

Fairfax Area Disability Services Board (FA-DSB)
March 14, 2016 Meeting Minutes
12000 Government Center Parkway, Conference Rooms 9/10

FA-DSB Members in Attendance:

Tapan Banerjee, Chair, Dranesville District
Linda Collins, Braddock District
Alexandra Dixon, At Large
Harriet Epstein, Secretary, Providence District
Donald Kissinger, Jr., Springfield District
Chester Freedenthal, Lee District
Tim Lavelle, At-Large
Michele "Cookie" Hymer Blitz, Hunter Mill District
Leeann Alberts, Vice Chair, At-Large

FA-DSB Members Excused from the Meeting:

Mark Farage, City of Fairfax

Others Present: Matthew Barkley, Jill Clark, and Carl Varner-Fairfax County Department of Family Services' Disability Services Planning and Development; Tom Bash- Springfield District representative of the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging; and Ursula Kiel-Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management.

Minutes and Agenda: The March agenda and the February minutes were both adopted unanimously.

Public Comment: Tom Bash reviewed his Lines of Business position regarding how Fairfax County should invest in a Pre-Notification 911 system and expressed doubt that the 15,000 people identified with a functional need on Fairfax Alerts will truly be any safer during an emergency. He also said that since countywide emergencies are relatively rare, yet there are thousands of 911 calls received each year, Pre Notification 911 would be beneficial and provide enhanced safety readiness for people with disabilities in both instances.

Fairfax County's FY 2017 Advertised Budget Priorities: Tapan Banerjee presented proposed budget items that could impact people with disabilities for review. The FA-DSB agreed to emphasize the following priorities:

- The FA-DSB is grateful to the Board of Supervisors for not proposing any major reductions to services that are vital for adults with disabilities.
- *Bus Stop Accessibility Improvements:* Without the \$1.5 million required by FC-DOT for ongoing bus stop improvements, there's no guarantee that 75 proposed bus stop accessibility projects will be completed in FY17. This will result in widespread negative consequences for people with disabilities and Fairfax County's transportation infrastructure as a whole.
- *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance:* ADA enhancements to Fairfax County Government and Park Authority facilities are essential so they are accessible for people with disabilities. Fairfax County must be sure that all new projects are ADA compliant preventing the need for expensive renovations.
- *Meet the Growing Demand for Services for Adults with Disabilities:* After several years of reductions and without any increased funding for services for our most vulnerable adults with disabilities, Fairfax County needs to invest in programs to meet growing demand as an investment in future services. For example, rather than recouping unexpended funding for the Home Repair for the Elderly Program, the FA-DSB feels that alternate strategies expanding the capacity to serve more people should be prioritized.

FA-DSB Strategic Planning and Proposed Community Forums: Tapan Banerjee shared a proposal for the FA-DSB to host a series of community forums to more directly connect with the people with disabilities served by the board as a first step to take toward developing strategic action plans that will have a positive impact on the people served by the board who are in greatest need. The forums will be held at various public locations and partnering agencies serving people with physical and sensory disabilities throughout the county. At least two FA-DSB members would be needed for each forum, and support staff will help facilitate the discussion. Receiving unanimous approval, the board will proceed with the forums in the late spring/early summer.

Committee Reports:

- **Emergency Preparedness:** Harriet Epstein reported that the March committee meeting met and discussed the Medical Needs Registry, Fairfax Alerts and the gaps that prevent people with disabilities from being adequately served in an emergency. She reiterated how “Pre-Notification 911” could be beneficial during an emergency, and clarified that the OEM is focused on getting information out to groups of people during an emergency, while public safety is focused on individual needs.
- **Housing:** Chester Freedenthal said that he participated in an “Analysis of Fair Housing Impediments” forum, but he noted only one citizen attended. The Analysis of Fair Housing Impediments report required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sets out action steps for Fairfax County to pursue to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in successful housing outcomes.
- **Mobility and Transportation (M&T) Committee:** Don Kissinger reported that they’ve had a series of spirited meetings about Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) and taxi companies. He said that the committee needs to re-evaluate the Commonwealth’s legislation authorizing TNCs to operate in Virginia to more adequately address how they are required to serve people with disabilities. Jill Clark spoke about a proposed pilot project in Maryland for TNCs to provide some paratransit services to supplement MetroAccess, and added that the next M&T Committee meeting will focus on wheelchair accessible taxis.

Chair’s Items: Tapan Banerjee reported that a message was sent to the At Large, Mason, Sully, Falls Church and Mt. Vernon districts asking them to fill their FA-DSB vacancies. Included were recent accomplishments of the FA-DSB, which the board said should be shared with other elected officials. He also established the Nominations Committee to propose nominees for the FY 2017 Executive Committee during the May 2016 meeting. Don Kissinger, Linda Collins and Tim Lavelle volunteered to be on the committee.

Member and Staff Reports:

- Matthew Barkley said that the FA-DSB’s business cards should be ready before the next meeting. Brailled cards that can be used both by board members and support staff will be printed separately.
- Michele Hymer ‘Cookie’ Blitz reported that she met Maria Town, White House Liaison for People with Disabilities during a series of Jewish Disability Awareness Month activities. Cookie was impressed by how many people are touched by disabilities and recommended that Maria be invited to a future FA-DSB event. Harriet added that Bobby Silverstein, the director of the Center for the Study and Advancement of Disability Policy, is another interesting person the FA-DSB should invite to an upcoming occasion.
- Leeann Alberts sent a link to an article about TNCs and people with disabilities to Tapan, and asked that it be shared with the full board. Tapan said the reporter who wrote the article would like to speak with him.
- Tim Lavelle reported that there will be a parade for the rights of people with hearing issues on 5-4-16 in Richmond. Staff explored his recommendation for a local plastic bag tax that could fund services for people with disabilities with the Dept. of Tax Administration and the Dept. of Public Works. Since this is a “Dillon Rule” state, such a program requires action by the General Assembly.

Adjournment: 8:55 p.m.