

VAAC Meeting Minutes March 15, 2016

In attendance:

From VAAC: Berl Colley, Patty McDonald, Jonathan Whitby

From Auditor's Office: Mary Hall, Diana Benson, Lynnette Thornton, Carrie Wack, Valerie Walston

Other: Marlene White (Office of the Secretary of State), Michael Kosonovich

New business

- New member Jonathan Whitby introduced himself to the committee. He explained that while he can represent the deaf community, he can also represent the blind community through his work at the Department of Services to the Blind.
- Marlene White from the Office of the Secretary of State introduced herself and mentioned that the OSOS has a similar committee called the Disability Advisory Committee (DAC).

Old Business:

Review of AutoMARK usage and activity

- Valerie brought up low roadshow turnout for AutoMARK usage. Patty expressed surprise about low AutoMARK use turnout despite social and other marketing.
- There are many more potential AutoMARK users in Thurston County than those who are currently using the device. Berl estimated 780 persons (450 of whom are registered voters and therefore potential AutoMARK users) in Thurston County experience some level of blindness. Marlene said that 12% (29,000) of the Thurston County population has any disability.
- Patty recommended continuing a strong social campaign.
- The AutoMARK is on permanent display in the Auditor's lobby so potential users can interface with it using old ballots.
- Berl asked about going out to service organizations for outreach. Valerie replied that Mary will be going forward to some of those organizations.

Everyone Counts

- Mary suggested bringing laptops and a printer to a Council of the Blind meeting as an option during an election. Jonathan mentioned that E1C could work for his clients at Department of Services for the Blind; some have printers, others do not. Mary clarified that this would be marketed specifically to the voters with disabilities community, rather than a wider roadshow audience.
- Mary suggested going to the DSB and doing a demo for Jonathan to benefit his clients. Jonathan agreed this is a good idea. Valerie will follow up with Jonathan.
- Mary reminded the VAAC that E1C is followed with an optional survey. Mary suggested talking to OSOS and Elizabeth Petrich and see if we can include a question such as, "are you a voter with a disability?"
- Valerie summarized that we will now begin marketing both the AutoMARK and E1C.

AutoMARK Brochures

- Valerie mentioned that we dropped off AutoMARK brochures at the Social Security Administration, Clarus, and other eye centers around the community. Berl asked whether it had any impact on AutoMARK usage. It was estimated that it did not have any immediate impact.

Valerie reminded the VAAC that awareness campaigns typically take a lot of time to have any measurable impact.

- Valerie asked Berl if Denise had a chance to talk to the Braille Library on whether they would print Thurston County Elections materials. Berl did not know.

Miscellaneous old business:

- TCTV ran the AutoMARK PSA
- An article about the AutoMARK ran in the *Senior News*
- Thurston County Elections registered voters and performed AutoMARK outreach at a local transition fair

New Business:

Paid Advertising

- The VAAC agreed to pursue advertising with Yelm Cinemas for the General Election.

Community Partnerships

- Valerie noted that we will meet with the local League of Women Voters and asked if there are other community partners specifically in the disabilities community we should work with. None were identified.
- Marlene asked about partnerships with local colleges. Berl suggested leaving voters' pamphlets with the disability offices on campus. Valerie wondered if we would be allowed to include a voter registration form in student orientation forms and will follow up with local campuses.

National Voter Registration Day

- For the purposes of partnerships, no local organization specific to people with disabilities could be identified.
- Marlene discussed the OSOS's Get out the Disability Vote Day outreach event that was being planned by the OSOS's Disability Advisory Committee (DAC). She noted this event is still in early stages (day, location, key players, etc.). Note: this event has since been canceled.

Mobile App

- Valerie asked the VAAC whether there are any accessibility features we should consider. Berl noted iPhone has excellent accessibility features, whereas Androids don't always read everything. Jonathan reminded to caption any video.

ASL

- Valerie asked Jonathan for his thoughts on why there is low voter turnout in the deaf community. Jonathan clarified that many people who are deaf have other disabilities as well (autism, for example). Some of them might not have excellent English skills since ASL is their first language.
- Jonathan suggested production of materials in ASL might be helpful. Lynnette noted that for many years we produced the voters' pamphlet in ASL, but that a few years ago we stopped. Mary noted that we had no traffic to those webpages.
- Jonathan informed the VAAC about the Deaf Political Action Committee; if we did something in ASL, he could forward it to the DPAC listserv. (There are 1,200 members; not all are from Thurston County, but a good percentage is.) Mary suggested this would be appropriate for the OSOS; Marlene will follow up with Jonathan.