

CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
Disabilities Action Team Sub-Committee (DAT)
May 19, 2015 Minutes

The Disabilities Action Team of the City of Mesa met on May 19, 2015,
at 6:00pm at the Mesa City Plaza, 20 E. Main St. Ste. 170.

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>MEMBERS ABSENT</u>	<u>STAFF PRESENT</u>	<u>GUESTS</u>
Cheryl Anderson, Chair Denise Heap Mark Tompert Lu Ann Schmidt		Bethany Freeland Ruth Giese Jodi Sorrell Amanda Stamps	Bill Mcallister

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

2. Items from Citizens Present.*

There were no citizens present to speak to the DAT.

3. Approval of minutes from the April 21st, 2015 DAT meeting.

Mr. Tompert made a motion to approve the April 21, 2015 DAT meeting minutes and Ms. Heap seconded the motion. The motion moved unanimously.

4. Hear, discuss, and take action on periodic update from transportation services for people with disabilities including reviewing a quarterly report and annual report on East Valley Dial-A-Ride.

The board heard a presentation by Jodi Sorrell, Transit Services Director, regarding the state of the East Valley Dial-A-Ride program. Transit desires to make the program more regional, getting the different cities to link their individual programs more cohesively. By July of this year transit must produce a formal outline for reasonable accommodations. The average monthly ridership for Ride Choice has dropped significantly recently and transit is looking into the possible causes of that. One of the possibilities is that Ride Choice switched from booklets of coupon vouchers to a refillable plastic card. Riders may feel less comfortable using the card as they can't physically see how much money they have remaining. The board questioned whether it would be beneficial to offer one or the other method, but Ms. Sorrell stated that the coupon book is much more costly for the city. Mesa's Dial-A-Ride program is about three times larger than any other city in the East Valley. Transit has also expanded the budget in their Buzz Service program for a six month pilot program. This takes riders from downtown to the Mesa Riverview area. Also the light rail will be opening very soon. Testing for the trains begins Thursday May 21st, 2015. Ms. Schmidt inquired whether or not Phoenix is planning to link up with the East Valley and start a cab program as well. Ms. Sorrell stated that they have no intention of having cabs and plan to continue using their cut away buses.

5. Hear, discuss and take action on presentation from Mesa Police Department on emergency care for citizens with mental health needs.

The board heard a presentation from Officer Amanda Stamps, Lead of the Crisis Intervention Team, regarding the necessity of an East Valley Mental Health Care Facility. In the last two years this team

has done about 1300 mental health care calls ordered by doctors or judges. This process involves two escort officers and at least two hours of commute time to get the client to the facility. These calls are the same as those that fire are called out on, thus garnering twice the cost for the city. This process is long and costly for the client as well, putting pressure on an already stressed individual. Once the transfer is complete, the client gets cleared within twelve to 72 hours and is then released in Phoenix. This is troublesome because they were picked up in Mesa, essentially stranding them. Having an East Valley facility would obviously greatly benefit the city, as well as the clients. Commute time would be significantly reduced and there would no longer be patient displacement issues. Communication between the facility and the officers would be improved as it would be a local structure. The officers could go directly to the center with questions or paperwork. As it stands, officers have no direct access to the Phoenix Facility Director and any type of communication takes a very long time to achieve. The Crisis Team currently has 111 officers. The goal is to achieve 30 to 40 percent of officers trained in crisis intervention. Also, it would be ideal to get mental health training for all officers across the board. Due to staffing issues, this training is on hold. MPD is running at a minimal level and requires more officers to cover while some receive training.

6. Hear, discuss and take action on second town hall meeting to educate the business community on mental health and substance abuse issues.

Bill Mcallister of the Marc Community Center joined the board in their discussion of the second town hall meeting and how to get business involved in the hiring of those individuals with disabilities. Mr. Mcallister explained to the board different things that he and those individuals looking for employment through Marc Centers are involved in and how he reaches out to employers to find possible employment opportunities for those individuals. They do things such as running condiment carts for the baseballs games, gum removal for the schools, and cleaning buses for Valley Metro. Ms. Anderson stated that the mission of the next town hall meeting is to educate business on the benefits of hiring those individuals with disabilities. Ms. Heap explained that some institutions probably already employ individuals with either Serious Mental Illness (SMI) or general mental health issues and aren't even aware of it. This would be a good talking point to generate conversation during the town hall meeting. There are also federal contracts and federal monies available for those businesses that choose to hire disabled individuals. These usually stipulate that the business must have a certain percentage of disabled individuals on their payroll. The board is considering putting together an agenda and meeting with the disabilities hiring group that already exists. The board doesn't want to restrict the town hall meeting to only businesses located in Mesa. Mesa residents need to be able to attain jobs in other valley cities as well. The board would like to gather all of their contacts as well as the contacts from Bill and combine them into a larger event in the fall. Ms. Giese recommended having knowledge based learning sessions at the meeting to go along with the job fair portion. Ms. Heap would like to put together a presentation outlining what constitutes a healthy work environment that promotes productivity and acceptance for employees. The board plans to write up a goal proposal to present to potential businesses looking to get involved. Also, to find those businesses that have already hired a number of people with disabilities to be a part of a panel discussion.

7. Hear update and discuss the need for and feasibility of creating a Psychiatric Recovery Center in the East Valley.

Ms. Heap stated that Joni Flat would like to work with the board on this issue. The board agrees that the information that Officer Stamps brought to the table will be integral in moving this project along.

The main issue still remains the placement of the facility. Ms. Anderson inquired to Ms. Giese how the committee could go about obtaining a list of available parcels of land to look at for the purpose of finding a space for the facility. Ms. Giese recommended reaching out to the planning and development office.

8. Hear update and discuss ways to evaluate the adequacy of services and programs for people with disabilities and the implementation of ADA.

This agenda item is still a little bit too broad and needs to be narrowed down to a few specific items on the agenda at any one time. Ms. Schmidt said that this agenda item was originally added in order for Ms. Giese to update the board on ADA issues that she receives from citizens. This should be added as a monthly bullet point to this agenda item. Ms. Schmidt also pointed out that parking hazards are rampant in the city. Cars routinely park over driveway sidewalks as well as pulling too far over the sidewalk in front of businesses. This is a walking hazard for the disabled and children alike. Ms. Giese suggested doing more research to narrow down exactly what the board is looking for as a resolution to this issue. Ms. Giese would also like to interview Ms. Schmidt to get an idea of what is most hazardous in her opinion that way she can narrow down who enforces those restrictions and bring it to that party's attention.

The braille embosser has been purchased and we are just waiting to receive the machine before we move forward.

Ms. Heap also questioned Ms. Schmidt on the Diversity Luncheon that she attended that was held by Councilmember Luna. Ms. Schmidt stated that there were many valuable ideas brought to the table.

9. Scheduling of meetings, future agenda items, and general information.
 - Next DAT meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 16th, 2015 at 6:00pm.
10. Adjournment.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,
Diversity Program Administrator