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Board of Directors *Meeting Minutes*

November 3, 2023

Attendees: Veronica, Brad, Linden, Heather, Elaine, 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
- Taxes
- Peer Guidance Group birthdays
- Site additions
- Air travel practicalities
- Section 504 NPRM
- Peer convention
- Community photos
- Priorities survey

• **Next regular meeting**

Friday, January 5th at 1:00 PT/3:00 CT/4:00 ET.

Board social: December 15th at 1:00 PT/3:00 CT/4:00 ET.

• **Taxes**

We've submitted our federal taxes and our state registration exemption form.

• **Peer Guidance Group Birthdays**

A community member has collected birthday information and will help celebrate community members' birthdays.

• **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**

(No update Nov. 3rd) 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.

• **Section 504 NPRM**

We received late notice about a notice of proposed rulemaking on Section 504. We will shortly be reviewing this, writing a comment, and putting word out to our community.

*Brad: Draft comment for Section 504 NPRM.

• **Peer convention**

Our 2024 peer convention will be at the Hilton Garden Inn in Rock Hill, South Carolina, April 26–29. The convention webpage is now ready and we're accepting registrations.

The committee has approved the schedule.

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/resources/convention/2024-convention>

- **Community photos**

We will solicit 2023 community photos starting in December.

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

- **Priorities survey**

We ran this year's priorities survey September 5–12 and reviewed the results during the meeting. There seems to be increasing support for existing and new programs.
