

City of Worcester
Commission on Disabilities
March 10, 2010 Meeting Summary *Revised*

Type of Meeting: Regular Monthly Meeting

Date and Time Convened: March 10, 2010 - 4:00 p.m.

Place Where Convened: Worcester City Hall, Esther Howland City Council Chamber

Members Present: Dawn Clark, Rachel Brown, David Perry, John Cronin, Jacqueline Norton,
Grace Clark

Members Absent: Joseph Sinasky

Associates Present: Deborah Malone, Mary Healey, Herbert Cremer

Associates Absent: None

Staff Present: Fran Manocchio

Guest Present: None

Public Present: Mike Kennedy, Scott Babbidge

1. Meeting called to order by Dawn Clark, Chair, at 4:00 p.m.
2. Acceptance of January and February 2010 Meeting Summaries: Approved as submitted.
3. A. Chairperson's Report:
 - Dawn Clark reported that she, Fran Manocchio and Deborah Malone met with the Elections Commission on March 1, 2010 in Room 208 to discuss the ADA complaint. The meeting space location and set-up was not conducive to people with physical disabilities. Jacqueline Norton made a motion that the Commission on Disabilities communicate with the Human Rights Commission regarding this ADA complaint. Grace Clark offered a second to the motion and was unanimously carried. Fran Manocchio will forward the motion to Cheryl Pope, Chair of the Human Rights Commission.
 - Rachel Brown offered a motion, second by David Perry, that the Office of Human Rights and Disabilities send a memo to all staff liaisons that public meetings must be accessible. Motion passed unanimously. Fran Manocchio will follow-up.
 - Mass in Motion: Dawn reported that a group of people with disabilities and allies held a productive meeting on February 23, 2010 with the Mass In Motion project coordinator at Worcester Public Library.
- B. Director's Report:
 - Fran has been invited to have a tour of the Audio Journal. David Perry and Debbie Malone would like to join her.
 - It has been a very, very busy month with resident complaints and interacting with City departments. We continue to work on the ADA complaint with Elections Commission.
4. Discussion on how to process to prioritize street repairs, curb cuts, and ramps in order to communicate with Dept. of Public Works & Parks: Additions made to the table (see

revised attached). Commissioner asked if it is possible to map the projects; Fran Manocchio will inquire.

John Cronin suggested that priorities set according to the following criteria:

- Areas with high concentration of people with disabilities
- Public housing/low income neighborhoods
- Sidewalks by Elm Park, especially the Elm Street side

Rachel Brown made a motion to prioritize 4 immediate projects:

- a. John Street Baptist Church
- b. Curb Cut on Front Street and Mechanic Street, adjacent to the Common
- c. Main and Pleasant Street, in front of Denholm Building
- d. Audible chirpers along Park Avenue

Motion passed unanimously. Fran Manocchio will communicate with Dept. of Public Works & Parks.

5. Transportation and T.P.A.G. Update: Debbie Malone stated that she raised the issue of WRTA bus drivers lack of consistency with call – outs (announcing the route number, destination and stop locations) at the recent REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for Disabled). The WRTA offered to hold a meeting with Ms. Malone on March 4, 2010. At the request of Ms. Malone, Fran Manocchio and Michael Kennedy attended that meeting. The WRTA showed a PowerPoint Presentation about the new intelligent technology, scheduled to be installed in 18 months, which will include several customer-friendly features. However, there was not a satisfactory answer regarding how the WRTA drivers will deal with the issue of inconsistent call-outs in the meantime or short-term.

Larry Raymond, Chair of T.P.A.G., also attended the meeting at the WRTA. Mr. Raymond recommended that T.P.A.G., the Commission on Disabilities, REDD and Center for Living & Working co-sign a letter to WRTA union members offering support for those drivers who follow the call-out procedures and with a reminder about the ADA regulations. Upon review of a draft letter by Mr. Raymond, Commissioners unanimously rejected the letter. Rachel Brown offered a motion to have the Commission on Disabilities compose its own letter expressing dismay about lack of compliance with ADA regulations to provide equal access to all customers. Motion passed unanimously. David Perry will work with Fran Manocchio on draft letter; once Commissioners approved, we will share with other organizations.

Dawn Clark noted that the issue of lack of consistent call-outs by the WRTA dates back to at least 2008 when the Commission sent a similar letter. Debbie Malone noted that REDD has data regarding lack of consistent call-outs back to 2003.

Ms. Malone stated that REDD is not yet satisfied with the WRTA's customer complaint process. Jacqueline Norton made a motion to request information from the WRTA and the RTA on a quarterly basis relative to customer complaints and the resolution.

The Commission may request that Steve O'Neil, WRTA's Administrator attend the May meeting to address some of these issues.

6. Transition Plan, Accessibility and Access Board Issues:

- a. Report from ADA Transition Plan Work Group: Jackie Norton reported that the group is meeting monthly. Currently, the work group is waiting for a list of all city properties and polling locations. Fran invited David Clemons, Director of the City's Emergency Management Dept. to the April meeting and we will discuss, among other topics, emergency shelters and transportation in the case of evacuation. Herb Cremer mentioned that the management at his residence agreed to install a Knox Lock Box (for easy access by emergency personnel) in the lobby at a cost of \$200.
- b. Follow-up on John Street Baptist Church: Fran has connected with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Dept. of Public Works and Parks and City Councilor Haller. No timeline given for the repair to sidewalk which is impeding people with disabilities from attending services.
- c. Sidewalk Cafes and License Commission: At the request of a Worcester resident who is concerned about Shrewsbury Street businesses, we reviewed the language in a proposed ordinance for sidewalk cafes. Mike Kennedy, ADA/Accessibility Specialist with CL&W, and Fran Manocchio submitted a report to the License Commission for discussion at their March 4, 2010 meeting which was very well received.
- d. Eastern Orthodox/Ichabod Washburn Hospice Residence: The organization, located at 1183 Main Street is seeking more than 20 variances for expansion of the facility. Application has been made to the AAB. More to follow at a future meeting.

6. Snow Ordinance and Concerns: Several concerns raised by members:

- Ordinance not enforced consistently throughout the city.
- Who is responsible for removing snow along the "catwalk" on Belmont Street across from Belmont St. Community School?
- Who is responsible for removing snow at WRTA bus stops?
- Member have noticed a decrease in snow removal at Worcester Housing Authority properties.

Fran Manocchio recommended that we invite a representative from the Worcester Police Department and Dept. of Public Works & Parks to attend a future meeting to review the process and policies in preparation for next winter.

7. Other Business: Rachel Brown inquired if there was any response to the letter sent regarding HP parking around the DCU Center. Fran noted that we received correspondence (dated February 25, 2010) from Commissioner Moylan with a report from the Director of Traffic Engineering, Joseph Borbone. Fran will request meeting with Commissioner Moylan to follow-up on this item, discuss our priorities and inquire about the status of the \$200,000 "ADA" designated funds.

Adjournment –The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 p.m. after a motion by John Cronin and Jackie Norton, motion to adjourn was accepted unanimously.

Respectively Submitted,

Fran Manocchio

Revised 4/23/2010