Greater Alexandria Chapter

Of the National Federation of the Blind Minutes for July 27, 2017

The meeting was called to order by President Brian Miller at 7:05 p.m.

Members in attendance:  Brian Miller, Terri Nettles, Wanda Taylor, Renee Valdez, Andre, Franklin, Jeremey, Abbot Stevens, Rick and Donna Browning, Jessica Diez, Jerry.

Brian gave a brief report on the board meeting that was held  May 25th.  He mentioned he had sent out the minutes to the board but would be sending out to the chapter.  He announce there would be a State meeting to be held in Richmond August 5th.  Then Brian briefly discussed the tour of the tall ship in Alexandria that took place the last weekend in May.

Franklin reported on the June activity a hands on tour of the National Catherdral and about eight people participated.  He mentioned there was a lot of art involved but it was accessible.  They were able to see the Braille Kneeling pillow from 1960.  Wanda said the Fairfax Chapter would be interested in  a tour if we do it again.  Franklin said that if any one was interested in a tour anytime to let him know and he would contact Chris the tour guide.  Wanda also mentioned a free organ concert that was July 4th.

Jeremy reported on the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian advisory Committee.  He along with Bob Hart gave a presentation and are working on an action plan on Vision Zero.  He explained this means no deaths, injuries or in our traffic system are acceptable.  This helps protect cyclists, pedestrians, and people in cars.  He also talked to the committee from the prospective of being a blind person walking around Alexandria both traveling with a cane verses a guide dog using auditory cues.

He is also asking guide dog users who are using Uber and Lyft to go to the website nfb.org/rideshare and start logging all rides taken both positive and negative experiences.

He also spoke of his experience with Tuesday Night Tandem ride and encouraged members to try it out and to contact Bonny if interested.

Brian suggested for the October meeting Bonny and Bob talk about Ski for Light and Tuesday Night Tandem biking.  For November he suggested the activity to be horticulture experience.  He also asked if we would be interested in the screening for Do You Dream in Color?  All were very interested.

We had a town hall portion of our meeting.  Vice-Mayor Justin Wilson came to talk and answer questions.  Brian first gave a brief overview of the Federation and our Chapter and the work we do.  Justin Wilson gave an introduction of himself  and discussed such topics as Alexandria budget, working on broad band which the city will build a fiber network similar to the Chattanooga model.

He then entertained questions covering vision Zero, and talked about having accessible pedestrian signals.

Transportation was addressed trying to invest in new buses and expanding service on DASH.  He has not heard of any significant change to the Dot paratransit.

Water Front:  They are in the implementation phase, a new hotel called the Indigo just opened, Robin terminal South is under construction.  This will be comprised of residential, commercial and retail.  There will be a park at the base of King Street.

Landmark Mall:  Still in negotiating phase.

Applications for the city are accessible and compatible with screen readers.

Voting machines are going to be replaced and they will all be accessible

Brian expressed a need to have available Braille instructions for blind voters.

Justin will look into having Way Finding and historical landmark information signs made accessible.

Justin mentioned if anyone want to receive his newsletter electronically to email him at: Justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov.

Chapter wrap up:  Brian gave a brief description of Alexandria Citizens Academy which is a 10 week course.  He mention he had moved next door to the Meridian and if members wish to meet there it has a nice meeting room and easy to locate.  He will send out a reminder for the Board meeting in August.

Bonny mentioned the National Gallery has accessible tours for “Picture This”.  If a groups is interested contact Bonny.  Jeremy said he would send notes from the Metro meeting to be included in the Minutes.  Brian encouraged members to think of something you can be expertese in to be on the topical liasone.  Bonny and Bob are the recreation and athletic liasone.

Wanda mentioned a technology seminar will be in Richmond.

Creating a FaceBook page for our chapter was also discussed and Jeremy and Donna will work on that together.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Terri Nettles

Secretary