult and extensive. The Committee has parking lot specifications that they can and do share with area businesses. They also have specs/assistance on heavy doors, though this is not required by the ADA. They have a checklist, survey form, and online entry link, which Michael has cleaned up and made easier to use.

Vicki identified a committee goal of making sure that all restaurants with an Accessibility Decal are identified as such in *Bloom* magazine. (Identification is currently provided in some but not all instances.) This will also help the committee identify which establishments still need to be contacted/visited.

Casey suggested that the CCA try to encourage the *Herald Times* and/or *Bloom* to print an article and/or insert of the full list of Decal recipients for Disability Awareness month.

- B. Activities and Events Committee: Susan reported that the Activities and Events Committee hasn't really initiated its work yet, though they are reviewing planning information from the previous CCA meeting to generate ideas for Disability Awareness Month and Accessibility Awareness Month. They are also already working on organizations presentations by people with disabilities at local elementary schools. Susan shared that the teachers have been very receptive to this initiative. Zoe offered to be a contact for organizing (and maybe giving) presentations at The Project School. Another participant suggested IU, but Susan shared that it has been much easier to work with MCPL so far.

Chris shared that the library will be mounting a display of some kind to mark Disability Awareness Month, probably featuring books on disability-related themes. It was suggested a similar display for the City Hall atrium.

The Activities and Events committee is aiming to hold some kind of celebration of the people and businesses who have received Accessibility Decals so far – over 30 in the downtown. One idea would be for a group to go to the business and present the Decal in person, with some kind of ceremony or fanfare. Michael reminded CCA members that the CCA does have a budget which could be used for this purpose. It's a priority for the committee to identify a date for this event, so Susan offered to send around a doodle poll with a number of alternatives for CCA members to consider and choose from among, so the Committee can choose a date that works best for the most people.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.  
Respectfully submitted,  
Rachel Guglielmo