

To the City of Flagstaff Mayor and Members of the City Council:

The City of Flagstaff Commission on Inclusion and Adaptive Living (CIAL) has been established with the duty to advise the Flagstaff City Council on issues affecting individuals with disabilities in our community. With our duty in mind, we are submitting this letter to provide a voice for those members of our community whom we represent.

Today we are specifically informing you of our support for a new citizens advocacy group in our community, Barrier Free Flagstaff (BFF). BFF grew out of the CIAL but is now functioning as an independent group of citizens. The mission of BFF is to facilitate Accessibility Expeditions throughout our community with the intent to help create a more accessible and inclusive community for all. We on the CIAL are also informing you of our full support of Accessibility Expeditions being facilitated by BFF at city facilities as well as at sites throughout our community.

Through discussion with experts from Northern Arizona University we have learned that there are two established approaches to accessibility reviews; Accessibility Audits and Accessibility Expeditions. Both approaches have proven to be successful at raising awareness of accessibility and inclusion issues, but each is facilitated in its own way. Accessibility Audits are usually conducted by 2-4 people with a site being evaluated for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act followed by a report being generated. Alternatively, Accessibility Expeditions gather together a group of people (including those who work at or attend the site, those who need accommodations for access, etc.), involve them in group exploration of a space, and then follow up with a discussion of universal design. This follow up discussion details environmental factors that make the space accessible, barriers that were found, and suggestions for improving access. (Further information on Accessibility Expeditions can be found at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1435138.pdf> )

One of the stated goals of the CIAL is to improve access to housing, buildings, and transportation in our city. In pursuit of this goal, we members of the CIAL seek your support of Barrier Free Flagstaff as well as its intent to facilitate Accessibility Expeditions at city facilities and throughout our community. We seek this support with the understanding that in the future, the CIAL itself may be facilitating Accessibility Audits in our city as the CIAL has done in the past.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Respectfully,

Members of the City of Flagstaff Commission on Inclusion and Adaptive Living