

03/18/2010 Access to Facilities Meeting Minutes

Present: Ms. Sandra Lugo-Gines, co-chair, Atty. Roy Smith, co-chair, Ms. Virginia Apple, Mr. Robert Burke, Ms. Michelle Burroughs, Mr. Richard Byam, Atty. Starr Carroll, Ms. Heather Collins, Atty. Joseph D'Alesio, Ms. Alejandra Donath, Chief Russell Downer, Ms. Cristina Goncalves, Ms. Jamey Harris, Ms. Precious Hyland, Mr. Robert Kilpatrick, Atty. Stephen Ment and Atty. Steven Pelletier

Submitted by: Michelle Burroughs

- Atty. D'Alesio opened the meeting and invited each member to introduce themselves. He then provided a brief background regarding the formation of the Committee and its charge. The Committee was formed to allow the Branch to achieve the first of five outcome goals of the Public Service and Trust Commission's Strategic Plan: Access to Justice. The Committee was formed as part of the second phase of the Strategic Plan and it will work to implement recommendations that have been made during Phase I. The Committee is charged with making recommendations to address and eliminate barriers that impede entry to and movement around Branch facilities.
- Atty. D'Alesio asked the Committee to give consideration to the following issues:
 - how the Judicial Branch publishes directions
 - where the Branch publishes directions
 - accuracy of directions
 - how the courts are viewed from an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) perspective
 - signage guiding visitors to ramps for those with physical handicaps
 - the types of signs the Branch posts
 - similarity of signs at metal detectors
 - up-to-date building directories
 - how signs are displayed
 - where signs are displayed
 - the proliferation of paper signs
 - the language used on posted signs
- Atty. D'Alesio will meet with the Administrative Judges on Monday to discuss the Access to Facilities Committee and how to address the issue of paper signs.
- Atty. D'Alesio asked the Committee to: be on the look-out for good signage, visit places where there are large crowds of different backgrounds (such as the

International Arrivals terminal at Kennedy Airport), speak with managers of facilities that use effective and appropriately displayed signage, review the data collected by the Courthouse Observation Team, and conduct focus groups with people who have disabilities.

- Atty. D'Alesio wants the Committee to have a completed checklist of standards for signage within two to three months. It was suggested that the checklist be divided amongst broad categories. The Committee will have to discuss the layout of the checklist. The Committee should complete the bulk of its work by September 2010.
- Atty. Smith asked the Committee to review the handout stating the goals of the Committee.
- Ms. Lugo-Gines provided a summary of the goal. The Committee will assess every state owned or leased Judicial facility that serves the public. The Committee reviewed the Judicial Building Listing. Ms. Lugo-Gines will send the group a revised Judicial Building Listing containing only facilities that serve the public.
- The Committee members were each assigned a court district to examine. Each Committee member (with the exception of Atty. Pelletier) will be assigned to serve on a subcommittee. Each subcommittee will include: the Chief Clerk (or designee), a member of ADA and any others as deemed appropriate. The Committee members were advised that they can switch the district they were assigned with another member if they wish to do so. Members of the Committee will meet with local subcommittees within the courts and develop a template based on what signage and directions will effectively allow the public to have ease of access to courthouse facilities. The Committee members will report back to the Committee on behalf of their subcommittee. Ms. Lugo-Gines will email the Committee members a breakdown of subcommittees and their members once it has been approved. Atty. Pelletier will serve as legal staff to be consulted by each subcommittee.
- Subcommittees may choose to observe signage of newer Judicial facilities. The subcommittees will review internet directions to Judicial facilities for accuracy and simplicity. They will have to come up with recommendations for providing accurate online directions to Judicial facility locations, in multiple languages. Ms. Apple explained that this topic has been an ongoing discussion of the Web Board. The subcommittees will also take photos of signage currently displayed at Judicial facilities.
- Ms. Lugo-Gines will email each Committee member the portion of the report prepared by the Courthouse Observation Team which pertains to the respective district to which they were assigned.
- The Committee will have to identify what signage is standard at Judicial facilities as well as what is not standard. Atty. Pelletier will provide each Committee member with any existing State and municipal ordinances regarding interior and exterior signage as well as ADA requirements for their respective district.
- The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 8, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. The location is to be determined.