



AAC

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Meeting (Virtual) Minutes: April 1, 2024

Attendees

Present: Patrick Sheehan (Chair), Denise Rush (Vice Chair), Kelley Simoneaux (Second Vice-Chair), Tino Calabia, Vanessa Coles, Rico Dancy, Tajuan Farmer, Debbie Fisher, Marcie Goldstein, Steve Kaffen, Thomas Mangrum, Phillippa Mezile, Sandra Neuzil, Phil Posner, Doris Ray, Paul Semelfort, and Philip Weintraub.

Call to Order

Anupama Sharma, AAC Coordinator, welcomed everyone, shared helpful tips, read the agenda, thereafter, Chair Sheehan moved the meeting forward.

Approval of Agenda, Board Report, and Prior Meeting Minutes

The April 1, 2024, meeting agenda was approved as presented.

The March 4, 2024, Meeting Minutes were approved as written.

The Board Report was approved as written.

Systemwide Accessibility Report:

Carol Peredo Lopez, Director, Office of ADA Policy and Planning, Systemwide Accessibility, stated we are going to be incorporating customer response process. We will keep track of the responses provided. We will have updates on Waymap as well. In addition to those, we are also working on accessible mapping. On WMATA website, we have Station View, that provides visual presentation of the station features. We are developing a map on the Station View that will provide information about elevators within the stations.

Vice-Chair (VC) Rush asked if the maps would include public restrooms in the stations. Ms. Peredo Lopez stated we can review including information about the restrooms in Station View.

AAC By-Laws:

Mr. Semelfort started the review of the AAC By-Laws from Article III's Section B: Terms of Office. He reviewed the document line by line, and referenced the new language that was added by the Workgroup. Chair Sheehan recommended to add terms limits for Subcommittee Chairs, Emeritus member, and Representatives of Access for All (AFA) – beginning from 2024, standardizing membership for all the members.

Ms. Ray recommended one year hiatus for a member who has termed out, and to be re-appointed again following the appropriate process. The recommendation was added to be considered in the document.

Mr. Calabia stated if the membership lacks participation, that individual should not be considered as a member and that position should be replaced. There was a discussion about the Riders Advisory Council (RAC). Chair Sheehan clarified that the AAC Chair is

required to participate at the RAC meetings, however, cannot be the Chair for the RAC. He further explained that the attendance is reviewed for all the members and there is a criteria for an individual to remain a member. Mr. Semelfort also provided an explanation about members being replaced in past due to not meeting the attendance criteria. Chair Sheehan also informed about the need of volunteers to be added as members.

Mr. Weintraub recommended for the member departing, to find a replacement, so that there is no lag time in fulfilling the position.

Second Vice-Chair (SVC) Simoneaux asked for clarification about calculation of term limits, whether it will be considered from 2015 or would it reset from 2024. Chair Sheehan stated it will be calculated from the year an individual joined the AAC, per the 2015 version of the by-laws. For the AFA members and the Emeritus member, the clock will start from 2024 since it was not mentioned in the 2015 version of the by-laws. SVC Simoneaux recommended to clarify it in the next version of the by-laws. Ms. Ray asked if the positions are staggered. Chair Sheehan confirmed that not all the members terms will end the same year as the terms are staggered.

Dr. Posner stated keeping a term limit for the Emeritus member would not be needed. He did not think that an Emeritus member may not be around for 12 years, thus, it is a moot point. Clarifying further, Dr. Posner stated Chairs of the Subcommittees are the members of the full Committee and are appointed by the AAC Chair. If a member is not a member of the AAC, they will not be a member of the subcommittee. Dr. Posner also discussed the vacancy per the jurisdiction, maintaining the diversity of disability, the member who is term-limiting, may be requested to stay until a replacement has been seated. Dr. Posner also stated the RAC meetings are online as are their documents thus adding a report is unnecessary and time consuming.

Mr. Mangrum asked about the deadline for the by-laws, and if there would be consideration for an individual who is unable to attend the meetings regularly due to health or other unforeseen reasons. Chair Sheehan informed that provision already exists.

Ms. Coles asked if the meetings will continue virtually. Chair Sheehan stated at this time, there is no consideration for any changes, thus the meetings will continue virtually.

Ms. Fisher recommended to include definitions of the type of member within the by-laws, for example define the Emeritus member. Furthermore, it may be helpful to include the terms/tenure of each current member within the by-laws. She also recommended to have a policy and procedure manual, for example, how do we establish new members, etc.

Mr. Kaffen agreed with Ms. Ray, to include one year hiatus after an individual has reached the term limit, before the person can re-apply. He also commented about how to handle an individual who does not work out, not only someone who does not participate in meetings. Mr. Semelfort informed there is existing information within the by-laws.

VC Rush commented about starting the clock in 2024. Chair Sheehan corrected her and stated the clock is not starting over. VC Rush emphasized on the importance of an Emeritus member to keep the historic information carried from members to members. She also commented about the speaking time change. Ms. Ray stated the speaking time may not be a matter that should be included in the by-laws. Ms. Ray further commented about an individual who joins the AAC in the middle of a term, their terms limit does not start until they begin a full term. Chair Sheehan stated the AAC in 2025 started the clock again, and that is when the AAC started reporting to the Board.

Mr. Farmer stated term limits has been a heavy topic. His concern is over the concept of term-limits. He opposed the idea of one year hiatus and enabling an individual who has been term-limited, to re-apply for AAC membership again.

Ms. Mezile stated don't be so quick to ditch people that you loose good candidates. When people are being replaced, try to replace the person with same disability. Mr. Semelfort stated, based on the pool that is received, determines the members that get appointed.

Mr. Semelfort restarted the review from Article IV: Termination of Membership, followed by a discussion. Ms. Ray recommended to delete some language and replace it by not making it public but rather holding a separate email to discuss termination of a member.

Mr. Calabria stated about members who are hard of hearing and/or are deaf, he also recommended it may be too redundant and too time consuming for the Board to approve the processes.

VC Rush commented about members to join on time, and not waste time by asking the repeat questions at the meeting only because an individual did not join the meeting on time. Chair Sheehan commented that not only a person needs to join the meeting on time and remain for the duration of the meeting.

Ms. Neuzil stated there is no language about attending the meetings. Mr. Semelfort stated that language exists in the document currently.

Public Comments:

The first member of the public commented that the AAC should have completed the by-laws review much longer. He again made comments about tenure of the AAC Leadership. He again made comments to the AAC which were inappropriate. He stated MetroAccess is being abused. He does not think any of the members is doing anything to help the disability community.

The second member of the public recommended that when an individual started their terms in the middle of a term, their first full term is considered when they begin the full term. Chair Sheehan informed that is the current practice.

The third member of the public commented about faregates at a Metrorail station, where he was not able to exit the station and could not find a station manager. He pressed the button for help and received no response. He asked about training to deal with people with disabilities. Ms. Sharma asked him to provide his contact information so that the complaint could be followed up.

Ms. Goldstein recommended about the time limit of three minutes to speak, for a person with speech disability, they would need additional time. Chair Sheehan stated that is a very good point.

Public Comments can be received via phone at 202-962-1100, or via email at MetroAACChair@wmata.com

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.