

DISABILITY SERVICES BOARD

2017 FEB 13 PM 4:05

January 26, 2017 - 4:00 P.M.

Council Chamber - City Hall

Members Present

Michelle Graham
Michelle Ritter
Kim Hubbard
Shawn McBride
Sarah Kovac
Jeremi Kroos

Others Present

Andy Clements, Public Works & Transportation Department
Bill Heatherman, Public Works & Transportation Department
Bill Falkner, Mayor
Jo Townsend, Public Works & Transportation Department
Chuck Kempf, Parks, Recreation & Civic Facilities Department

Andy Clements called the meeting to order and introduced Bill Falkner, Mayor of St. Joseph.

Introduction – Mayor Falkner. Mayor Falkner thanked the members for attending today’s meeting, and for being willing to sit on this committee. He stated that he’s hopeful the new Board will move forward making progress for St. Joseph residents. Andy and the Mayor agreed that having a Disability Services Board is an important role for the City as they strive to provide the same services for everyone.

Overview of Board’s role and responsibilities. Andy briefed the members on the City of St. Joseph Code of Ordinances related to the DSB. He explained the Board functions essentially as an appeal body; only called upon when they have an appeal or a similar matter requiring their attention. One area that evokes questions from DSB members is the section “identify needs and surveying services for the physically disabled”. The interpretation has often been that, based upon citizen requests, that the DSB hear ideas about needs/data gathering methods for the disabled community. However, without a more clear charter that sets forth an active role of the DSB in other areas, the Board itself is essentially restricted to its charter as outlined herein.

Discussion of possible revisions to the Board’s existing mission. Andy stated that in spite of how the Code of Ordinances reads in *Sec. 2-819 Functions and duties*, the reality is the previous board members didn’t have a lot to do. Andy further advised that he and Mayor Faulkner have discussed if the primary purpose and reason for the Board is to act on appeals, history has shown that to be very rare. Andy mentioned there were some Transit issues several years ago and there could possibly be other similar ones sporadically. Several years ago on the board there was a great group involved when an important topic to discuss came up, but the topic itself was outside of both the jurisdiction and provisions of what the Code says the Board is supposed to do. Some of the prior Disability Services Board members had been talking about some different ideas, for example, trying to work with some of the Universities and conduct surveys of ADA accessible businesses. Andy stated there had been interest from both Missouri Western State University and Northwest University to engage in that idea. He noted this Board also wanted to get involved with conducting some surveys and producing some educational pieces so that businesses would know to make sure when they renovate they can do things easily and inexpensively to make their facilities ADA accessible. Expressing that not only is it the law, but it’s the right thing to do. The notion Andy pushed to the Mayor when asked about these issues, was that he felt we ought to contemplate working together to update the language in the Code of Ordinances. For example, the existing code references

paratransit service, which we haven't had that since 1997. It just needs to be updated. Perhaps try to think more about this not being a disabilities services Board, but rather act more as an ADA Board similar to what other cities have. Andy stated that the Mayor has talked about potentially speaking with the County and having this group a City/County Board since it wouldn't necessarily matter if an issue was with the City or the County because we are all the same community. This would also give more buy-in from two large governments that affect everybody's daily lives in St. Joseph. This is the idea Andy spoke with the Mayor about and wanted to present to this Board. Andy stated that staff has done a lot of research, therefore instead of re-inventing the wheel, this Board can steal from a model other communities have developed. This is a very common element that communities have; we just don't have that here in St. Joseph.

Andy explained that the Board members should first of all think about the idea and then at the next meeting we can start brainstorming on the direction they want to take. Subsequently Andy would visit with the Mayor and then Mayor would have a council work session on the idea and then if Council is on board we'll make the Code changes necessary. Andy further explained that the Mayor will speak with the County Commissioners and get them on board. The ground work to lay this in motion has been started. Andy informed the new Board members to think about these ideas that he, Mayor Falkner and the City Council are proposing because it is up to them to decide which direction they wish to take. Andy confirmed that they want to allow this Board to be proactive in looking at things in the community, not be the type of Board that makes a ruling when someone gets upset about something not working. The Mayor explained it as, turning a negative into a positive. Andy reiterated the focus should be on the future direction this Disability Services Board wants to take.

Election of officers. Andy mentioned that he is running this meeting but he really shouldn't be because he is a staff person. He asked to move into agenda item 4 which is to elect Chair and Vice-Chair officers so that the Board is conducting future meetings. No nominations were made as the members had just met for the first time and one member was absent. Member Graham suggested that introductions with brief background of each member be made at this time. Subsequently, Jo Townsend stated she would share the members' contact information among this committee.

Other business. Chuck Kempf mentioned that he is also the ADA Coordinator and shared a Memo that went to the Mayor and City Council in May of 2016. He stated the ADA Transition Plan is updated every spring; identifying any barriers that were eliminated. He also offered to supply the Compliance Plan to anyone interested.

Discussion was also held on various hazardous handicap parking spaces at businesses in St. Joseph.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

The next scheduled meeting is February 23, 2017, 4:00 P.M.