

COMMITTEE ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Friday, March 3, 2006, 10:30 a.m.
Aupuni Center Conference Room

PRESENT: Ted Yamanaka, Vice-Chair; Denise Cowdrey, Jack Matsui, James Souza, Julia Staten

EXCUSED: Lawrence Scadden, Chair; Betsy Whitney, Secretary; Michael Gleason

ABSENT: Laura Tobosa

GUESTS: Malina Dravis-Tucker, Interpreter; Lisa Duwall, Landscape Architect-Hawaii Volcanoes National Park; Teri Spinola-Campbell, ADA Coordinator (Equal Opportunity Officer); Sergeant Dexter Veriato, Police Department

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:40 a.m. An introduction of committee members, staff, and guests was made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

D. Cowdrey made a motion to accept the minutes of February 3, 2006. J. Souza seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ISSUES

None.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The treasurer's report was reviewed.

D. Cowdrey made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as submitted. J. Souza seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

TEAM REPORTS

A. EDUCATION/PUBLIC AWARENESS TEAM – M. GLEASON

No report.

B. RECREATION TEAM – L. SCADDEN

No report.

C. TRANSPORTATION TEAM – B. WHITNEY

No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. VOLUNTEER PARKING VIOLATION ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE – SGT. D. VERIATO

Sergeant D. Veriato reported that there are four disabled parking volunteer officers in Kona and one in Hilo. The volunteers call him at least once a month and they send in their statistics. He has met with the Kona group on several occasions. They have been plagued with some problems and health issues so they have been lacking in their hours. However, he gives them slack because they don't get paid for it, it's a tough job, and sometimes they get involved in confrontations. But, the disabled parking volunteers account for about 90 percent of all the disabled citations that the police department issues, especially in West Hawaii.

D. Cowdrey questioned why isn't there more citations issued by the law enforcement officers. Sergeant D. Veriato said the police officers do know that the volunteers are out there so they allow them to take care of the task. The police officers do issue citations on occasion. The volunteers are asked to work 20 hours a month.

There is one application on his desk for West Hawaii. There is not much interest for East Hawaii, but hopefully more people will come forward because it is a voluntary job. The recruiting effort needs to get going by word of mouth or asking interested people to apply. He can be reached at 961-2305.

J. Souza asked how does the police department recruit and advertise. He has never seen any press release in the newspaper. Sergeant D. Veriato said it's voluntary so they cannot depend on the Department of Civil Service to put out the recruitment. However, he could prepare a press release and inform the public on what the volunteers have been doing and ask anybody if they are interested in volunteering.

T. Spinola-Campbell asked if the police department has a lot of complaints in Hilo that there are infractions where people are parking without the placard. Sergeant D. Veriato said he has not received any complaints in recent months even though they have the mechanism to send letters out to the public when they receive a complaint.

D. Cowdrey stated she understood that if police officers do see someone that is parked illegally, then they don't write an infraction or they just ignore the problem. Sergeant D. Veriato responded that the police officers usually look for the placard if the placard is there. If the placard is not there, the police officer will stop and investigate.

T. Yamanaka asked if there are any restrictions as to who can volunteer. Sergeant D. Veriato said the police department does the normal background investigation check to make sure the applicant is physically fit and able to do the job. The process also includes a drug test and interview. Once the interview process is done, the person begins training for several days. Patrol Captain Paul Kealoha

from Kona has been very receptive to the program and he dedicates his supervisors to watch the volunteers and take care of them on the occasions Sergeant D. Veriato is unable to supervise them.

Sergeant D. Veriato noted that the volunteers work in pairs. Their standing policy is not to confront any drivers if you are going to issue a citation. The citation should be issued to a vehicle where no one is in the vehicle. In recent months, the Kona couple has requested to work on their own due to personnel issues. Sergeant D. Veriato discouraged it, but he is not going to tell them “no.” Therefore, Captain P. Kealoha has been monitoring them.

D. Cowdrey asked what kind of press release should be done. She suggested a story about the volunteers in Kona and then ask for recruitment from East Hawaii. Sergeant D. Veriato said he could draft a press release or contact one of the writers at Hawaii Tribune Herald to do an interview.

T. Spinola-Campbell mentioned that there has been some discussion about a junior cadet program for the police department. She wondered if this program would allow the cadets and the volunteers to work together. Sergeant D. Veriato also suggested the animal control officers to issue citations if they had the power to cite.

D. Cowdrey stated that at the last meeting MCPD was a little confused about the report and the time frame whether it was cumulative. Sergeant D. Veriato responded that the report was a comparison between 2004 and 2005. This year the volunteers have not worked as many as they worked in 2005. One of the volunteers had some health issues and two volunteers went on vacation for several months. The citations had also dropped from 189 to 130 because of the hours that the volunteers didn't spend and maybe people are aware of not parking illegally in the disabled stalls. The warning letter comes from his office for any other traffic infraction. If the public sees an infraction, they call his office to report the violation and his office will send out a letter to the owner of the vehicle just to let them know that it's against the law to park in a disabled stall without a placard.

T. Spinola-Campbell asked if there is an email address for people to complain. Sergeant D. Veriato said that Jackie Murai is the traffic coordinator and her email address is jmurai@co.hawaii.hi.us

J. Matsui suggested that the County/police department obtain some grant money to pay the volunteers for gas and maybe more people will apply for the job. Secondly, he suggested that people who see violations occurring at an establishment to file a report with the management.

D. Cowdrey suggested working with Prince Kuhio Plaza and the supermarkets to enlist some of their security guards as volunteer officers and to be able to issue citations. Sergeant D. Veriato thought this was a great idea as long as they met the criteria.

Sergeant D. Veriato reported that there was an officer in Kona that cited a lady for having a disabled parking placard for her 11-year old disabled son who was at home, but she was using the placard to park in the disabled stall to run an errand for him. The judge dismissed the case because as long as she was parking in the disabled stall in the interest of the disabled person, she could use the stall. MCPD disagreed.

D. Cowdrey asked if the police officers also cite illegal parking (parking in the red zone, parking by a fire hydrant) besides placard violations. Sergeant D. Veriato responded that most of the citations issued are usually parking in a no parking zone. Most of the no parking signs are enforced more.

L. Duwall reported that the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park does not have problems with their parking because the law enforcement officers are constantly driving around and they will issue a citation for illegal parking. A minor problem is that the tour buses who drive through usually slow down and stop for two to five minutes and they let the people look out the window. Unfortunately, the bus is on top of the accessible parking. They are aware of the problem and discussion is being held about restriping the parking lot so there is no conflict. In addition, the sulfur bank trails have two accessible spaces and they may be putting in more parking spaces. They also made three parking spaces universal so all parking spaces are 26 feet long, 11 feet wide with an access aisle. Therefore, all three parking spaces will accommodate anyone and it will be first come, first served.

Sergeant D. Veriato reported that the police department is 70 positions short. Two recruit classes are in session. The calls for service have increased. They have a new management system so the police officers spend a lot of time on the computers rather than out on the road. Therefore, they are asking the state to provide monies so they can purchase laptops for the police officers' car instead of having to come back to the station to input their information.

T. Yamanaka asked if Sergeant D. Veriato could attend the next meeting on Friday, April 7, at 10:30 a.m. in the Kona Mayor's Office conference room. Sergeant D. Veriato agreed to attend if he is available.

B. UPDATE FROM DCAB – C. FLEMING/N. OLESEN/K. SHAW

The March report from K. Shaw, DCAB was distributed to MCPD members.

C. ADA COORDINATOR'S REPORT – T. SPINOLA-CAMPBELL

T. Spinola-Campbell provided her report as the ADA Coordinator for February 2006. ADA Coordinator's report attached.

D. Cowdrey clarified about the informal complaint that MCPD is ineffective and does nothing. T. Spinola-Campbell said that the complainant noticed that there are no reports submitted on the issues from the various subcommittees when reviewing the minutes. The complainant felt that the committee has certain obligations under the Transition Plan and ensuring that the County adheres to the Transition Plan.

T. Spinola-Campbell said she saw under the Transition Plan that MCPD will continue to advise the Mayor on accessibility issues. The committee could request that the Public Works Department attend the meeting to provide a report on curb cuts.

The next quarterly ADA Coordinator's meeting will be held on March 17 in Hilo. T. Yamanaka will be representing L. Scadden at the meeting.

D. PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT – A. MITCHENER

No report.

E. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS – L. SCADDEN

No report.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ISSUES

L. Duwall reported they are waiting on the interpretive panel for the sulfur bank trail. A blessing will be held for the sulfur bank trail once the panel arrives. Secondly, the new accessible trail was finished a year ago and it is asphalt and boardwalk.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

D. Cowdrey announced that there is a VSA Art Display in the Aupuni Center during the month of March. The artists are persons with disabilities and they have art classes three times a week.

J. Souza announced that there will be a presentation on using videophones for the deaf, by Sorenson Communications on Saturday, March 18, 2006, at 10:00 a.m. at Traitor's Meeting Room (next to Hilo CIL). The videophones are the latest and best communication devices for the deaf. The deaf can also call the relay service via videophones.

The next meeting will be held on Friday, April 7, 2006, at 10:30 a.m. in the Kona Mayor's Office conference room.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

JEAN VIERNES, STAFF SECRETARY