

**City of Worcester  
Commission on Disabilities  
Meeting Summary**

**Type of Meeting:** Regular  
**Date and Time Convened:** November 18, 2009, 4:00 pm  
**Place Where Convened:** Saxe Room, Worcester Public Library  
**Members Present:** Dawn Clark (Chair), Rachel Brown (Vice Chair), Grace Clark, John Cronin, Jacqueline Norton, David Perry, Joseph Sinasky  
**Members Absent:** None  
**Staff Present:** Fran Manocchio  
**Public Present:** Mike Kennedy, Herb Creamer, Mary Healey, Debbie Malone  
**Guest:** Jonathan Church, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Council

*Please note: Agenda was taken out of order, as reflected in the minutes.*

1. **Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions:** Dawn Clark called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. Attendees introduced themselves.
2. **Acceptance of October Minutes:** Rachel Brown moved to accept the October minutes; Mr. Cronin seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.
3. **Information and Education: Jonathan Church, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Council regarding the Blackstone Canal District Project**  
Chairperson Clark commended Herb Cremer, guest, for bringing the Blackstone Canal District Project to the attention of the Commission, particularly the issue of crosswalks. Ms. Clark asked Mr. Church, who has been involved with this project, to provide an update for Commissioners. Mr. Church offered the following information via PowerPoint Presentation and discussion:
  - a. The plan proposes new streetscape for 3 streets: *Water, Harding and (?)*.
  - b. It appears that the crosswalks at the intersection of Cambridge and Southbridge Streets (recently renovated) are made of brick which can cause issues/obstacles for people with disabilities.
  - c. Walkability: Element of a walkable community are safety, access and aesthetics. The walkability refers to multiple uses, such as people with disabilities, elders and strollers.
  - d. Sidewalk Materials: When communities design or renovate sidewalks, there are several choices: stone, concrete, brick, packed stone dust, cobblestone. Brick and cobblestone present obstacles for people with disabilities, elders and stroller since there is often a rumbled effect and space between pavers. Bricks typically freeze much faster than concrete. Stamped concrete is often used in mid-west; granite is more often used in New England. Thermoplastic is a newer material.

In response to Mr. Church's presentation, Commissioners discussed possible written communication to the Secretary of the newly formed Department of Transportation regarding (i) use of materials (not bricks), (ii) have Commission on Disabilities review plans for the Blackstone Canal District Project, (iii) underscore the need for audible pedestrian lights which has been a persistent issue in the City. Rachel Brown offered to compose a letter to the Secretary of Transportation and the City Manager; all Commissioners voted unanimously to support Ms. Brown's offer.

David Perry offered to conduct research prior to a hearing regarding the Blackstone Canal District that will be held on Tuesday, December 15, 2009 at 6:30 pm at Union Station.

Tonight a meeting will be held regarding the Belmont Street Project. Rachel Brown, David Perry, Deb Malone, and Mike Kennedy all plan to attend. Ms. Malone plans to provide personal testimony.

Suggestion offered by Commissioners to include a brief survey on the City's website to gather people's impressions about walkability in Worcester.

**4. Old Business:**

- a. **ADA Grievance Procedure:** Grace Clark made a motion to accept the ADA Grievance Procedure as submitted. David Perry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- b. **CLW Event:** On October 22, 2009 CLW held a community event. John Cronin, a member of the Planning Committee, reported on the event.
- c. **Snow Removal Guide:** Dawn Clark stated that the Commission on Disabilities and REDD will be added to the snow removal guide published by Common Pathways.
- d. **Neighborhood Conversations:** Dawn Clark reported that there is a balance of \$141.00 remaining from the Common Pathways. She suggested that we apply the funds to WRTA passes for people who attended the Community Conversations for health-related appointments/activities.

**5. Transportation and TPAG:** Ms. Norton raised concerns regarding public transportation:

- a. how to get to and from accessible bus stops; b. how does WRTA track customer complaints; c. maintenance and need of bus shelters, especially with winter approaching.

**6. New Business:**

- a. **Observations about Elections:** Ms. Malone reported a serious problem with her attempt to vote. She will meet with Ms. Manocchio to file an ADA Complaint. Dawn Clark also offered observations from her role as a poll worker. Discussion held regarding possibility of inviting the Elections Commission and staff to a future Commission on Disabilities meeting. Commissioners would like to know how poll workers are trained, both in terms of equipment and dealing with people with disabilities. Herb Cremer noted that he often votes by absentee ballot and does not encounter any difficulties. Mike Kennedy stated that while it is true that anyone with

a disability can chose to use an absentee ballot, the main reason to go to your local polling site is for visibility purposes.

7. **Transition Plan, Accessibility and Access Board Issues:** Dawn Clark requested formation of a Work Group to update the City's transition plan. Commissioners John Cronin and David Perry volunteered as did Mike Kennedy and Deb Malone. Ms. Manocchio will coordinate a meeting.
8. **Announcements and Adjournments:**
  - a. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will hold a community forum on Thursday, December 03, 2009 at Worcester Public Library. Commissioner Charles Carr will facilitate.
  - b. Grace Clark made a motion to adjourn at approximately 5:25 pm which was seconded by Mr. Cronin. The motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fran Manocchio  
Director, Office of Human Rights and Disabilities  
December 3, 2009