# MEMORANDUM

TO: Coalition File

FM: Len Sandler

DATE: February 16, 2004

RE: Coalition Meeting

The Johnson County Coalition for Persons with Disabilities met this evening from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at Uptown Bill’s.

Attending: Sherri, Marilyn, Jordan, Tim, Mona, Lori, Bob Welsh, Loren, Valerie, Martha, Louise, Marilyn, Darren, Jaia, & Mark Brown. Student Legal Interns: Joe Wilson and Milan Bhatt.

ISSUES:

Traffic Signal at Dubuque and Burlington

Universal Design Bill: Bolkcom, Dvorsky, IFA, IDED, DPS, Building Code Commissioner, met last week in Des Moines, the Iowa Home Builders Association must support or remain neutral or the bill will die.

Traffic Signal and Light at the Intersection of Dubuque and Burlington streets near the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Iowa City. The most common problems and unsafe conditions include:

Light does not stay on for adequate time period for people to cross Burlington Street at Dubuque. Mark Brown said the light changed at three seconds, not the seven seconds we timed or that is mandated in the regulations.

Drivers make right turns on red while people are in the intersection,

 People in cars speed through the intersection

 Curb cuts may or may not be at opposite corners.

## The intersections may not have the APS technology for use by people with vision impairments.

*History of the Intersection* 1970s: Bob Welsh provided a history of the intersection, which included discussion of urban renewal efforts by the city and the contract it entered for the construction of Capitol House apartments in 1978 or 1979. He and others timed the lights in the late 70s and found that many people encountered difficulty crossing during the normal timing cycle. The city promised to modify or adjust the lights and the timing if it became problematic after the apartments were built because the primary emphasis was going to remain on Burlington Street traffic going east and west.

Late 1990s. Two years ago, Louise and others from Capitol House addressed the city council about people having difficulty crossing the intersection before the light changed. Louise was also interested in having Iowa City patrol or police the intersection for turning right on red before pedestrians have cleared the intersection.

Responsible officials: Anissa Williams is the Johnson County traffic engineer who offered to attend a Coalition meeting to explain the law, the regulations and the timing cycle at the intersection, as well as what could be done if a safety problem exists. She insists the intersection timing complies with the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards.

Operation of the signal at Burlington and Dubuque:

The signal only operates when a pedestrian presses the switch. When the white walker logo turns on it takes seven seconds for the flashing red hand to begin and then the red do not walk sign is triggered at 20 seconds. That meets the MUTCD standard, which both Iowa and Iowa City adopted in the state regulations and city code.

I. The question is what leeway, discretion or tolerances does the law, local practice or engineering standards allow in lengthening the timing cycle?

II. The question is what is the timing and cycle for all the lights at the intersection and others east and west, and what difficulties do people have crossing there?

Find out what the specifications are at the intersection, the dimensions, timing cycle, etc. Call Williams and ask if the timing is different for days of the week, etc.

Survey and Field Trip: A field analysis and survey is critical

It must include people of varying ages and abilities. Volunteers included nearly every one attending tonight.

The survey should be administered several days and at different times of days.

Survey instrument must be developed and teams created to walk, time, record and video or photograph the audit and results.

 Must create teams, to time and state aloud the second, record the information video and photograph

Meet at the lobby of the Sheraton or the Capitol House at noon on February 28, 2004 and begin the survey at 12:30 p.m.

Milan distributed and reviewed the survey he and fellow Student Legal Interns created this week (Angie delivered a Braille copy of the letter). Take control, give some guidance regarding how you want to approach the issue.

Amend the survey: include a question about mobility, vision and other impairments, use of mobility devices or wheelchairs.

Distribute it to Capitol House residents, those who live next to the Senior Center, officials at the Senior Center and others; Rev. Welsh will assist.

(Milan, lots of assumptions about what Anissa said in a two- paragraph email. Give facts, discuss the cycle, the standards, get the name of the intersection right, we need a more than a perception survey.) Don’t guess about the intent or history of the regulations. Provide greater guidance; sit at the table).