

Knoxville Mayor's Council on Disability Issues

January 12, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Via Zoom

I. Meeting was called to order at 4:03 pm.

II. Roll call:

Members: Alexander, Barber, Briggs, Childress, Colebrooke, Cook, Dziubak, Foutch, Huang, Landfather, Lowe, Moore, Mull, NeSmith, Orr, Rodgers, Simmons, Spangler, VanDyke, Villanueva, Welch

Present: Barber, Briggs, Dziubak, Colebrooke, Cook, Jenkins, Lowe, Mull, Nesmith, Orr, Rodgers, Simmons, VanDyke, Villanueva

Absent: Alexander, Childress, Foutch, Huang, Landfather, Moore, Spangler, Welch

Guests: Lynn Petr – With Shangri-La Therapeutic Academy of Riding STAR

Interpreters: Haile Stewart, Dawn Munroe

III. Approval of December Minutes:

- First motion was made by NeSmith, Barber seconded motion, all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

IV. Guest Speaker:

Lynn Petr – With Shangri-La Therapeutic Academy of Riding (STAR)

The Shangri-La Therapeutic Academy of Riding has been around since 1987 and is going into their 35th year. STAR works with children and adults starting at age four and up including seniors with physical, mental, and neurological disabilities or those considered at-risk. STAR serves individuals from Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Fentress, Knox, Loudon, Jefferson, Monroe, McMinn, Roane, Sevier, and surrounding counties. The mission of STAR is to foster personal achievement by providing therapeutic experiences using horse related activities for persons with disabilities or other special challenges. In 2019, STAR served 245 individuals with a total of 16,780 hours of Equine Assisted Services. STAR began in 1987 as Lynn Petr's

Therapeutic Recreation Master's thesis project at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The program started with five riders, one horse, three volunteers, and one employee.

The Therapeutic Riding Program. The Therapeutic Riding program is designed to meet the specific needs of each participant. The prescribed program may include grooming, saddling, and learning riding skills, or may be passive in nature. With some riders, STAR positions them so the movement of the horse can relax tight muscles, increase range of motion, improve trunk stability, and balance. These individuals are not learning riding skills but are reaping great benefits just from being on the horse. Balance, coordination, and muscle tone improve through exercises done on horseback. Psychological benefits include increased independence, motivation, and self-control. Vocabulary development and sequential learning contributes to cognitive gains, and self-esteem soars as the riders learn to control their mounts. The recreational aspect of STAR's program proves invaluable for those who normally cannot participate in conventional sports.

The Changing STRIDES Program. STAR's Changing STRIDES program teaches life skills to at-risk youth, women in crisis, and those in rehabilitation by developing partnerships with horses. This program provides the tools to better manage their lives and foster positive relationships while teaching problem solving, appropriate communication, anger management, and personal fortitude. Most of the lesson is interaction on the ground with the horses, learning to co-exist with herd animals where trust is the foundation.

The Changing STRIDES Curriculum consists of:

- Life Skills Lessons
- Stable Management
- Equine assisted activities
- Horse care and handling
- Leadership skills and team building lessons

The Minis in Motion Program is one of STAR's core programs in which their miniature horses and donkeys are partnered with local schools, long-term care facilities, camps, and organizations to ignite a spark for learning and personal development. Although small in stature, these animals are big on personality and capture attention wherever they go. Because of their size, the minis are perfect partners in equine assisted learning activities that promote personal development and emotional well-being. Designed for both individuals and small

groups, these activities enhance life skills through experiencing the world of the horse. They predominately go into memory care units and local assisted living facilities but are equally comfortable with school groups, camps, and parades. The Minis will come to your location and even come inside! (minis have diapers and shoes, so they won't make a mess).

The Heroes & Horses Program is a Therapeutic Riding and Equine Assisted Learning program for Veterans with disabilities or other special challenges in East Tennessee.

Partnering with horses provides a wealth of therapeutic benefits such as:

- Improving balance and coordination
- Strengthening core and muscle tone
- Increasing self-esteem and confidence
- Providing relaxation and stress relief
- Networking with other veterans
- Opportunity to learn something new
- Relationship Building

STAR is a 501(c)3 organization and holds premier accreditation from the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) STAR is currently serving 140 participants per week.

V. Member Advocacy and Information (5 minutes)

- Welcome new CODI member Hank Jenkins
 - Fairly new resident of Knoxville, has lived here about 2.5 years
 - Minister by trade with United Methodist Church for about 15 years
 - Paraplegic and identifies as a Person with a Disability.
 - Over the past 4-5 years, he has been doing disability advocacy within the church, called the Association of Ministers with Disabilities, which is a group of ministers within the United Methodist Church that advocate for people with disabilities (PWD) within the church.
 - Started at Lincoln Memorial working toward getting his law degree to do more disability advocacy work.
 - His disability advocacy work is what drew him to CODI, especially making the community aware of the needs of PWD and giving voice to PWD for them to be able to advocate for themselves.

- VanDyke discussed information she shared at a meeting she attended concerning the Annual Action Plan, which is a part of a five-year plan the city does concerning HUD.
 - Spoke of what has been going on for the last year or two with HUD monies. They have typically used 15% for services, that amount increased due to CARES act, but will soon be going back down.
 - As such, they inquired what was working and what was not working. They spoke of an increase in accessible homes as a focus, and that more low-income units should be available in areas people could take advantage of public transportation.
 - VanDyke did mention Monica Orr's friends who were Deaf-Blind and moved away from Knoxville because they could not find housing in a safe area with access to public transportation.
 - There needs to be a focus making sure new housing contractors understand the need for more accessible / affordable homes which would have access to public transportation. VanDyke shared that 54% of their HUD funds did go toward developing affordable housing and helped many people through housing assistance at a cost of one million dollars.
 - Spoke of different programs that would help people go to work, which involves training, but may also involve mental health services.
 - Important thing to note – if you are interested in getting a grant through them, there will be a mandatory Technical Assistance Workshop on February 9th and 10th, or you can visit www.KnoxTN.gov/Development.
 - February 1st from 6:00 – 7:30 is the first Annual Action plan public meeting, which will be via Zoom.
- VanDyke shared the CODI Executive Committee is meeting with Mayor Kincannon on January 13th from 3:00-4:00pm.
 - After reviewing past CODI meeting minutes VanDyke noticed several great ideas that were not followed up on. If you are a chair of a committee, please create an agenda based off what has happened in previous minutes. We need to be more conscious on follow-through, and more organization and intention should help with this.

VI. Committee Reports

Bylaws:

- Did not meet

Membership:

- Did not meet

Transportation:

- Did not meet
- Discussion of KAT and West Town Mall
 - A Meeting occurred between dRC with Katherine Moore, Michael Scripa and Matt Davis, CODI Chair VanDyke, City ADA Cook, as well as the Director of Transit for CoK, and West Town Mall. In follow-up:
 - KAT is trying to explore what equipment they have that would be better or more feasible to get into mall property
 - Mall reports four entrances and that the best entrance for a transit stop would be near the Cinebarre parking garage.
 - Looking at hourly service to the Mall via KAT.

Community Engagement

- Dziubak recapped last month's meeting and decision to focus on supporting other committees and by getting word out in the community about CODI, and briefly discussed the Livability PSA and Universal Design video and as well as the Universal Design's plan for a "Dinner and Design" event.
- It was decided that Community Engagement and Universal Design would meet together in March to discuss how Community Engagement could best support them in the video and/or "Dinner and Design" event planning.
- Afterwards, a brainstorm discussion took place with members giving ideas of how to better engage with the community.
- Dziubak asked everyone to complete a "homework" task to bring presentation ideas to the March meeting as well as a list of who they might know that could be speakers or sponsors of the "Dinner and Design" event.

VII. Strategic Plan Group Reports**Livability:**

- Lowe reported Dziubak is researching two tablets for us to use when doing the Accessibility Checklist Virtually with employers.
- Mull and Lowe have provided the Livability Committee with a list of restaurants/businesses in the downtown area to kickstart the checklist.
- Livability Committee finalized the business window cling for when a business completes the checklist.

- Mull is working on the email blast for the Knoxville Chamber Email Blast announcing the Accessible Checklist for businesses.
- Next Steps are working towards having a mini training for all CODI members regarding how to complete the Accessible Checklist with businesses.

Universal Design:

- Discussed Visitable Type C Units. Universal Design had a past motion to try to obtain a change in city requirements regarding Type C Dwelling Units, and during this meeting it was discussed in detail. The committee looked at disability and population statistics and decided to ask for 30% of all new single family and duplex type housing be created as Type C. The number of individuals moving into TN over the age of 65 is 28%.
- Dziubak has invited Jim Tente to come and speak at the February Universal meeting to provide more detail on type C dwellings and answer any remaining questions.
- Cook reported that there is a \$50 million dollar investment over 10 years in the City's Affordable Housing Rental Development fund

VIII. New Business

- CODI had decided to do quarterly in-person meetings when COVID looked more positive, and now cases are sky high and climbing. We need to discuss whether we are wanting to meet via Zoom or in-person for our February meeting, which was the first scheduled quarterly in person meeting for this year.
 - A survey poll took place for in-person or zoom meeting preference for the February CODI meeting. Majority (11 of 13 members present) chose Zoom.
- Annazette Houston resigned from CODI on 1/3/22, effective immediately.
 - We will need a Chair for the Bylaws Committee
 - We will need to convene Membership Committee to discuss bringing in a new member.
- CODI Window Cling approved by Livability Committee
 - Barber motion to present to designer that we are concerned with the size of the QR code and will defer to them whether they think it is better to keep it as is, or move the verbiage at the bottom down a bit in order to make the QR code bigger.
 - Mull seconded, all approved, no one opposed

IX. Announcements and Public Forum

- None

X. Adjourn at 5:30 pm.

Upcoming Meetings/Reminders:

February 9, 2022

March 9, 2022

April 13, 2022

May 11, 2022

June 8, 2022

July 13, 2022

August 10, 2022

September 14, 2022

October 12, 2022

November 9, 2022

December 14, 2022