

Minutes – Transportation Subcommittee

Commission on Disability

February 9, 2001

Marissa Shaw, Chair, brought the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. Commissioners Marrissa Shaw and Emily Wilcox were present and later joined by Commissioner Karen Craig.

It was noted that this was our regular January meeting moved to a later date due to staff turnover. There were no members of the public and no general comment. Beverly Bolden came in to tell us that she would phone Gene Biggins if we needed him to join the meeting when we addressed the Paratransit item. Eric Dibner dropped off copies of an item to City Council from the Commission on Aging.

ITEMS COVERED (in sequence covered during meeting)

V. Paratransit Program

Motion: Send statement to the full Commission on Disability that we support the Commission on Aging's item to City Council (as received from Eric Dibner in the attached draft) regarding "SMALL CAB COMPANIES", noting the following comments.

- a. It is a good start, however, it does not cover all the problems with the Berkeley Paratransit Program
- b. The funding for the waiver of the 10% discount must not be taken from the van and EBPT (i.e., wheelchair accessible) side of the program
- c. We have been reviewing the total Paratransit Program for months now – a considerable portion of that time was due to delay in getting hard data from staff – and plan on bringing our own recommendations to the full Commission on Disability in the future.

The motion was moved by Emily Wilcox, seconded by Karen Craig and passed unanimously.

II. Budget Priorities & Staffing Issues

Motion: Forward the attached summary to the full Commission on Disability to be included in the Budget discussion. (Note – not done due to insufficient time.) The motion was moved by Karen Craig, seconded by Emily Wilcox and passed unanimously.

III. Pedestrian Access Problems

Motion: Send item to City Council requesting that City Policy and Engineering specifications require that all bicycle parking facilities, including racks, be

installed so as not to block pedestrian access and not to block access to legally parked vehicles.

This motion was moved by Emily Wilcox, seconded by Karen Craig and passed unanimously.

Background: Currently engineering specifications for bicycle parking do not address positioning the racks so that there is access to legally parked vehicles'. As a result, racks can be installed in places that prevent car doors from opening fully and van lifts/ramps from being used. An example of such an installation from the 1999 bicycle facility enhancements is the bicycle parking unit installed next to the parking space closest to the Elmwood Post Office, on Prince Street.

If the accessibility policy and engineering specs were coordinated, it would be possible to accommodate both the installation of bicycle parking and the need for disabled drivers and passenger to get into and out of vehicles legally parked next to bicycle racks.

Karen Craig provided an article from current issue of the Arthritis Association's magazine illustrating automotive accessibility enhancements. Wide-opening doors were shown in the article.

VI. Items for Future Agenda

We will continue with our existing work list. We made notes to include the following issues in future items.

1. Paratransit Program – cab companies should not bump scrip users to the bottom of the response queue.
2. Pedestrian Access Problems – policy and specifications must be developed and adhered to for the placing of infrastructure elements so that access problems are solved, not compounded, over time. A partial list of elements follows: parking meters, light poles, storm drains, fire hydrants, sign posts, newsboxes, waste cans and recycling cans.

Our next meeting will be our regularly scheduled February meeting on February 23rd (Friday) from 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY, TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

BUDGET PRIORITY & STAFFING ISSUES SUMMARY – February 9, 2001

Funding for staff to work on transportation issues is our priority for the upcoming budget process. Staffing takes priority over capital improvements because many existing transportation problems could be solved via projects funded from other sources - and because 1999 showed us how little happens without adequate staffing. The following lists summarize our main points.

Transportation Subcommittee priorities

- Berkeley's Paratransit Program
 - Administration & Expansion / Adequate service for all users
 - Ramp taxi program (new project)
- Safe & accessible pedestrian route access
 - Better accessibility features & placement of infrastructure elements to be included in all projects, including major street renovations
 - Audible signals & way-finding enhancements
- Safe & accessible vehicular access
 - Accessible traffic calming design & implementation
 - Adequate & accessible blue zone parking
 - Accessible non-blue zone parking

Critical functions a qualified staff could fulfill to solve existing problems –

- Insuring federal, state & local access regulations are adhered to in all Berkeley projects (especially when funded through other departments)
- Insuring federal & state access regulations are included in all local policies
- Filling in gaps in access policy as needed locally,
- Acting as liaison with transit and other agencies,
- Obtaining funding via grants & administering grant-funded projects
- Acting as liaison to with other departments to insure that access policies are enforced. (Many of our critical & ongoing problems would be solved if all City departments were aware of current access requirements, included them in their policies, & enforced the regulations.)

Skills necessary - Ability to:

- Administer Paratransit Program
- Staff Transportation Subcommittee (including agenda, mailings & minutes – & respond to requests for information)
- Work within the existing structure and with the variety of stakeholders – particularly with persons with disabilities (without condescension)
- Advocate for disability community in City & neighborhood meetings (real disability advocacy, not head-patting)
- Contract administration
- Write policy (good writing skills in general, too)
- Obtain & administer grants
- Implement projects (complete tasks on-time, efficiently & meaningfully)
- Successfully advocate during budget process