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Board of Directors *Meeting Minutes*

December 18, 2020

Attendees: Veronica, Brad, Elaine, Linden, Heather, and Rob

This regular meeting was called by verbal agreement during the prior meeting, or by intermediate written reasonable notification made in good faith and agreed to by a majority of board members through email or phone, and was held through videoconferencing.

Agenda

- Next regular meeting
- New moderators
- Articles: Lawmaking and reporting guides
- Article: Service dog letter templates
- Flying law update
- Texas House Bill 801
- Virtual meetups
- Convention
- Meme contest
- Community photos
- Mask design contest
- Media

• **Next regular meeting**

Friday, February 5th at noon PT/3:00 ET.

Today's meeting is a semi-open board meeting, with the Board of Advisors invited.

• **New moderators**

Karen A., Allison, and Katie J. have joined the Peer Guidance Group's moderation team. Welcome!

• **Articles: Lawmaking and reporting guides**

Brad wrote a guide for state and local lawmakers, which they and their constituents can use to craft better service dog laws. He also wrote a guide for media

professionals, which can help them write more responsibly on service dog and disability issues.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/lawmakers>

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/reporters>

- **Article: Service dog letter templates**

We posted a new article, “Service dog letter templates”, linked to from our main page for healthcare professionals. Veronica wrote the article and Brad assisted.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/healthcare/service-dog-letter-templates>

- **Flying law update**

USDOT updated the ACAA regulations. The update will take effect in early 2021. Psychiatric service dog users finally have parity with other types of service dog users.

More detail about the update is in a December 2nd entry on our advocacy page. We have updated our site in preparation for the regulation update, especially the page for healthcare professionals and the laws FAQ.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/board-of-directors/board-activities/advocacy>

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/healthcare>

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions/laws>

- **Texas House Bill 801**

We plan to write to Texas legislators to oppose Texas House Bill 801. It is unnecessary in the context of federal law and onerously burdensome to disabled people.

This bill would set up bureaucratic and financial hurdles for those with assistance animals other than service dogs (including service miniature horses and ESAs, and by extension, service dogs in training). This seems to have been written without the benefit of a disabled or disability rights perspective, or a non-rich-person perspective.

The certification requirement contains an obedience class requirement that may end up stopping disabled people from being able to get an animal as an ESA or SDIT. It also seems to ignore that ESAs can be non-canine species. It’s hard to imagine a goldfish, snake, or cat in an approved obedience class. But for a housing-based disability accommodation, an obedience class requirement seems excessive from the start, since not everyone can afford classes or the time, energy, and transportation needed to attend them.

In addition to paying for an obedience class and veterinary checkup, each year those subject to the law would have to obtain and pay for the Texas certificate. They would also have to be part of a publicly available registry.

- **Virtual meetups**

Linden is organizing a virtual (chat) meetup for Peer Guidance Group members. This may progress to a video/audio-optional chat.

- **Convention**

Due to the pandemic, we've shifted our 2021 convention from May to October 1–4. PSDP has helped pay for some videography equipment so we might be able to produce documentary video(s) during the convention.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/resources/convention/2021-convention>

- **Meme contest**

We issued prize sets to four meme contest winners. If we are able to, we will post pictures of them with their prizes once they receive them. We are waiting on a recently placed order to arrive.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/board-of-directors/board-activities/advocacy/service-dog-memes/2020-submissions>

- **Community photos**

Through December, we are soliciting 2020 community photos for our site.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/resources/community-photos>

- **Mask design contest**

We're running a mask design contest in December. The winner will receive a mask with their design.

Pup'parel will sell the design, along with a basic PSDP logo design.

- **Media**

A "USA Today" Editorial Board member recently interviewed Brad for background on the flying law update. Brad was a backup choice for writing a counterpoint against the Editorial Board's position, but was not the top choice because he is not as extreme as they would prefer.

The editor of "Transit Access Report" contacted us for comment from Brad on the flying law update.
