

# Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities Committee

## Minutes

Zoom Remote Meeting Hosted in Tacoma, WA 98402

Friday, March 11, 2022

- Call to Order** The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.
- Commissioners Present** Krystal Monteros, Luke Byram, Todd Holloway, Aimee Sidhu, Lukas Barfield, Tony Caldwell, Richard Smaby, and Kristy Willett.
- Commissioners Absent** James Williams, Amin Tony Hester and Rebecca Parsons
- City Staff Present** Lucas Smiraldo (OEHR),
- Guests Present** Deputy Mayor Catherine Ushka, Cindi Laws, Ivan Tudela, Emergency Management,, Haley Edick, David Edick, John Halliday and Julian Wheeler.
- Adoption of Agenda** In advance of a vote on the agenda, guest John Halliday led the group in a song of greeting derived from his Muckleshoot roots. Commissioner Sidhu ask that the commission discuss a future meeting to look at alternative responses that do not involve police. Commissioner Barfield asked that the commissioners discuss the proposed Warehouse and its potential impact in the community and on the environment. A motion was made by Holloway and seconded by Monteros to accept this meeting's COD agenda. The motion was passed.
- Acceptance of Minutes** The February minutes were not ready for review and so will be presented at the April meeting along with the March minutes.
- Public Comment** Hayley Edick expressed concerns around sidewalk construction across the city and the obstacles it presents for people with disabilities.
- Officer Elections** Lucas led commissioners through a discussion and nominations for the 2022 term for Chair and Vice Chair. The following nominations were made:  
**Chair:**  
Monteros  
Byram  
Hester (pending his acceptance)  
**Vice Chair**  
Byram  
Sidhu  
Hester (pending his acceptance)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Guest Presenter** Cindi Laws, Purple Mountain Advocates
- 1<sup>st</sup> Guest Presentation** Cindi Laws presented the preliminary findings from the Accessible Taxi Feasibility Study.
- People with disabilities comprise the largest minority in the United States. 4% of people use wheelchairs and over 6% over 65, 80% report that local transit is insufficient.

- The need is clear, the question is whether there is enough will to create an alternative transportation model to meet the diverse needs of people with disabilities.
- The best model of accessible taxi/transportation for people with disabilities is in Montgomery, Alabama with eight different companies that provide this service in a city that is comparable to the population of Tacoma with a much bigger square area to cover.
- Montgomery had funded this with a .25 surcharge for taxi and issuing 50 licenses to a cooperative.
- Has 1,200 licensed operators
- Other models include Seattle/King County, Washington DC, New York City, Chicago
- IN DC subsidies allow accessible rides to any destination for \$7 per trip which is supported by a Federal Enhance Mobility Grant
- In Seattle there was 842 % increase in WAT (Wheelchair Accessible Rides) from 0.7 per vehicle a day to 4.8 rides per day.
- Other unsubsidized rides can range as high as \$75 per trip in other cities
- A Tacoma solution will most likely require a dedicated staff such a Transportation Director and need millions of dollars of seed funds from multiple sources including the federal government

The following emerged from discussion with commissioners and the presenter

- Density helps build demand
- Ms. Laws believes that the program would work with 5 million in total initial funding
- The program will need to forge public private partnerships such as with local hospitals
- Many current drivers in this region are immigrants from India, Pakistan, Ethiopia and other northern African nations.
- Deputy Mayor Ushka emphasized the city has been supportive of this direction since the start and needs to identify the resources to make it viable.
- Electric vehicles figure prominently into the future programs as does ongoing training and vehicle retrofits

***Reports  
Chair  
and Vice Chair***

Chair Monteros: A shelter evaluation committee gave input around accessibility and a planning event is being prepped for summer to invite greater interaction. No report from Vice Chair

***Liaison Report***

Feasibility Study covers Accessible Taxi report. A summit will be called soon to build a process of reconciliation and several commissioners could be a part of that process. Volunteers will work on a media campaign to promote drive through accessibility. Closed captioning mailing is now complete with both letters and window clings sent to businesses and a complaint based system for future follow up. The parking committee has yet to meet for which commissioners would be involved.

***PCAC Report***

PCAC needs more funding proposals for community improvement. Meetings to discuss on March 16 and 23<sup>rd</sup> and deadline on April 18th

***New Business***

Hayley Edick would like more dialogue on meeting the disability needs of people in homeless shelters. Lucas encouraged Ms. Edick to attend Continuity of Care meetings to voice concerns. Commissioner Sidhu discussed reaching out to the Tacoma Action Coalition to explore crisis model that does not include Police staff. The group will meet later in March to discuss this and other models. The committee would draft language in support of a petition that proposes an alternative model that is non aggressive by nature. Mr. Smiraldo will follow up around chance to learn more information about he warehouse and where to give community input.

*Good of the Order*

None

*Adjournment*

Motion made by Commissioner Sidhu and seconded by Commissioner Caldwell to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 6:15 p.m.