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DAVID HICKS
Chairperson

APPROVED

Commission on Disabilities Minutes
May 11, 2009

Present: Dana Canevari, David Hicks, Stan Kontogiannis, Elaine Quinn, Matthew Ranelli,
Linda Reeder

Absent: Chris Getlein, Heiwa Salovitz, Robin Tousey-Ayers

Staff: Michelle Duprey

David Hicks brought the meeting to order as a quorum was present. The minutes for April 2009 were reviewed. Linda Reeder moved to accept the minutes as written, which was seconded by Dana Canevari. Elaine Quinn and Stan Kontogiannis abstained. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman's Report

Bill 444

David Hicks reported on Senate Bill 444, which was raised in the Transportation Committee, and which would reform the program for Designated Parking placards. This bill is basically the same as last year's. Though it has been approved in all the necessary committees of the Legislature, it will probably not be passed because of the attached fiscal note, which is also very similar to last year's. Changes the Transportation Committee might make to the bill are not likely to lower the fiscal note enough to allow the bill to pass. Commissioner Ward, who was drafting the Department of Motor Vehicle's version of similar legislation last year, has been out on medical leave. Without his participation the Office of Fiscal Analysis is unlikely to change the fiscal note. David Hicks said that it's almost certain that the bill won't get passed.

Disability Planning Committee

David Hicks reported he had been in touch with Anthony Rescigno, President of the Chamber of Commerce, who said that the Chamber had already been doing a lot of ADA education and training recently. David Hicks said the Chamber will be holding an Expo planned for middle of November and it's possible that the Commission along with the American Institute of Architects could either have a table or hold a break out session at the Expo. Michelle Duprey said that the Department was already doing something at the Expo. She suggested that because the Chamber has different Councils, it might be better if the Commission hook up with one of these councils for the planned presentation on accessibility. There was more discussion about how to proceed. The consensus was against participating in the Expo, and Michelle Duprey suggested that someone from the Commission talk to Susan Rapini of The Chamber for suggestions on what group might be most appropriate for the presentation.

Department Report

Michelle Duprey talked about the progress of New Haven Connect-Ability grant and the work that Therese Nadeau has been engaged in. There will be a training session on June 23, 2009 for Chamber of Commerce members, held at the Greek Olive. Therese Nadeau is due to come speak at the Commission meeting in the near future.

A Transportation update was given to all Commissioners, prepared by Kristin Barber. That update is available upon request.

Old Business

Commission Web site Revision- Stan Kontogiannis has no report

ADA Anniversary- Michelle Duprey was able to get a contact at Arts and Ideas. David Hicks or Dana Canevari will follow up.

Guests Arrived at this point.

The invited guests for this meeting from the Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD) arrived. The guests introduced themselves as Brandon Foster, Manager of Administration, and Alan Naudus, Operations Manager. The Commissioners individually introduced themselves.

Brandon Foster began by explaining that some of the Commissioners had met with their ADA Committee back in 2007. At that time, the Transportation Subcommittee of the Commission on Disabilities had formulated a list of concerns. Brandon Foster had addressed all of those concerns and at this meeting he went over those concerns, as well as what had been done to address the concerns.

He went through all of the concerns, listed on below as "Response to ADA Commission" August 24, 2007:

ADA Advisory Committee Meeting held August 24, 2007

Response to Inquiries:

Concern #1

Verifying ride – It is the policy of GNHTD to ensure that Customer Service Representatives (CSR's) repeat back information to the client. Dated materials have been updated and will be distributed to all new clients as well as being available upon request.

Concern #2

My Ride Client information sheet has been updated to incorporate the no-show information. GNHTD has also added this information to the telephone event line as a reminder along with additional rules and regulations. GNHTD is exploring new technologies using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) software to electronically call clients and remind them of their rides and/or offer an opportunity to cancel their trip. The Commission offered its assistance in securing funding for these technologies.

Concern #3

Reference #9 has been changed to: Although not required, it is recommended that ride times be verified prior to the day of the ride.

Concern #4

Reference #13

Drivers arriving early. If a driver arrives earlier than the anticipated window the driver must wait 5 minutes beyond the negotiated pick up window prior to making the trip a no-show.

Proper address? GNHTD is exploring new technologies using GPS to ensure address validation. The Commission has offered assistance in securing funding for these technologies.

Drivers' clocks. All no-shows are verified by dispatch using a two-way radio utilizing computer clock. GNHTD is currently researching the possibility of purchasing an atomic clock for the dispatch center. The accuracy of this clock is guaranteed to verify the no-shows. Additionally the aforementioned GPS devices would have similar corrections to its clock thus ensuring proper times.

Concern #5

Policy #2 in the My Ride tri-fold has been changed to: Comments regarding the service can be made by writing to the District Administrative Office, calling 203-288-6282 Option #5 or by email to comments@gnhtd.org. TTD services are also available at 203-288-7067.

Concern #6

Capacity Constraints – All denials are of great concern to GNHTD. Trip denials are between .02% to 1% of total rides. As 1% is being approached it is determined whether additional seats need to be made available or if the current functionality of our software is offering maximum rides.

If return trips are unavailable within the ADA hour window GNHTD counts these trips as denials.

After concern # 4, someone asked if the clocks are standardized, and it is understood that the Dispatch center is used for the correct time and the driver checks in whenever there is a no show.

Regarding Concern #5, they have seen a little bit of e-mail complaints.

After reviewing Concern #6, there was a question concerning the number of trips which are denied. In March they had 56 rides denied. Michelle Duprey took issue with this number since in her personal experience she was denied 10 percent of the time. Alan Naudus said he will check to make sure they are recorded properly. He said there are an average of 100 refusals per month, when riders turn down a ride time they are offered. There was a clarification between refusal and denial as there was a discussion about the ADA definitions. Michelle Duprey stated that every time she has called for next day service, she was denied.

In March 2009, there were 9,936 rides and 667 "no shows," people who scheduled a ride and then were not there when the ride arrived. The GNHTD hopes to cut down on the number of no shows. Brandon Foster talked about what the drivers are up against.

There was discussion about drivers using cell phones. Their policy is that they are not to be talking on cell phones or texting.

Michelle Duprey asked about hiring testers but was told that would be cost prohibitive. Now they have a random customer service call that they make to people. They also have an ADA Advisory Committee and they open up regarding problems.

Stan Kontogiannis asked if there were any new issues faced by GNHTD of which Al Naudus stated that they are concerned about funding. The Municipal grant was not in the budget this year but they are hoping that the funding for the Paratransit will stay intact. There was some discussion about whether he felt that the State was looking long term into transportation needs as the population of baby boomers will require additional transportation.

The Transit Board is looking for new Board Members. The guests suggested that they come back annually to the Commission and it was generally agreed that this contact and discussion was useful for all involved.

After the guests left, there was some discussion regarding the presentation.

Linda Reeder made a motion to adjourn, and Dana Canevari seconded the motion. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned.