



**Accessibility Advisory Council
MINUTES
February 24, 2015**

LOCATION:

Meeting was held at the Michigan Association of Manufactured Housing, Recreation Vehicles & Campgrounds office in Okemos

AAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Richard Briggs, Co-Chair Bill Sheffer; Ken Buchholtz, Cynthia Burkhour, David Campbell, Justin Lippe for Ann Conklin, Vendella Collins, John Edgerly, Michelle Mull, John Witzke, Kimberly Woolridge, Duncan Wyeth

AAC MEMBERS ABSENT:

Al Bobrofsky, Daryl Domke, John Edgerly, Carolyn Grawi, Aaron Harris, Scott Norris, Marc Russell, Scott Severn, Jim Trinklien, Amy Trotter, James Hall, Laurel Hall, Michael Harris, and Sarah Peurakoski

DNR A-TEAM MEMBERS PRESENT:

Greg Andrews, Christie Bayus, Diana Engle, Michael Evanoff, Joe Frick, Sharon Schafer, Lynne Thoma and Fran Ryan

GUESTS:

Janet Jurus and Andrea Rehkopf, Interpreters
Neal McKenzie, Chuck McKittrick and Brooks Harryman, Deaf Community
Mike Galella, Demmer Center
Scott Crawford, Zero Day
Tom Jones, Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors
Other DNR Management/Staff

ROLL CALL AND VISITOR INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Briggs and Vice-Chair Bill Sheffer called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Changes were requested to the December 9, 2014 Minutes. On page 4, paragraph 5, item #2 should read "The National Center for Accessibility." Chair Briggs made a motion to accept the December Minutes incorporating these changes; Cindy Burkhour seconded the motion; the December 9, 2014 Minutes were approved with these edits.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Joe Frick announced he will be retiring; Sharon Schafer will be his replacement on the Council. Sharon's goal is to provide partner with groups to ensure access to the state's natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities. Chair Briggs updated Sharon about the Council and its goals, the need to improve grants to reflect the same language used for trust fund grants, and the need to contact Council members for knowledge and expertise regarding help with grant writing. Dan Lord is now the new head of facilities and will be an asset to the Council regarding state facilities. He will also serve as the new AAC Coordinator. Lt. Creig Grey retired; the Law Division will have a conservation officer present for the meeting in June. Cindy Burkhour asked about the Strategic Plan. Sharon Schafer will look into where the plan is at this time and a timeline for release of the updated version.

INDIVIDUALS FROM THE DEAF COMMUNITY/PUBLIC COMMENT

Neal McKenzie, Chuck McKittrick and Brooks Harryman commented about possible discounts on licenses like Florida has for the hearing impaired, and the possibility of designating a percentage of the elk draws for people with disabilities. State parks also need interpreters for hearing impaired citizens so they can receive the same experiences. Mr. McKittrick also suggested having interpreters at DNR seminars and classes for hunting and gun safety, etc. Mr. Harrington commented the state parks need WiFi as this is the only way for deaf residents to communicate. It was suggested that someone from the deaf and hard of hearing community become a member of the Council.

DEMME CENTER UPDATE

Mike Galella mentioned the Olympic team is coming to the Demmer Center March 6-8, 2015. The U.S. Paralympic Shoot will also be held on April 26 at the Center. Mike also talked about the adjustable shooting bench for wheelchair users and the design of a rifle for the blind so those with sight impairments will be able to shoot. He also mentioned partnering with the DNR for the summer 2015 Demmer Day.

CAMP LIBERTY

Chair Briggs commented that Camp Liberty's goal is to get veterans to engage in outdoor recreation, to get them in the out-of-doors, and to give them hope and purpose to life after combat. Outdoor recreation is also very therapeutic for those suffering from PTSD.

MICHIGAN OPERATION FREEDOM OUTDOORS (MiOFO)

Scott Crawford with Zero Day, and Tom Jones (MiOFO) gave a presentation on MiOFO. This program is a cooperative effort of veterans, partners and volunteers who will assist with enhancing the outdoor experience through habitat improvement and accessibility. MiOFO's mission is to provide improved outdoor recreation opportunities for wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges, and to coordinate a support network that facilitates their recovery through connecting with nature. They are currently focusing their efforts at the DNR-managed Sharonville State Game Area in Grass Lake and the neighboring Camp Liberty in Ann Arbor.

2015 AND 2016 AAC GOALS

Greg Andrews asked to have the Council think about their goals and how awards will be decided. Chair Briggs asked the Council to think about someone that has really made a difference regarding access opportunities, projects etc. Greg will set the standards for awards and share nominations for a vote. Awards will be presented at the December 2015 meeting.

Diane Engle suggested the DNR consider a “train-the-trainer” program to show their commitment to those with disabilities.

Cindy Burkhour suggested the Council review ADA complaints from the public so they can work to find solutions; hold a demo on how to navigate the web site, especially for those with hearing or sight loss; and reminded staff and presenters that videos need to be descriptive for those with a visual disability and closed caption for the hearing impaired.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Due to the lack of time, more discussion regarding goals will take place at a future meeting, and the two items listed below will be rolled over to the next meeting:

- ATV use on state property for people with disabilities.
- Reduced costs for hunting/fishing licenses for people with disabilities.

Diana Engle reminded the Council that ending the meetings on time is very important, especially for people that depend on pre-scheduled transportation to/from the meetings.

Meeting was adjourned.