

City Commission Accessibility Committee

Virtual meeting through the Government Channel

January 14, 2021, Noon – 1:00 pm

Present: Davey McNelly, Noah Trembly, Dianne Bouvier, Ryan, Tiffany Beals, Rob Delach; David Riggs (Guest); Scott Thompson and Ryan Schwartzhoff (Government Channel technicians)

I. Call to Order

Davey McNelly called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm

II. Approval of Minutes

Approval of December 10, 2020 minutes – tabled until February meeting

III. Agenda Items

Meet with David Riggs, City Code Office

David Riggs, Director of Code Enforcement for the City of Athens, was invited to the meeting. He said that the City follows 2010 ADA for new construction and renovations and if there are problems people could contact the DOJ, the City Code Office has no compliance arm for responding to complaints. If businesses have more than 15 employees, they should remove barriers that are Readily Achievable. Large projects go through State review process and City has a chance to look at projects or plans. When businesses file to get a building permit for construction/renovation, the City gives them a 40-page government document on Readily Achievable Barrier Removal (required under Title III of the ADA, for private businesses serving the public). Booklet available through ADACompliance.com

City Bid projects go through Jessica Adine, Interim City Engineer and City Planning.

Interest in having accountability at the City level to address accessibility. No code regulations to meet this except to do a comprehensive review a site plan for new construction or renovations with Title 41 permits. This applies to major projects, not small interior upgrades that do not impact structure.

Who is responsible for ADA compliance in the City (Local Government under Title II of the ADA)? The City has over 50 employees. Is there a designated person someone could go to when things are out of compliance? Interest in having the City Council incorporate ADA compliance into Code. Difficulties with having enough Code staffing. Individual property owners are responsible for making sure their property is compliant. Any individual could go to the City with an issue, would need to codify for enforcement.

Discussion about how to support building owners to include accessibility upfront when making renovations and new construction. The Accessibility Committee is interested in partnering with City Code Office to provide a joint letter to property owners as they undertake structural changes.

Talked about sending out letters when we notice issues. David Riggs said the process would require the Mayor's approval to provide a joint letter. Purpose of letter – to give guidance to business owners about what areas need to be addressed. Committee would need to have access to review spaces and renovation/construction plans. The letter would explain what we're doing, what changes a place needs to do to follow ADA that are considered "Readily Achievable," list types of things that could be out of

compliance/check list; additional resources available, let them know we are here to support you, get in touch and follow up/ give some details and refer to govt doc. Give links/pages.

The letter would provide general information on accessibility improvements that would be considered “Readily Achievable” (i.e., accessible parking, pathways into facilities, entrances, pathways to major programs and services, locations with public programs and services, restrooms). Committee could serve as a resource. When appropriate, letter could point out location for applicable guidance within the 40-page ADA government document. Davey to send doc.

Accessibility Committee will draft a letter to be sent to building owners making renovations or doing new construction, to be signed jointly by the committee and the Code Office. David Riggs and City would provide feedback to the letter.

Interest in having the City Council include accessibility in Code enforcement when not in compliance. To change codified ordinances, Commission/Committee would need to petition City Council. They would draft ordinances through a committee of the Council and it would need to be voted on by the Council. Chris Fahl of the Planning and Development Committee is a potential champion for this; Davey and Noah will follow up with her.

David Riggs indicated that some cities have an ADA committee to address concerns. Noah is working with Paul on forming a committee with City Officials, but not an ADA Committee. Next steps – figure out when Noah’s committee is meeting. We can see who else on City Council will be involved. Arian is not running for reelection. Whoever is new next year could maybe help.

Address Scooter parking and bicycle, and e-bike parking – how is that best handled? David said the City would work with the scooter companies to create a scooter hub parking area, with recharge abilities. They would require businesses to install this. The City knows it’s a problem. Governor just signed regs re: scooters, could affect issues.

Committee will invite David Riggs to come back in April/May – have letter down, get approval from Mayor’s office, and identify businesses that would be open to working with us.

Goals for 2021

- Work with schools, diversity and Inclusion, readily available improvements
- Adding 2-3 different people to Committee – interest in including people with differing impairments – visual, deaf or hard of hearing, developmental differences. Ask jw – he may know of others.
- Could ask Communications Committee to do a fb posting that we’re working with City officials – who would like to join us?
- Work on a specific project to have uptown curbcuts be level with the street
- Send letter to Jessica – Can we get the concrete grinders to make sidewalks level – every year or two as part of a cycle?
- City App – Rob has set alert when something posted – seems to be working. Add information on to facebook on SeeClickFix – ask Claire to have Communications committee do some announcements about this. App is branded for the City. Can see points on a map and click on location, can submit. Might be good to assess it. We could use it, test it out, and give feedback to City. Keep on our radar for the spring. City has ability to modify the app (better than the old

app). Once we do an assessment and get word out, we could do a Walk and Roll to teach people how to use the app – Rob offered to lead that when it is safe.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting February 11th at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom

VI. ADJOURN

The meeting Adjourned at 12:59 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Dianne Bouvier
January 17, 2012*