

**Walla Walla/Columbia County  
Accessible Communities Advisory Committee  
Zoom Meeting Minutes for October/November  
January 19, 2022  
5:30-7:00 pm**

**PLEASE NOTE: This is a WORK SESSION**

**Welcome**

Connie called the meeting to order at 5:32. We discussed doing a group survey to adjust our meeting time to something that works better for everyone on the committee. Connie will coordinate this process, please email her times that would work for you moving forward.

**Attendance (update accordingly)**

**Present:** Timothy Barrett, Angie Peters, Connie Taylor-Randall, Larry Hector, Connie Taylor-Randall, Cynthia Wolski, Jeanne Walter

**Excused Absence:** Joseph Huether, Aniko Kuschatka, Betsy Hadden, Aracelli Castro

**Unexcused Absence:** Joshua Hepler, Kati Tureman

**Minutes**

Motion: Larry Hector, Second Timothy Barrett  
Passed Unanimously.

[December Minutes](#) approved. (Click on link and make a copy.)

**Business-**

Approval of Appointment of Secretary - Angie Peters

Motion: Larry Hector, Second: Timothy Barrett

Passed Unanimously

**Guest Presentation - None**

**Goal Work-**

Tonight's focus is setting priorities and tasks within our goal categories. With the upcoming conversion of two hotels to permanent

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housing, this may be an opportunity for advocacy as the current plans would only result in one affordable unit, and there are no known plans for accessible units. A second opportunity is to pursue further advocacy on the First Street Plaza project and whether or not it will have accessible parking. A third is finding where we can help with respite care and enrichment opportunities for local residents in need.

**Detailed notes for each topic are listed below under goals**

**Sub-Committee Reports (update accordingly, waiting on)**

**By-Laws Committee:** Connie

[WWCACAC Bylaws Revised 8-19-2021](#)

**Membership Committee:** Connie

**Terms of Office** [Terms of Office](#)

**New Members** - no news

**Member Recruitment and Application Process** - Connie indicated that we need to continue to recruit members for the committee which represent all disabilities for compliance with bylaws and state.

**Officers** - Chair: Connie, Vice Chair: Larry, Secretary: Angie

**Community Outreach Committee:** Kati - No report available.

**Grant Proposal Committee:** Connie, Jeanne, and Joe: no update

**Update on Local Grant Requests** - no update

**Communications/Media Committee:** Need chair, no report

**Goals** - Connie reviewed committee goals. See notes below

1) **Employment** - Improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities:

[Cynthia coordinates with multiple local vendors on employment.](#)

[There is currently a community-based program \(DVA\) where clients can be enrolled into the service and receive help with placement in](#)

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jobs. This program has suffered from COVID based on quarantine and based on client comfort going out into the community to work. Agencies are forced to do only the bare services that allow them to keep going at this time. Cynthia will be discussing these challenges in an upcoming meeting and should have an update in the future.

Cynthia wants us to have an ACAC rack card with quick facts for accessible employment information (how to be an accessible employer, who are currently accessible employers currently), and she is willing to help coordinate this process. She received feedback that the local wineries were not interested in posting any accessibility stickers or posters in their windows, primarily due to the size of the information. This may have been motivated by a no-poster policy rather than any issues with accessibility information in general.

Larry asked about accessible employment positions currently in existence, and it appears support for these jobs has waned during the pandemic. A local restaurant lost for accessible positions because the people in the roles were not able to cross-train as much as a person without any accessibility needs. A local retailer will no longer allow job coaches to be in the building, which means that some of these accessible roles are eliminated due to the individual's inability to work without the coach. Employers being unwilling to job carve is a barrier. It appears that the employers are eliminating roles where accommodated works have been and having other roles absorb this work instead.

Next steps: developing a rack card or brochure with information on the benefits of being disability friendly, and how to improve in this area as a business and as an employer. Cynthia can help with supplying some of this data and would like to see an expansion from

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just developmental disability to physical disabilities, or language barrier, or technology barriers. Connie and Larry will work with Cynthia to develop materials to bring back to the group for review.

2) **Housing** - Increase affordable housing for individuals in the disability community, providing more choices in where they can live. Previously the ACAC has discussed creating a checklist for builders, possibly using state-created resources, for best practice door widths, etc to make rentals and homes more accessible in the community. This project would likely involve working with the city/county planners to get these checklists into the packets of information that go out with new permits. This would also benefit from getting these checklists into the hands of local developers outside of the permit process. A great first step would be to start compiling the appropriate checklist and hopefully putting together a subcommittee.

Larry is willing to start putting the subcommittee together, and Jeanne is willing to do this coordination work in Columbia County as part of this subcommittee. Tim agreed to help with this group as well. They will start with communicating with the county commissioners and touching base with the housing support group in Columbia County.

Timothy will also do some research on how we can get more information from the city on the hotel conversion situation. Larry will reach out to one of his contacts with the housing authority to see if he can get any more information.

3) **Accessibility** - Increase accessibility in Walla Walla Valley, making it more desirable for residents and tourism. This group has done some advocacy work here already. Previously representatives spoke with the city about sidewalks, alfresco dining,

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accessible parking downtown, and the 1st Street Plaza. We are still seeking to get an ACAC member on the BPAC committee. Connie and Larry will work with the Walla Walla City Council to get on the agenda and discuss issues with accessible parking at the new plaza. They will also reach out to Cyndi Knight to see if she is willing to join this effort. The goal is to get on the agenda before the final designs come to the city council for review.

Columbia County appears to have more of a barrier with automatic door availability than accessible parking, but Jeanne intends to poll more mobility device users on this issue and will follow up on the group.

Connie and Larry recently sent a letter with concerns on the accessibility issues with the post office, city hall, and the school district building and intend to follow up on that soon. They requested that Jeanne give them information for a letter if it is needed in Columbia County. For example, there are not a lot of accessible recreational options available in the community, and this is likely a grants opportunity.

Previously the ACAC has helped secure a grant to get an accessible door for SonBridge but did not get an opportunity to do publicity work on it, which would help grow awareness of the group. This is an area we should try to improve upon. Betsy's accessible tourism work could lend itself to successful articles as well.

Timothy suggested the creation of a pre-packaged accessibility audit that could be used to start the conversation with businesses that have room for improvement. This could become a service that members of the ACAC offer to the community. This is something that Aniko has

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been excited to do in the past, and maybe willing to do in the future. Larry is going to reach out to the fire department about if accessibility audits could be folded into pre-fire inspections.

4) **Care Options** - Increase care options for parents/guardians of children and adults with disabilities to provide respite alternatives, care options, and enrichment opportunities.

Cynthia reported that Walla Walla Valley Disability Network(WWVDN) is partnering with her to put on a training for special needs children, that had been put on the backburner previously due to COVID. This was delivered in a hybrid model. This training will help improve educational and child care environments for these children.

Cyndi Knight/ WWVDN recently received a \$25,000 grant for improving respite care options in the community. She is involved in many of the areas of opportunity we are working in, and having her be a part of these sub-committee groups would likely be very helpful.

Connie and Larry discussed that we should probably make a membership packet item for state reimbursement forms. There are several members who experience disabilities that have not yet filled out forms and are missing out on this opportunity. Angie and Connie will work on pulling these forms together and helping the members to get everything filled out so they can be reimbursed. Connie will also coordinate with her husband Aaron to help with Spanish-speaking outreach on this project.

Membership goals: we need to continue recruiting, and we need to improve on covering all potential disabilities. We will go through our reporting on membership to find areas where we are falling short, for example, we do not currently have a member who is a veteran, so we

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can set priorities on recruitment. (Larry will reach out to the VA, and Aaron will reach out to the Latinx community.)

**Goal Progress- this session was focused on next steps so we can improve the level of progress that is taking place on these goals**

- 1) **Housing Report Update** - Need Ad Hoc Committee Chair - No report.
- 2) **Accessibility Report Update** - Connie no report
  - a) City of Walla Walla - Josh
  - b) Walla Walla United States Postal Service - Connie
  - c) Walla Walla Public Schools - Kati
  - d) Elections - David -

**Announcements and Further Discussion Items**

- 1) **no additional discussion due to this being a work session**

**Moving Forward** - Email Connie days and times that will work for you for meetings moving forward

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**Public Comment - non**

**For the Good of the Order - non**

**Next Meeting Date** - Weds. February 16, 2022 - In-person/hybrid meeting at SonBridge. [Meeting Dates - 2022](#)

**Bolded important notes for the upcoming meeting.**

**Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned by 6:31 pm.