

Accessibility and Advocacy Committee Meeting

Athens City Commission on Disabilities

May 9, 2025

Minutes

Call to Order – 12:02 pm Davey called meeting to Order.

Quorum Established - five members present

Present: Stephanie Hunter, Annah Korpi, Rob Delach, Davey McNelly (facilitator), Dianne Bouvier (Minutes recorder); Guests: Grace Kilcommons (SOCIL), Ben Ziff, Joel Nadler, Mayor Steve Patterson, Service-Safety Director Andy Stone

Approve Minutes – Approval of March Minutes tabled to next month's meeting

Update with guests Mayor Steve Patterson and Service Safety-Director Andy Stone

Questions and discussion

1. What is the status of the ADA transition plan, and when will it be complete? What is the scope of the ADA transition plan (ADATP)? When will the commission and people with disabilities be involved in the process? Do any of the people involved have experience doing this work? When will Sunday Creek Horizons be contacting the commission?
 - a. ADATP — Andy responded that the role of the consulting group, Sunday Creek Horizons, will first be to consolidate data previously gathered, focus for second half of 2025; their priority is to work with Appalachia and Armory projects.
 - b. Focus of ADATP is 1. City facilities, 2. City public facing areas, public rights of way (sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks. Etc.). This includes looking back and capturing what's been done. We should hear from them after July. Annah offered to be a communication liaison with Sunday Creek Horizons. They will seek input on facilities; they are not experts on ADA in buildings. Dianne offered to be a resource on ADA requirements in buildings.
2. What is the City's plan for addressing potholes, sidewalks, and crosswalks that are City owned? Is there someone looking for ADA issues?
 - a. The system the City employs is reactive not planned. No one is designated to look for and repair issues. They respond to issues brought to them. They use a work order system. Issues are reported to EPW and they eventually address them. Issues can be reported to Terry Workman or Kurt Mayo directly to create a work order or through the Who looks for ADA issues? A work order system is used – report to EPW, they eventually get those addressed.

- b. Davey expressed concern over the crosswalk at State and Court – significant issues, unlevel, grade and asphalt potholes. Since there are so many issues, it is not only difficult to get around the city, but it adds an extra burden on people with disabilities, particularly those using wheelchairs, to report them all. We ask that the ADA transition plan minimally include regular maintenance on milling (grinding) sidewalks.
3. Can you give us an update on the bid process for uptown renovations and the curb ramps project?
 - a. For the uptown renovations, bid are open from May 20 – May 22. The project includes cross streets along Court - intersections for Court and Union, Court and State, Court and Washington, sidewalks on West Washington and East Washington. The city is not prescriptive on when they do the project but has parameters for when they can't block traffic – the bidder provides a schedule. This project uses ARPA money so will need to be completed by end of 2026.
 - b. A second project is the Streetscape project on Carpenter – “overhead and underground” – a big project to move wires, cables from above to underground. Requires well timed sequencing for telecom and electric utilities. From Congress to College Streets. Goal to have it completed by fall of 2026. This project will allow the city to move/remove some accessibility barriers like telephone poles and includes decorative streetlight work.
 - c. For uptown projects – hoping one company although the work different. By end of calendar year 2027 both projects should be done.
 - d. The Commission reaffirmed that we endorse the decision to use stamped concrete in crosswalks and not bricks.
 - e. (A side note, the mayor reported that the backwards parking on College is being eliminated.)
4. How can we be included in the process and we also want to be doing reviews afterwards?
 - a. The Committee asked that we be notified in advance about projects that include ADA issues. We are available to give perspectives about what works and what doesn't for persons living with disabilities.
 - b. An example: the work at Court and Union was initially described as crosswalk repairs but ended up only replacing curb ramps—something we weren't told until the city council meeting, which caught us off guard. These curb cuts were then ground down due to brick sinkage and appear only marginally improved. It's unclear if replacement was even necessary.
5. Who is responsible for ensuring that ADA guidelines are met during construction projects?
 - a. Designs are supposed to meet intent of the law – The Commission should contact the EPW if a pathway is not accessible. Some PROWAG requirements are changing. Who will inspect and review? Who is being

trained? EPW staff is being trained. Difficult to find people who do cement work and even harder to find people with cement work and ADA training.

6. We really want to work with the city, but we have not had any representation from the city for our meetings.
 - a. The Mayor will contact the DEIA Coordinator to let her know that she has to come to our meetings.
7. What can the Committee/Commission do that would help the City?
 - a. Prioritization lists of ADA issues/projects is helpful
 - b. Don't copy everyone and reporters on emails, just call or email directly.
 - c. What are recommendations for making a change within the space that is available (can't always make a room bigger).
 - d. Keeping in touch on a semi-annual basis helps with communication and understanding what is happening.
 - e. If there is a "big issues," ok to cc the mayor.

New Business

Walk Audit for West Union

- Meeting on Wednesday, May 21, 12:30 – 2:30
- Accessibility and Advocacy Committee joins Pedestrian and Bicycle Task Force
- Meet by Athens Lumber Company House preservation (red house/Habitat Bdg) by bike crossing
- Stephanie and Dianne are working on a check list and plan. People will receive an email in advance with the plan and their role.

No new Announcements

Next Meeting: Friday, June 13, Noon – 1:00 pm, City Building, Berry Conference Room

Meeting Adjournment: Davey adjourned the meeting at 1:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dianne Bouvier, member
Accessibility and Advocacy Committee
May 12, 2025*