



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

June 2, 2015

MEETING LOCATION

The June 2, 2015 meeting was held at the Michigan Association of Manufactured Housing, Recreation Vehicles and Campgrounds office located in Okemos, Michigan.

PRESENT FOR THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

Rick Briggs, Chair
Bill Sheffer, Vice Chair
Al Bobrofsky
Cindy Burkhour
Justin Lippe, for Ann Conklin
Jonathan Edgerly
Michael Harris
John Witzke
Kim Woolridge and Guest, Rebecca Powell
Duncan Wyeth

Amy Trotter (via conference call)
Ken Buchholtz (via conference call)
Sarah Peurakoski (via conference call)

Sharon Schafer, AAC Sponsor
Stacy Welling-Haughey, AAC Upper Peninsula Sponsor (via conference call)
Dan Lord, ADA Coordinator

ABSENT

David Campbell
Vendella Collins
Daryl Domke
Sharon Ellis
Carolyn Grawi
Aaron Harris
Michelle Mull
Scott Norris
Marc Russell

PRESENT FROM THE DNR A-TEAM

Erica Moore (Chair)
Vicki Brown (Co-Chair)
Diana Engle, Michigan Historical Center
Michael Evanoff, Parks and Recreation
Kristin Phillips, Marketing and Outreach
Steve Burton and Dean Molnar, Law Enforcement
Tamara Jorkasky and Christie Bayus, Grants

INTERPRETERS

Janet Jurus and Stacy Pierce

OTHERS PRESENT

Tom Olson, Clinton County Parks and Green Space
Stacy Locke, Workforce Advocacy Group/Peckham
Other DNR Management and Staff

REGULAR MEETING

INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Briggs called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. He then took roll call, made introductions around the room and asked if there were any additions or adjustments to the agenda. Council member Ken Buchholtz asked that he be allowed to comment on ATV use on state property for people with disabilities (listed under Open Discussion on the Agenda) as he has a conflict and has to dismiss himself early from the meeting. The Council agreed to move this topic to the beginning of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Briggs asked if the committee had any additions, edits or changes to the February Minutes. The location of the February meeting needs to be corrected to reflect the meeting was held at the Michigan Association of Manufactured Housing, Recreation Vehicles and Campgrounds office in Okemos (*it was not held at the Demmer Center*) and add Diana Engle as being present at that meeting for the A-Team. No additional edits were offered for the Minutes.

Duncan Wyeth motioned to approve the February Minutes; Cindy Burkhour seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried and the February 25, 2015 Minutes were approved incorporating the corrections stated.

NEW DNR STRUCTURE

Sharon Schafer, chief of the DNR Finance and Operations Division, informed the Council that she will assume the role as the AAC sponsor, replacing Joe Frick who retired; Dan Lord will assume the role of ADA Coordinator, replacing Greg Andrews who left the DNR; and Yolanda Taylor will be the new assistant to the AAC and the DNR's internal Accessibility Team (A-Team). Sharon commented that Dan Lord has previous and extensive experience with this Council and accessibility issues as the former ADA Coordinator, and with his role and responsibilities when he worked for the DNR Parks and Recreation Division.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Executive Update

Sharon further reported that the DNR has made a serious commitment to this Council and providing accessible recreation for all users department-wide. Dan and Sharon reached out to all DNR division chiefs asking for their support with staff attendance, especially with their representatives on the A-Team. Sharon also recognized Assistant Chief Dean Molnar and Lt. Steve Burton from the Law Enforcement Division. Lt. Burton will now serve as a new member on the A-Team representing the Law Enforcement Division. Chair Briggs thanked them for their presence and representation on the team as Conservation Officers are the ones that have to enforce the laws.

A-Team Update

Dan Lord reiterated that he used to be the DNR's ADA Coordinator, he was around when this Council was initially formed and during the Access-to-Recreation initiative so he has worked closely with council member Cindy Burkhour on a lot of DNR accessible recreation projects.

Dan reported that changes have also been made to the A-Team due to employee transfers or departures. Erica More will now be the new Chair for the A-Team, with Vicki Brown being the Co-Chair. The role of Chair and Vice-Chair will rotate on an annual basis to allow all division representatives to get involved. At their last meeting, the A-Team identified four main pillars as their focus. Training (on a continual basis), Assessment (define where they have opportunities and gaps), Improvements (target upgrades needed and low hanging fruit such as parking areas working up to larger programs/needs), and Marketing (clearly and strategically marketing accessible recreation opportunities through printed materials, the Internet, social media, etc.)

Council member Burkhour asked about the status of the Strategic Plan. Schafer reported that the A-Team asked that they be allowed to revisit the plan. Once the A-team gives their blessing, it will be moved to the Director for approval.

The Council then discussed some of the agenda items out of order to accommodate Council member Buchholtz. Those discussions are noted under their respective items listed on the Agenda.

MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND AND OTHER GRANT PROGRAMS

Point Value System for Accessibility

Steve DeBrabander, DNR Grants Management Section manager, gave the Council a presentation on the three major grant programs they administer --- the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF), the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Recreation Passport (RP) grant programs. Steve gave an overview of how each program got started, the types of projects and applicants that are eligible for funding, and how many projects and dollars have been awarded over the year. Steve delved further into how projects are scored (i.e. scoring criteria), noting that all projects/programs are scored for universal design.

The Council would be interested in knowing how many cities or municipalities are benefiting from the program versus how many are being left behind because they cannot afford the match.

The Council thanked Steve and commented that this is excellent information that should be posted on the DNR's website for others to view.

Review of Proposed Projects with ADA Components

DNR Grants Management Coordinators, Tamara Jorkasky and Christie Bayus, presented two projects that have been submitted for grant assistance that both have an ADA component. The Council reviewed the projects and gave the grant coordinators valuable input and advice, as well as things that should be considered or required before considering awarding grants for these two projects.

Council member Wyeth suggested inviting Pat Cannon to a future meeting to share what the Federal Access Board's universal design platform looks like.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Nicole Colberg, DNR Legislative Liaison, gave the Council an update on legislation that could possibly have an effect on department programs. The Council was interested in House Bill 4239, which allows hunting from a personal assistive mobile device, as well as legislation that has been introduced to tap into the MNRTF to fund roads. Schafer commented that the MNRTF is protected by the constitution.

Council member Witzke also warned the Council to be aware of legislation that attempts to restrict or tap into the MNRTF, as well as legislation that wants to restrict or limit public land ownership.

Process to Address Legislation

The Council discussed how they can keep apprised of legislation that could have an effect on Department programs and those that deal with accessibility issues.

Council member, Amy Trotter, reminded the Council that she works for and represents the Michigan United Conservation Corps (MUCC) and, as a member of this Council, she acts as the liaison on legislative matters. However, the MUCC posts legislative updates on their website at www.mucc.org, which is also a good source of information.

Nicole also mentioned that she can share the monthly Legislative Updates that are submitted to the Natural Resources Commission with this Council, via Yolanda Taylor for distribution.

COUNCIL STRUCTURE

Schafer commented that, with all the changes that have recently occurred, staff is in the process of trying to decipher previous records to determine membership terms and revisiting the Council's By-Laws.

Discussion ensued regarding the history of the Council, term limits and recommended changes to the By-Laws. After much discussion, Schafer suggested she and her staff will take a stab at redrafting the by-laws, to incorporate the changes recommended, and bring them back to the Council at a future meeting for consideration, as well as the terms and term limits.

2015/2016 GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The Council decided (after much discussion) to carry this over to the next meeting and have this as the main item of discussion on the Agenda.

OPEN DISCUSSION

ATV Use on State Property for People with Disabilities

This agenda item was carried over per Council member Buchholtz' request. Dan Lord reminded the Council that the DNR Parks and Recreation Division came to a previous Council meeting to present this issue and, since then, has updated or is in the process of updating their policies and procedures.

Reduced Cost of Hunting/Fishing Licenses for People with Disabilities

Council member Buchholtz commented that he would like to see the department reduce the cost of hunting/fishing licenses for people with disabilities, similar to the reduced costs for senior citizens.

Council members Trotter commented that for every discount that is offered there is something that is not being managed on the ground due to lost revenue. She noted that the senior discount was very generous and has created a loss of close to \$3.5 million annually. She encouraged the Council to have a discussion to come up with something that is more revenue neutral.

Council member Wyeth cautioned the Council about requesting discounts for people with disabilities. When you talk about people with a disability, it covers a large range of individuals to include the elderly, women that are pregnant, etc. He further mentioned there are a lot of people with disabilities that can afford to pay and choose to pay the fees to support the programs.

Council member Woolridge also cautioned the Council to not violate the Larson Civil Rights Act. By providing a discount to people with disabilities it can be construed as discriminating against others.

Council member Wyeth recommended a task force or subcommittee to address these issues related to the state providing discounts for various licenses or programs for various reasons. Wyeth, Woolridge and Burkhour offered to serve if such a task force or subcommittee is created.

Events/Program Updates

Kristin Phillips, Chief of the DNR's Marketing and Outreach Division, reported that she is working closely with Pure Michigan on marketing accessible recreation, especially in light of the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act this year. However, Sharon Ellis, in a previous meeting, said she was taking the leadership role with Pure Michigan, so we need to follow up with her. Council member Burkhour suggested inviting Dave West to a future meeting to make a presentation on the Pure Michigan campaign.

The national celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act takes place on July 25, 2015. The celebration on the Capitol Lawn in Lansing takes place on September 17, 2015. The DNR will look into participating in this event.

Chair Briggs encouraged all Council members to get out into their communities or their parks to recognize and participate in the July 25th Anniversary.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Stacy Locke with the Workforce Advocacy group commended the Council on the work they are doing and the issues they address. She also had questions regarding accessible projects in her community. The Council recommended she talk to the two grant coordinators after the meeting.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Chair Briggs thanked everyone for their attendance, participation and input, and thanked all DNR staff for their presentations.

The Council discussed the location of the next meeting. It will either be in the Upper Peninsula or northern Lower Michigan. Schafer and her staff will work with Stacy Welling, the Upper Peninsula sponsor, and the Chair, to come up with a meeting location.

ADJOURN

Chair Briggs promptly adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.