

Public Hearing of the Oxford-University Transit Paratransit Service 10/16/08

Commission members present:

Jack Howard, George Price, Jim Windham, Donna Gurley

City Employees: Tim Akers, Janice Antonow, Hugh Stump

Media: David Hopper – Daily Mississippian, Melanie Addington-The Oxford Eagle

Public citizens: Stacey Reycraft, Becky Moreton, Tommy Boatright

Chairman Jack Howard called the meeting to order and began by introducing all of the commission members.

Mr. Howard gave an overview of the application and appeal processes. Noting that the Mayor's Committee on Disability Issues would sit in on appeals meetings.

Tim Lett, Senior Vice President for McDonald Transit, came forward to clarify the application and appeals process. He stated that a denial of approval was possible, though rare. The American Disabilities Act governs all policies and procedures.

Mr. Lett presented a brief overview of the paratransit policies and procedures along with a typed handout of the highlights. He noted that the full manual could be found online. He stated that the policies were in full compliance with ADA requirements and Stacey Reycraft, chairperson for the Mayor's Committee on Disability Issues, agreed.

Mr. Lett explained that the paratransit service would not be in operation until mid-November.

After the policies were presented, Jack Howard opened the meeting for public comment and questions.

Becky Moreton, Citizen – Will this service replace the current bus for elderly?

Mr. Lett explained that it would not.

Janice Antonow, Alderman, clarified that RSVP is a service for the elderly and they carry some disabled, but the OUT Paratransit service will be for ADA certified only. Mr. Lett pointed out that OUT did not want to compete with RSVP's existing service.

Stacey Reycraft, Mayor's Committee on Disability Issues – Will copies of the ADA certification applications be available?

Mr. Lett said that they will be available online and around town along with the policies.

Becky Moreton – What are the processes and policies for boarding the bus?

Jack Howard explained that the service is curb to curb, and that an operator cannot go into a person's home. Once they reach the bus they will assist in all areas of loading. Tim Lett added that the operators have had sensitivity training as a part of their requirements.

Stacey Reycraft – Will there be a maintenance person available to keep wheel chair lifts working?

Tim Lett informed that that OUT has a full time maintenance worker. He also explained that the lifts can be operated manually if necessary.

Janice Antonow – Two wheelchairs can fit on one bus?

Tim Lett said that two wheelchairs will fit on the bus.

Jack Howard encouraged the public to give their input as the system is finalized and as it enters into operation. He announced the kick-off ceremony would be held the following morning in front of City Hall at 9:00am.

Chairman Howard closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending.