



DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION

City and County of San Francisco
1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, California 94103-2414

ACCESS APPEALS COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

1:00 P.M.

*SPECIAL MEETING LOCATION:

111 Pine Street - LOBBY

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The special meeting of the Access Appeals Commission was called to order at approximately 1:15 p.m. by President Brown.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Alyce Brown, President
Ms. Roslyn Baltimore, Vice-President
Mr. Arnie Lerner, AIA, Commissioner
Mr. Walter Park, Commissioner

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Jurgen Dostert

CITY REPRESENTATIVES: Neil Friedman
Secretary to the Commission
Ms. Susan Pangilinan
Recording Secretary
Ms. Elaine Warren
Deputy City Attorney
Ms. Doris M. Levine, Reporter

OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVES: Edward Persico and Kathleen Finnerty
Representing Otis Elevator

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** public comment was not heard until testimony regarding the 111 Pine Street appeal case.

3. **REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS ITEMS:**
There were no communication items.

4. **TOPICS**
(DISCUSSION) Observation of the 'Destination –Based Elevator Systems at 111 Pine Street (Otis Elevator company) California Observation and discussion of 'destination based' elevator systems at

111 Pine Street (Otis Company) followed by observation of 1 California Street (Schindler Company). The elevator systems of these two buildings were the subject of appeals that were previously approved by the Access Appeals Commission (AAC).

Dr. Joshua A. Miele, Ph. D., Research Associate for The Smith – Kettlewell Eye Research Institute gave testimony and distributed a report regarding the operations of the destination- based elevator (DBE) systems and discussed areas that could be improved. Dr. Miele mentioned that his interest is not to slow down progress but that he doesn't want to approve something at the cost of losing accessibility.

Commissioner Parks asked for some clarification on some of the comments made by Dr Miele.

Commissioner Lerner asked about the lack of the up and down audible signals.

Commissioner Parks asked if there would be any advantage to have talking signs.

Dr Miele said unless it is part of finding infrastructure, it wouldn't be a good idea.

Commissioner Brown noted how quiet the audio pedestrian signals are.

Dr. Miele mentioned that there are systems with special sensors in place that adjust the sound level of the system to the ambient sound. He said he didn't mention this in his report but he should have.

Commissioner Lerner asked how someone would use the system if he or she had never previously used such a system.

Dr Miele said that they would ask for help initially but, it would be tough.

Commissioner Lerner asked if it wouldn't be difficult for someone who isn't sight impaired.

Dr Miele said that sighted persons have multiple ways of figuring it out through various signs, symbols and auditory signals.

Commissioner Lerner asked if it would be a good idea to use a Braille plate next to the elevator button.

Dr Miele said that Braille text doesn't work and that it would be a lot of text. One or two words works best for labeling.

Derik Burton with the American foundation of the Blind is a technical and product evaluator for gadgets and works with industry to show how they can make improvements for the disabled community. Mr. Burton mentioned he doesn't think we need another round of standards since we already have the California codes, ANSI, ADAAG and Section 508 of the Rehab Act. He mentioned that it is one of the easiest systems with a short learning curve and can be used very easily.

Commissioner Brown asked what a person would first do to use the system.

Mr. Burton said he would ask the security guard.

Commissioner Parks asked if there are any standards with the system like a key pad location.

Mr. Burton mentioned they already have the standard location between the doors to the elevator. Mr. Burton mentioned that you wouldn't want to diminish the skills of the people who need to use accessible systems.

Richard Skaff, founder and executive director of Designing Accessible Communities, formally with the City and County of San Francisco asked if AFB, American Foundation of the Blind is under contract with Otis. He mentioned that it be appropriate to have an absolutely neutral party like UL or Trace so that there is never any question with Mr. Burton's technical input.

Chad Lehocks, representing Otis, introduced himself.

Gil Johnson, with AFB, stated his office is located in the building and was asked to look at the elevator system. He mentioned it took him about 3 minutes and said it can be picked up quickly including by a sighted person.

Jessie Lorenz, Director of Public Policy for the Lighthouse used the DBE elevators at 111 Pine and 1 California Street. She agrees with Mr. Johnson that the elevator is a good foundation and encourages everyone to read Dr. Miele's report, applauding him for trying to come up with the best solution. Ms. Lorenz questioned why the decision was made to drop the beeping at each floor and when the doors open.

Commissioner Lerner asked how the elevator system works for her.

Ms. Lorenz said she questioned the 3 dots at the elevator call button and thought maybe someone really doesn't know Braille. She mentioned that the Otis system worked better for her and the verbal instruction was clearer. Schindler's voice keys were more ambiguous. She said the large text and her initial interaction with the key pad was awkward.

Vince Maurino, Otis mechanic explained that when one car is out of service the audio will tell you which way to go.

Commissioner Parks asked Ms. Lorenz if she new what floor she was on when the door opened.

Ms. Lorenz said the signage was very clear and that she is used to feeling the door jam rather than an auditory direction.

Kelly Houliha made a comment.

Karen Kircher mentioned how difficult the audio is in a noisy lobby. She asked how many languages the audible signals come in.

Richard Skaff mentioned that national guidelines are being written and that we are an aging community.

5. COMMISSIONERS' AND STAFF'S QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

There were no comments

6. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Karen Kircher made comments.

7. **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 P.M.

These notes are an approximate summary of the Commission meeting.

Full transcripts of these meetings are available for the cost of transcription. Copies of the audio tapes are also available for the cost of making the copies.

Neil Friedman

Senior Building Inspector

Department of Building Inspection

Secretary to the Access Appeals Commission