

**Lafayette City-Parish President's Awareness
Committee for Citizens with Disabilities**

Monday, April 14, 2008
Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Harold Arceneaux; Jim Richard; Peggy Stelly; Richard Phelps
Excused: Paul Fontana
Guests in Attendance: Donna Andrus; Dan Arabie; Deborah Aymond; Chuck Falcon; Yenter Tu
Staff Present: Ben Berthelot; Dana McPherson; Mike Mitchell; Lou Anna Angelle

1. Jim Richard called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests.
2. The March meeting minutes were approved.
3. Old Business:
 - Dana McPherson discussed the Taxi Voucher System (see letter below)

**LAFAYETTE CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT
INTERNAL MEMORANDUM**

Traffic & Transportation Department
Transit Division (594)
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TO: Disability Awareness Committee **DATE:** April 14, 2008
FROM: Dana McPherson
SUBJ: Assessment of Taxi Voucher Services

Background:

Recently, the Transit Division has been tasked to research the effectiveness of a taxi voucher system and to project a time frame of implementation for the rural communities of Lafayette Parish. Previously, the Transit Division explored the possibility of extending the existing paratransit service to Lafayette Parish. Of this research, two options were provided, both of which were not viable to the paratransit provider or users of paratransit service.

Taxis have played a significant role in providing transportation to individuals who do not use regular public transit. Many cities in the United States have used taxi service as a complement to their regular transit and paratransit service. In those cities, a registered paratransit user may use vouchers to pay for their taxi trips, up to a designated amount.

Voucher System:

A voucher system is a method of payment that enables people with Disabilities living in rural communities to obtain and afford transportation. This system enables the person with a disability to reimburse providers who accept vouchers for rides.

Federal, state or local agencies that fund rural transportation develop a "purchase of service agreement" with a voucher site or broker. The person with the disability decides where he or she wants to go and finds a provider with a vehicle who can provide a ride. The consumer may use a rural transportation provider (as long as the provider agrees to accept and reimburse the voucher). The individual pays the driver with the voucher.

Benefits of Operating a Voucher System:

- Allows consumers to decide when and where they travel
- Allows consumers to choose from available providers
- Assists individuals with limited income to pay for rural transportation
- Have successfully been used in remote rural communities
- Relatively low start-up costs and may have low operating costs

Disadvantages of Operating a Voucher System:

- Must comply with numerous agency rules regarding reimbursement
- Consumers assume risks related to driver liability
- Vouchers may be difficult for individuals with visual or fine motor impairments to handle
- May result in increased insurance rates for providers

Effectiveness of a Taxi Voucher System in Lafayette Parish:

The Transit Division is gathering data to determine the possibility of implementing a taxi voucher system for Lafayette Parish. Information regarding start-up and operating costs and recommendation(s) will be provided in the near future.

Dana McPherson
Transit Supervisor

C: Tony Tramel
Mike Mitchell

Dana indicated that she should have more information regarding the start-up operating costs and recommendation at the next meeting.

Peggy Stelly provided the committee with information she has gathered regarding the voucher program.

Peggy Stelly requested that Ben Berthelot place the following information on the website:

Where someone lives is not a pre-requisite to using the Paratransit Service. Someone living outside the fixed route can use the service, if they are somewhere within the service area.

The committee decided that once all the information needed regarding the taxi-cab vouchers has been received, this information will be presented to the Council of Government (COG) Committee.

Dan Arabie mentioned that the Deaf/Blind citizens are having a problem using the transit system. Several have been left at the bus stops because they are unable to hear or see the bus when it arrives. Dan would like the Traffic & Transportation Department to research how this problem can be avoided in the future. Mike Mitchell indicated that this problem has never been brought to his attention before. He will research and provide the committee with his findings.

Below you will find the information Mike Mitchell provided to the committee regarding handicapped parking spaces:

Sec. 86-108. Parking Adjudication Bureau established.

There is hereby created and established within the Traffic & Transportation Department, under the supervision of the Director, a Parking Adjudication Bureau which shall have jurisdiction over violations of the parking regulations provided herein.

Sec. 86-103. Designation of reserved parking for handicapped persons.

The Director is authorized to designate certain parking stalls, whether on public or private property, as reserved for handicapped persons and to erect and/or cause the installation of signs and/or markings to indicate such parking stalls are reserved for handicapped persons. The Director and/or Fire Department personnel are authorized to enforce compliance of same by owners and/or operators.

Sec. 86-128. Restricted area of parking spaces for handicapped persons.

(a) The Director is authorized to designate certain parking stalls and/or spaces (whether on public or private property) as reserved for handicapped persons. "Public facility," as the term is used herein, shall be as defined in La. R.S. 40:1732, as amended from time to time, and shall include private property which is open to the public and to which the public is invited for commercial or governmental purposes. Parking stalls and/or spaces that are designated as reserved for handicapped persons under this Section shall be so designated by the erection and/or installation of signs and/or application of pavement markings by the property owner and/or operator of the premises.

(b) An owner or operator of a public or private facility who fails to provide, maintain and/or remove the signage and/or markings or keep free from obstruction spaces reserved and designated for the exclusive use of vehicles bearing a handicapped license plate or handicapped parking placard may be cited by Fire

Disability Awareness Committee Minutes from 4/14/08 Meeting

April 14, 2008

Page 4

Department officials. Violations of this provision shall be subject to a fine in the amount identified in Section 86-174. Each day of non-compliance shall be deemed a separate offense.

(c) No person shall stop, park a vehicle, trailer, equipment, apparatus, portable buildings or any items in or otherwise block an appropriately designated parking space for the handicapped, except those persons that meet the requirements herein. Only vehicles displaying an official license plate, placard, or permit indicating a handicapped status issued by this State, another state, or the federal government are authorized to park in stalls or spaces specifically reserved for handicapped persons.

(d) A stall or space designated as reserved for use by a handicapped person shall consist of the area from the outer edge of the stall stripe to the outer edge of the area striped for wheelchair loading/unloading (if provided separately). It shall be a minimum width of 13 feet, except that one (1) of every eight (8) handicapped parking stalls servicing the same location shall be a minimum of 16 feet wide and have a sign designating it as "van accessible."

(e) Any person that has been issued an official, handicapped parking placard or permit identified in Subsection (c) of this Section who fails to properly display as required by the issuing state agency, shall be subject to a fine in the amount identified in Section 86-174. Failure to pay this fine, or appear at an adjudicatory hearing or failure to pay the fine assessed by the parking adjudication bureau after having been found liable shall cause the person charged to pay an additional penalty in the same amount as the original fine.

(f) The state-issued placard or permit is designed to be hung from the vehicle's front windshield rear view mirror. If the permit/placard is unable to be hung from the front rear view mirror, it must be displayed on the vehicle's front dashboard on the driver's side.

Parking Adm. Procedure..(Private and Public property)

1. Vehicle found in violation of the above ordinance (No HC placard visible or HC license plate on vehicle) is issued a HC parking citation - \$ 300.00
2. A vehicle with a HC placard or HC license plate - that parks in the " HC Loading / Unloading area" which is a part of the parking stall is issued a parking citation - \$ 25.00.
Both the stall and the diagonal lines (loading/unloading zone) makes 1(one) stall for only one vehicle not two (2) vehicles.

HC parking metered spaces – A handicap person that utilizes a handicap metered stall must comply with the ordinance regarding "limited time parking" and deposit a coin. They cannot meter feed. Anytime a HC stall is used they must display the state issued placard/license plate.

Harold Arceneaux discussed his concerns about the handicapped parking spaces not being monitored for violators.

Yenter Tu indicated that in some cities a handicapped individual does not pay for parking at a meter when handicapped spaces are not available. Yenter asked Mike Mitchell to discuss with the Director of Traffic & Transportation.

- The discussion of the Lafayette City-Parish President's Awareness Committee Resolution and By-laws was tabled for the next meeting.

4. New Business:

Peggy Stelly provided the committee with information she gathered at the Easter Seals Institute Conference on Transportation.

Peggy Stelly indicated that she and Harold Arceneaux are available for sensitivity training for the bus drivers.

Harold Arceneaux provided the committee with upcoming events.

5. The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.
6. The next meeting of the President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities is scheduled for Monday, May 12, 2008 from 11:30-12:30 in the Council Briefing Room on the first floor of Lafayette City Hall.