



MEETING MINUTES
Benton County Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (ACAC)
January 21, 2021

The meeting of the Benton County Accessible Communities Advisory Committee was held by WebEx at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 21, 2020 . Present at the meeting were committee members Matt Nash, Vice-Chair, Amanda Hatfield (County Elections Manager), Lorene Roe (Chief Deputy Auditor), Shyanne Palmus (Commissioners' Office), Judith Davis, Matt West, Teresa Payne, and Deidra Beck (Committee Coordinator). Also attending was Marc Culbertson (committee applicant), and Cody Shelton (Benton County—IT Department) administering the WebEx meeting.

Matt Nash opened the meeting at 2:03 p.m.

Because a quorum was in attendance, Matt, as Vice-Chair, opened the floor for nominations for the Committee Chair for 2021. Amanda Hatfield nominated Matt Nash, and Matt West seconded. The Committee voted by voiced yea or nay. Matt Nash was unanimously voted as the new ACAC Chair. Matt Nash then proceeded to open the floor for nominations for the Committee Vice-Chair. Matt Nash nominated Amanda Hatfield, and it was seconded by Shyanne Palmus. A unanimous vote was given in favor of Amanda Hatfield as the new ACAC Vice-Chair.

Matt asked Marc Culbertson to introduce himself. He has recently applied as a new ACAC member, and after a successful interview with Committee representatives Matt Nash and Deidra Beck, his name has been presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval at their next meeting on January 25, 2021. Marc proudly stated that he is the father of a seven year old boy, and then explained that after losing both legs due to an injury and subsequent infection, he is burdened to help others; joining our committee as we service the disabled in our community is something near to his heart.

Deidra reminded the committee that we postponed our guest speaker, Darla Rhodes, with The Disability App, until our February meeting next month.

The committee then discussed Ed Carter's article, "Advice for the Disabled Running for Office", which was sent by email for each member to review prior to the meeting. The question before the committee was whether or not to post this article on our Benton County web page. Judith again stated that she felt it was a great article, and she suggested that we inquire as to whether we can add a disclaimer to our web page stating that we are not posting with the intention of promoting any business or product. Matt West questioned whether we can consult with the County Prosecuting Attorney for advice and guidance on this disclaimer idea. Matt felt that such would be beneficial not only because of the article but also for any accessible business postings we may add as a result of our Site Evaluations. Shyanne agreed that we should have it reviewed by an attorney's office and make sure we are safe to post it. Deidra promised to reach out to Reid Hay, Benton County Prosecuting Attorney regarding this issue. Matt suggested that we postpone this vote on Ed Carter's article until we have further information and approval for a business disclaimer to be posted on our web page.

Following Brenda Chilton's departing advice, Deidra asked the committee if there was an interest to schedule another special 'whiteboarding' meeting early in this year to re-visit our Long-Term Goals and establish our new 2021 Short Term Goals. Matt asked whether we thought we should again try to schedule a special meeting outside of our regular schedule or try to accomplish this during a regular Thursday afternoon meeting. Amanda stated that she thought, if we brainstormed ahead of time, we could put our ideas together and accomplish a new outline in a regularly scheduled meeting. She suggested that, because we plan to have a guest speaker in February, we could devote our March meeting to whiteboarding our ideas and establishing our new goals. Deidra was asked, and agreed, to re-email the current Long-Term and Short-Term Goals outline to all members, and Matt encouraged all to review these and prepare to come to the March meeting ready to present their ideas.

Deidra shared about the notification that she received from the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) regarding the introduction of the new Chair of the GCDE Accessibility Communities (AC) Subcommittee, Megan Mason-Todd. Megan sent information of their funding notice and application cycle. Because funds are lower and

limited below normal from this past pandemic year, grants will be broken into smaller chunks, and applications for funding will only be accepted twice a year; March or August. Because our committee is not currently applying for funding, we don't have to worry about meeting the March deadline. However, Deidra promised that, as we move forward once our 2021 goals are set, she will be sure to keep the August deadline in mind and be ready should we need to apply for funding for a project that may develop in this first half of the year. Deidra also reported that the GCDE is still planning for their Washington State All Counties ACAC meeting in late Spring or early Summer. Matt encouraged that it would be good if all of our members would plan to participate as it will be a beneficial meeting where newly developing ACAC's and established and experienced ACAC's can help and inform one another about project development, the funding process, and share new ideas. Deidra reminded that the meeting would, more than likely, be a virtual meeting.

Matt Nash shared that he is involved as a member of the GCED. Upon Judith asking Matt about his involvement, he informed that he is on various sub-committees such as their Community Outreach Committee. This committee works to develop outreach events and town halls in different communities. However, because of the challenges we all face currently, their activity is slowed down. He also works with the GCED Employer Awards Event Committee in which they reward various business that have excelled in the employment of disabled people. This year, he reported, they held the awards ceremony as a virtual event, and, in spite of the challenges, it proved to be very successful in that format. They had a good compilation of recourses and people of varying expertise that helped them pull it together. Deidra asked that if our local area becomes an area that their Community Outreach Committee wishes to focus on, perhaps our ACAC could partner with them and become involved in a planned event. Matt admitted that he would love them to plan an event here because, he believes, our area has some unique challenges in this Bi-County/Tri-Cities area that is so intertwined. Matt also mentioned that in a recent meeting, they were visited by a woman from a committee for the blind. She expressed that mail in ballots were a real voting issue for them and that the requirement of having to print and sign their ballot was a real challenge and hardship. She wanted to learn of a way where they might have an option of electronically signing or other alternatives that may be more amenable to them. Matt is hopeful to connect her with Amanda, Benton County's Election Manager, to work with her for answers toward this concern. Deidra asked

Amanda whether this could be an opportunity for our ACAC to work alongside Benton County Elections to help facilitate outreach to the disabled community and increase media awareness with voter information about accessible options available for them.

With no further comments or new business, Matt adjourned the meeting at 2:42 p.m.

Our next meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.