Fairfax Area Disability Services Board (FA-DSB)
March 9, 2015 Meeting Minutes
12000 Government Center Parkway, Conference Rooms 2/3

FA-DSB Members in Attendance:
Harriet Epstein, Providence District
Jacqueline Browne, Mason District
Tapan Banerjee, Chair, Dranesville District
Tim Lavelle, Secretary, At-Large
Donald Kissinger, Jr., Springfield District
Alexandra Dixon, At Large
Mark Farage, City of Fairfax
Leeann Alberts, At-Large
Linda Collins, Braddock District

Absent FA-DSB Members:
Kelly Greenwood, Vice Chair, Mt. Vernon District
Petra Osborne, At Large
Michelle 'Cookie' Hymer Blitz, Hunter Mill District

Others Present: Matthew Barkley and Carl Varner-Fairfax County Department of Family Services' Disability Services Planning and Development; Doris Ray- ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia (ECNV); Lewis Gelobter-Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV); six master degree pupils from George Mason University.

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

Public Comment: Doris Ray from ECNV voiced her support for the Legal Services for People with Disabilities Program that is proposed to be eliminated in Fairfax County's FY 2016 advertised budget, and indicated that many of ECNV's customers have benefitted from this valuable service. She invited FA-DSB members to participate in ECNV's annual awards reception on June 11, and offered to collaborate with the board on activities celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act in July 2015.

FA-DSB's Proposed Fairfax County Budget Priorities for FY 2016: Lewis Gelobter who administers the Legal Services for People with Disabilities Program for LSNV, which is proposed to be eliminated in Fairfax County's FY 2016 advertised budget, gave an overview of the program and how it benefits people with disabilities in the Fairfax area. A fact sheet summarizing how the proposed elimination of the program would impact the community was distributed to the board. The FA-DSB briefly reviewed other budget items of interest, but then decided to focus all advocacy efforts for FY 2016 on the restoration of the Legal Services for People with Disabilities Program. Tapan Banerjee stressed that the board must take swift and immediate action to oppose the elimination of this program by writing letters to members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS), and by meeting with board members individually. Don Kissinger said that efforts to restore funding for the program should emphasize the revenue it generates which offsets much of the cost for the program, and how it has the potential to bring even more funding into the county with additional support.

Committee Reports:

- **Emergency Preparedness:** Harriet Epstein reported that the BOS recently passed an item supporting Smart 911, and asking staff for additional information about it. A number of BOS members have openly expressed an interest in the program. She also redistributed printed information about Fairfax Alerts and

the Medical Needs Registry encouraging FA-DSB members to continue to recruit new people for both programs.

Housing: Carl Varner provided an update on the Accessibility Guide for Home Modifications that is being developed as part of the Fairfax County 50+ Community Action Plan, and said that the FA-DSB will have the opportunity to review a draft version of the guide before it is finalized. The board decided unanimously to reappoint Michelle **'**Cookie' Hymer Blitz to serve another term as the FA-DSB's representative on the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee (CCFAC). The board also wants to invite the new director of Housing and Community Development to a future FA-DSB meeting.

- **Mobility and Transportation Committee**: Don and Alexandra reported that the last committee meeting included reviewing transportation items from Fairfax County's FY 2016 advertised budget, establishing advocacy priorities for the coming year, reviewing the transportation initiatives of the Fairfax 50+ Community Action Plan and statewide regulations for Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft. These activities were driven by the goal to ensure full accommodation of people with disabilities.

- **Americans with Disabilities Act**: Leeann Alberts recently volunteered to chair the FA-DSB's ADA Committee. She will be scheduling an ADA Committee meeting soon, with a focus on accessible parking reserved for people with disabilities. She welcomes other suggestions from board members. Mark Farage expressed the importance of this committee and its efforts, especially with the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act coming up in July, and agreed to participate in the committee.

Chair's Items:

Tapan Banerjee reviewed the list of FA-DSB vacancies on other advisory boards that need to be filled. Since the FA-DSB has a reduced meeting schedule, additional committee work is needed in between meetings.

Tapan stressed the importance of having an action plan in place where board members would take on specific advocacy activities and regularly provide status updates to the board. Rather than establishing the action plan and activities in a retreat setting as they have been in the past, the board decided to incorporate the strategic planning activities into their regular meeting schedule. The board agreed that a good starting point would be to develop action plans for the activities that are currently being worked on.

Tapan asked for an update on the Mount Vernon District representative for the FA-DSB, who is also the Vice Chair. Having not received any response in several months, he will follow up with the Mount Vernon District to consider how the FA-DSB's bylaws apply to the lack of communication and extended number of absences.

Staff/Member Reports:

- Jackie Browne provided an overview of the ABLE Act legislation, which was passed by the Commonwealth of Virginia's 2015 General Assembly. It allows low- income people with disabilities to save money for education, housing, employment, and other services without penalty.
- Matthew Barkley asked for volunteers to speak about Fairfax County's proposed budget items. Harriet Epstein volunteered to testify before the Human Services Council on March 12, and Tapan Banerjee will testify before the Board of Supervisors on April 7, 2015.
- 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act—July 2015: the FA-DSB wants to celebrate the ADA's anniversary, but will discuss specifics at a future meeting.
- Matthew Barkley asked for volunteers to serve on the FA-DSB's FY 2016 Nominations Committee. Leeann Alberts, Linda Collins, and Jackie Browne agreed to nominate the FA-DSB leadership for FY 16.

- Harriet Epstein reported that a rail has been installed along the path at the drop-off point for the Providence Community Center, however she still recognizes barriers to people with disabilities there. Tapan suggested that the FA-DSB take a look at the accessibility of the facility.

Adjournment: 8:45 p.m.