



Veronica Morris, PhD

Elaine Malkin

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Linden Gue

Heather Walker

Bradley W. Morris, MA, CPhil

1651 Sandpiper Drive
Rock Hill, SC 29732
USA

(805) 876-4256
info@psych.dog
www.psych.dog

Board of Directors *Meeting Minutes*

September 1, 2023

Attendees: Veronica, Brad, Linden, Heather, and Katie

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
- Peer Guidance Group birthdays
- Site additions
- Air travel practicalities
- Peer convention
- Priorities survey

• **Next regular meeting**

Friday, November 3rd at 1:00 PT/3:00 CT/4:00 ET.

Board social: October 13th at 1:00 PT/3:00 CT/4:00 ET.

• **Peer Guidance Group Birthdays**

A community member wants to help celebrate canine community members' birthdays. We discussed how this might happen.

• **Site additions**

Veronica drafted an article tentatively titled "My future service dog: what should I train first, and next?".

Brad is working on Emily's Chinese translation for our general flyer.

• **Air travel practicalities**

Brad and Veronica have been meeting with fellow advocates and DOT officials, and are working toward solutions for the documentation issues that are harming service dog community members.

From earlier: In an upcoming advocate meeting with DOT, Veronica and Brad will be discussing with DOT whether it is appropriate under the regulations for Open Doors to have an initial work/task screening question in their handling of service dog documentation for some airlines.

DOT has clearly said that airlines aren't permitted to require documentation beyond DOT's (see the email excerpt below from May 10, 2023). However, some airlines direct passengers to Open Doors' system, which has the extra screening question beyond DOT's form. There hasn't been a clear indication this process is optional. What's more, it would be an outlier to try to avoid the Open Doors system and submit DOT's form to the airline, which in practice tends to make such an attempt difficult and burdensome when airline employees aren't accustomed to (or accepting of) handling the passenger's service animal paperwork themselves. This renders the Open Doors' system—with its extra screening question—as a practical requirement, in violation of the regulations. As an extra consideration, Open Doors people are not actually service dog experts, which makes their judgments on their extra question suspect. Their denial might impact a passenger's ability to fly with any of the often limited airlines available from their particular locale.

This is also an issue for the "Service Dog Pass", which may result in harassment of those who don't have it.

The DOT's service animal rule does not permit airlines to require documentation from passengers beyond the DOT forms, the rule also does not prohibit airlines from asking passengers to "voluntarily" complete other documentation, which would include the service dog pass. Please understand that this statement is based strictly on the language in DOT's service animal rule, 14 CFR Part 382, Subpart E, and is not the result of any approval or endorsement from DOT of the service dog pass, or any other documentation outside of the DOT forms. We can discuss this in more detail at the next advocacy meeting.

From earlier: Open Doors Organization is handling the service animal documentation for multiple airlines, including JetBlue, Alaska, and Allegiant. We are not quite on the same page about how this should be done, but we were able to do an invited training for their staff and leadership. We made significant inroads toward ensuring they handle the documentation in appropriate ways, and we will keep communicating with each other.

• Peer convention

We have a contract for the 2024 peer convention. It will be at the Hilton Garden Inn in Rock Hill, South Carolina, April 26–29. Now we will be able to set up the convention webpage.


We want to make sure next year's convention will be a welcoming place for our LGBT+ community members, in spite of any oppressive laws that may pass. We want to have a hate-free, safe convention for our community members. We have assurances from the hotel that staff will not cause issues for any hotel guest using the restroom the guest feels is appropriate.

We made other requests this year, and this is the hotel's positive response to our requests:

"Thank you for voicing your concerns and letting us know so we can address them.

"We can definitely ensure on your BEOs and on your group resume (that are distributed internally to all our staff) that your request that no air fresheners are to be used is clearly stated. We don't wish to aggravate any health issues or make anyone sick!

"As regards to your second point, all Hilton staff is given DEI training and we would never make it our business to determine which bathroom a guest can use. We strive



to make the Hilton Garden Inn Rock Hill an inclusive space and celebrate diversity in its infinite forms. We have also appreciated the service dog one-page explainer you have sent in the past so that we can make it available to all our staff prior to your arrival and go over it together as a senior staff.

“I’ve spoken with our GM and he said it would be possible to make the patio outside the restaurant smoke free from 9 AM to 5 PM. We are also workshopping other outdoor space ideas that may suit your group’s needs.”

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/resources/convention/2023-convention>

- **Priorities survey**

We drafted this year’s priorities survey and will get it out to our community soon.
