

# **ADA Advisory Council Minutes**

## **June 8, 2022**

### Attendance:

Advisory Council Members Present: Steve Schoenberg, Joe Cheray, Robert Nugent, Kim Dietrich, and Anthony Fadale

Absent: Nicholas Trammell, Marilyn Lind

City Staff Present: David Bevens, Assistant to ADA Coordinator

### Welcome & Introductions

Kim introduced Evan Korynta, ADA Coordinator, City of Lawrence, and Taylor Moore, Independent Living Advocate, Topeka Independent Living Center (TILRC). Councilmembers introduced themselves. Evan presented to the group about his duties, experience, and path to becoming Lawrence's ADA Coordinator.

### Additions and Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

Approved

### Public Comments, Public Outreach

### New business

Evan Korynta, ADA Coordinator for the City of Lawrence became the ADA coordinator once the PW Assistant Director retired

after 20 years. The Assistant Director was a part-time ADA Director.

Lawrence leaders wanted to put inclusion and ADA at the forefront in Lawrence. He was the first full-time director and has been for the past two years.

Two biggest things was the need to update the Facilities Services and ADA Transition Plans. Part of Federal requirement. He first looked at anything out of compliance and worked to get it into compliance.

The first goal was to update the Transition Plan which had not been updated since the early '90s. Evan spent first 16 months doing accessibility surveys and working with all of the different departments to see if there were any areas that needed updated, including HR. From that, a new transition plan was created. He presented it to Lawrence in March 2022. He is now working on transition plan in all of the right-of-way infrastructure. He wants to have it to their city leaders later this year.

Lawrence has identified 6,500 curb ramps and 400 miles of sidewalk. Many are out of compliance, including lots of non-compliant brick sidewalks; not conducive for blind and mobility challenged. He also inventoried and Lawrence is working on bus stop accessibility. There is a huge project for the bus transfer center in Lawrence. He is working with the consultant about accessibility around it. The project is the next push in updating accessible infrastructure.

Transition Plans for Public Right of Way Infrastructure.  
Springfield has a 17 year plan to upgrade.

On a weekly basis, Evan:

- Site plan reviews – They are required on most major private reconstruction projects and all construction projects. The reviews are done as part of the Construction Management Group. An example of an element that is reviewed is curb cut ramp designs.
- Code enforcement – These are done under Title III on private business side. However, he doesn't have much to do with it unless there are ADA questions or concerns.
- Spends a lot of time at on-site meetings with project inspectors and addresses items that need addressing. Works with City Facilities staff to meet timeline to get things addressed in a timely manner. He also meets with Parks and Rec to make sure paths from parking to play grounds are accessible.
- Point person – proactive vs. reactive approach. A lot of it has to do with reactive but trying to move toward more proactive.

Evan notes that he is the only full-time ADA coordinator in the region. However, larger cities have a full-time or stand-alone coordinator. Where they are housed depends on

emphasis. Sometimes in a CM or Attorney office – reactive; sometime city attorney or HR staff. Springfield – The selected person is a Transportation Planner and ADA coordinator but the transportation she is planning is ADA-related. The emphasis depends on the needs of the community. For Lawrence it was the infrastructure that was at issue so that is why he was placed in Public Works. They are more proactive.

Just hired Equity and Inclusion staffer at Lawrence; also a Sustainability position. It is part of the Lawrence's City Commission's plan.

- During COVID – City allowed temporary expansion into right of way so he worked with businesses so we could make sure the designs maintained accessibility. City is now looking to do it permanently and he is part of that.
- Boards: Multi-modal transportation and the Lawrence Pedestrian Plan staff Advisory Group;

## Questions

Joe – What was education background?

Evan – Worked at TILRC as operations management – disability rights and resources. Very well versed in ADA and Fair Housing. He has national ADA Certification Coordinator certification and has honed skills on technical requirements for program, facilities and public right of way infrastructure; Bachelor's

Degree - Exercise Coordinator; also been in a wheelchair for 15 years, uses it to test slopes or tricky curb ramps. He said he likes the field work!

Evan also noted he works on committees with others with disabilities, such as blind; collaborates with his work colleagues, he has lots of people to ask questions of; reaches out to other expert colleagues.

His attitude is: "What can we do to go above and beyond? How can we build an inclusive community?"

Steve – Have you had any experience working with deaf people?

Evan – Not really except for hiring an interpreter, requests for accommodations. TILRC had deaf staff and interpreters who worked there. Not a lot of opportunity to work with the deaf at this point

Steve – What is most important quality in the work you do?

Evan – Being an effective communicator and follow-up with the person who is calling in. He is always willing to meet people where they are – in the home, on the corner at curb ramp. Be as responsive as possible. It is about getting out there and handling the situation. Go back, research, talk to colleagues. Must effectively communicate with staff and the public – police, fire, public works, parks and rec. Want them to reach out to you beforehand if they have questions to reduce issues.

Evan to Bob – Were you on the interview panel?

Bob – You are absolutely correct.

Bob – Years before, the city got into Complete Streets, which emphasizes multimodal transportation. City wanted to explore and implement all facets of the concept – biking, walking, and vehicular, etc. The flaw in Lawrence’s infrastructure was the lack of accessible elements, such as curb ramps and sidewalks. At the time, an ADA accessibility assessment by an outside firm was done. They looked at the slopes and said slopes, etc. were a problem.

Evan said Melissa Anderson came to the City. She works on the national level as an expert. The person doing ADA for 20 years was very complimentary and supportive of the work they were doing now.

Joe – What were questions you were asked in determining your position?

Evan – It seems like a blur now. It was a very large panel and a two interviews. About 6-8 people. Various departments.

More of a philosophical thing: How can we achieve this or that? Parks and Rec was a big focus – trails, parks, playgrounds.

“What can we do there?” Looking now at routes around various recreational facilities.

TILRC set Evan up well for his position at the City of Lawrence.

Whoever does it needs to have years of experience working in

the field and the ability to learn technical requirements, legal terminology, etc.; ability to work with public as well as internal departments, such as the HR Department for employment accommodation issue, for example; and needs a wide variety of experience.

Work could be providing policy and procedures. The thing is the City (Topeka) needs to identify needs and then that will drive who it chooses as a full-time coordinator.

Trina – What is something we should look at?

Evan – without knowing concerns within city government, it will have to be a customized job position - What are the needs, and where are the opportunities.

Bob – In reality, the City of Lawrence, the people around the table didn't know what they wanted. We were asking candidates "What do you see how to fix this problem?" We wanted to know what the person thought and looking for a person who was self-starter and ready to move. As the ADA advisory group, we need to put emphasis on the ADA.

Evan – What are you looking for, what you can achieve?

Anthony – It has to be tailored to the community. It is my understanding to do the job, the same types of things expressed 20 years ago when I got hired, are the same today. Those

components that Bob and Evan talked about are the same components that were brought up 25 years ago.

Evan – You can tailor the position based on what you hear from the community. The Lawrence Community was seeing what we were seeing. Sidewalks, curb deteriorated, etc. We saw it too and there is only so much money for repairs. Is the community okay with that? If we pay for X then how do we pay for Y?

Joe: Salary or hourly?

Evan: Salary Exempt. Position was tailored as a project manager. Manages the ADA improve fund money under the General Fund. Also under the CIP for funding projects.

Right now the Splash Park is under development; ADA components included.

Steve thanked Evan for presenting. Expertise has helped.

Evan offered to send the Facilities ADA Plan passed in March.

Evan left meeting.

Steve – Anything else for new business?

Non-ADA Business:

Joe – filed for House Office District 53. Asked the Council's blessing to include her leadership in the Parking Survey process and advocacy for a new sidewalk in her campaign literature. The



Council was fine with that.

Anthony to Steve regarding the LE Committee work – He said the City Council had a document of principals put together in terms of what PD could do. Part of it was training for inclusion. Anthony was thinking that may fit in any type of training that is moving forward. He said the Council's initiative is spearheaded by Councilwoman Hiller. Anthony wanted us to be aware and maybe participate.

Steve – Asked if someone should be appointed to go to the meeting,

Anthony – Suggested reviewing the committee's recommendation, review what they were talking about – on going training for officers – and go from there.

David to look into it – find out more details.

Anthony – The council may already be involved something that we are looking into. Joe to attend meeting and investigate what the Council committee has proposed.

Anthony – Nephew gave presentation at Carnegie Hall in New York! Saxophone.

The rest of the agenda was suspended. Meeting adjourned.

Scheduled the next meeting for July 13, 2022

Adjourn