

**DAGWould? Board Meeting Minutes  
November 18, 2021  
Community Room  
City of Knoxville Public Works Complex  
3131 Morris Avenue**

Members in Attendance:

Shazi Ahmad, Secretary  
Nancy Brown  
Sarah Holloway  
Stanley Taylor  
April Tomlin

Others in Attendance:

Carly Pearson, ADA 504 Coordinator for Knox County  
Myers Morton, Knox County Law Department  
Kristin

Call to Order: 3:02 (EST)

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

-Carly called the meeting to order.

-Carly welcomed everyone to the meeting and told the group about herself and her background. She also talked about the ADA coordinator's role and responsibilities.

**APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES**

-There were no minutes recorded for the May 2021 meeting and nothing consequential occurred at that meeting.

**PRESENTATION: CARTER PARK UPDATE**

-Carly introduced the guest speaker, Kristin Grove, PBA Director of Property Development, to update the group on the design and progress of Carter Park.

-Kristin told the group that with Cindy and Shanna (Parks & Rec) gone, she was brought in to help.

-Kristin reminded the group that the Transition Plan was set up to look at ADA barriers (both existing and what needs to be corrected). From that plan in 2019, Carter Park was identified as one of the first projects that touched almost every aspect of the ADA barrier process. It also encompassed most

departments within the Transition Plan-a 30 acre park, a library, a senior center, and many recreational amenities (soccer, baseball, softball, batting cages, pavilion, playground, basketball courts, concessions, restrooms, and a walking trail).

-Kristin noted there were 13 projects within the park that were identified in the ADA Transition Plan as needs for improvement. She said that in March 2021 Kimley-Horn was selected as the design professional (they also did the transition plan). She said there has already been a stakeholder's (public) meeting and the next one is planned for winter 2022. From there, they will continue to work on construction plans, phasing, cost-estimating plans, permit and utility coordination, bid services, and then construction. Kristin said the hope is to be under construction by Fall 2022.

-Kristin showed the group a document and map of the 30-acre park and said that the entire park had to be surveyed. She thinks it is a good place to start addressing the Transition Plan because there are a lot of projects within in to improve on. Kristin pointed out the following:

Typical exterior improvements:

- Site accessibility
- Parking Improvements
- Concession, restroom, and bleacher access
- Dugout and batting cage

Typical interior improvements:

- Door swings
- Countertop height
- Restroom accessories
- Accessible routes

-Kristin outlined the next steps of the Carter Park improvement project:

- December 16<sup>th</sup>: 60% design review
- Winter 2022: Stakeholders meeting
- Spring 2022: Document completion
- Fall 2022: Phase 1 construction

-April asked where the starting point would be and Kristin replied that phase 1 has yet to be determined. She noted that some of the easier issues have already been addressed by PBA and Knox County Library maintenance.

-Nancy asked if the picnic area will be improved and Kristin said that pavilion access and playground are both included.

-Carly asked if the group toured Carter Park to which several group members confirmed they did. Kristin noted that almost every aspect of the park the group saw is being identified and addressed in the plan. She said this is why it will go into phases of construction and improvement, thereby making the cost pretty extensive.

-Kristin thanked the group for their time and told them to send any questions they might have to Carly or herself. Carly thanked Kristin for her presentation.

### **CARLY PEARSON: UPDATE ON ADA POSITION AND CURRENT PROJECTS**

- A. Knox County website updates and suggestions
  - a. Carly asked the group to email her if they have ideas to improve ADA access on the website.
  - b. Carly said she is working on setting up TTY communication, as it is a DOJ law.
  
- B. Updating Bylaws
  - a. Carly said that her title needs to be changed to “ADA Coordinator,” which is different from what Cindy’s was, “ Strategic Facilities Engineer/ADA 504 Coordinator.” Myers noted this will need to be drafted, presented to County Commission, and they will have to confirm all changes.
  - b. Myers said he would email the group a draft of the proposed changed bylaws and it can be put on the agenda for the next DAGWould? meeting.
  - c. Nancy asked if the committee must have 9 members, to which Carly replied that it does. Myers noted the Knox County Ordinance says 9 members as well and any changes would have to come from County Commission. Carly asked if Nancy thought that number should be changed and Nancy said it would be nice if members could attend meetings regularly.
    - Randy asked what attendance has been like and Nancy replied there has usually been a quorum. April asked if there would be better turnout if the meetings returned to the DRC offices. Carly asked if more members of the public attended at that location. April and Shazi agreed there seemed to be better group attendance at that location; however, both said that no members of the public have ever attended a DAGWould? meeting.
    - Carly noted that perhaps COVID issues have impacted DAGWould? group attendance, to which everyone agreed. April also pointed out that meeting attendance via Zoom was good and then declined once they went back to in-person. Sarah mentioned transportation is also an issue for some members attending in-person meetings. Carly agreed.

-Myers said he sent a request to the open records council about DAGWould? meeting by Zoom and they said no. He said he will email the group this correspondence and maybe they can figure out a way to pivot from that.

-Randy asked Myers what reason he used to which Myers responded that members are disabled and at more health risks. Shazi asked if they provided a reason for their denial; Myers said he would email their response, but it was basically that the public has access to attend the meeting. Carly told Myers she would email him a case she found regarding this issue. She said she doesn't see a reason why there couldn't be a hybrid meeting (as the City is doing).

-Shazi said another basis for allowing online participation could be to tell the open records council that no one from the public has ever shown up to a DAGWould? meeting. Myers and Randy said the public just has to be given the opportunity to attend.

### C. EPW and other Transition Plan updates

#### a. Current Projects:

- i. North Cedar Bluff sidewalk is just in the pre-bid phase.
- ii. Carter Park phases (trying to get design paid for).
- iii. Right of way sidewalk at Carter off of Strawberry Plains (survey should be finished this week).
- iv. Restructure accessible parking at Carter Middle School.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

-Replacing Anna: Carly said she has a couple of suggestions. Nancy asked if there was an issue with regards to the group submitting potential candidates. Randy said the recommendation comes from the Mayor and then has to be approved by the Commission. Myers said the group is free to make suggestions to submit to the Mayor, but just can't deliberate outside of meetings. Carly said DAGWould? has to have 50% of members with disabilities and neither of her candidates have one. April pointed out that Anna didn't have one either. Carly said she will talk to her contacts regarding filling Anna's spot.

-April said that DAGWould? was created as an advisory committee for the Transition Plan and asked what its role is now? Carly said that she is quickly learning that her new role is not a one-person job and it will take a collective team. She said she sees the group advising her on many community related issues and not just the Transition Plan. Carly noted that this might entail adding other representation to the group such as an amputee, someone who is hearing impaired, and other disabilities. April asked if Mark is still involved and someone said that he is, but just not in attendance.

-Randy said he sees the group's role as being to help Carly determine needs and priorities (that they encounter themselves or hear about from friends) that might be missed. Carly noted if Knox County doesn't spend the fiscal year's budget to make accommodations, they might think the funds aren't needed and take them back.

-Kristin said that she works with the city's ADA group as well. She said they have set priorities and have upcoming projects lined up. She said there is no timeline on the projects actually happening though. She asked the group if this has been done with the Transition Plan projects. Randy noted that Carter Park is set to take place in the phases, which will take place over multiple years. Kristin suggested DAGWould? spend a meeting discussing what projects should be next (without timelines).

-Carly said that Cindy had set a foundation of easy targets to go after; however, there are also massive improvements to consider at places that are visited frequently like the City County Building and the Health Department.

-Carly said that complaints she receives needs to go to the top of the list and be fixed. She also said that projects need to be diversified geographically.

-Nancy asked about repairs that need to be done after the Tik Tok vandalism challenge. Carly said she wasn't aware of these.

-April noted that projects need to be done correctly the first time so they don't run into what happened at Karns Senior Center (new facility with inaccessibility issues).

-Carly suggested the group look at what senior centers, libraries, parks, etc. are most used and how those can be improved. For example, she knows that Concord Park is the most used part and can use some easy updates (bathroom, braille signage). Carly noted that little fixes can go a long way. She just needs to figure out how to disperse these kinds of improvements, perhaps with a workshop looking at the Transition Plan.

-Nancy asked if Carly has a current budget for the year. Randy said the Commission has allocated \$1-1.2 million per year and there is also some state money. However, between the projects in line right now -Cedar Bluff, Ebenezer, Carter-those funds are already committed over the next 5 years or so. Randy noted that he and Carly are trying to get more funds to concentrate on fixing smaller projects people use day to day (soap boxes, sinks, doors, etc.). Randy said he loves the Carter Park project, but he wonders how many people are helped at the expense of \$6 million. He said he would like to focus on the smaller projects that make a big difference to people.

-Carly said she would like to look at the main and first floors of the City County Building and the Health Department (as they don't even have an accessible exam table). Randy also suggested focusing on senior centers.

-Carly told the group that Cindy left a detailed spreadsheet that lists projects that are easier/cheaper to fix; Kimley-Horn also left miles of spreadsheets that outline high, medium, and low priorities. Carly said the problem is that there is just so much to fix.

-Kristin said that PBA managed facilities are separated out in the Transition Plan and that some of the smaller issues are already being addressed by PBA and Knox County maintenance. She said she thinks this will continue over the next several years. Carly said all the different departments will have to communicate over what issue have been fixed so those can be taken out of the Transition Plan.

-Myers said that witness stands and jury boxes in many courts are not accessible so they are left to using one courtroom to accommodate those who need it. He said the county is responsible for funding courtrooms, which they are doing slowly. Carly said she has an upcoming meeting with the ADA court liaison and with a representative of the schools. She said her hope is to find where schools can identify little improvements that can be done on their school budgets-and to find where the majority of kids with disabilities is and to prioritize from there.

-Nancy asked if any of the federal infrastructure funds could be utilized for projects. Carly replied that she doesn't know, but is looking into grants that might help pull funds from somewhere.

-Stanley asked that Carly give the group some specifics on what she would like and/or need from DAGWould? and then the group can do some planning around those needs. Carly replied that she could break the Transition Plan into segments and look at each area individually. April noted that she has a list of ways to improve senior centers.

-Carly said she would try to send the group parts of the Transition Plan that can be discussed at the next meeting because it is hard to find certain files on the county's website. Myers reminded the group that they can review documents, but not to email, deliberate or make decisions outside of DAGWould? meetings.

-Nancy asked Carly to send the group the website address. Carly said that she would and that she also wants to get feedback on how easy the website is to access. Carly said improvements to the website can be discussed at the February meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

-Carly thanked the group members for their efforts in attending the meeting and confirmed 2022 meetings quarterly (on the third Thursday at 3:00).

-Carly said that she would add voting on a new chair to the February 2022 agenda.

-With no other business to discuss, Carly adjourned the meeting at 4:17pm.

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