

Minutes from Wednesday, July 13, 2011 Commission on Disabilities
Meeting
Levi Lincoln Chamber
4:00PM

Attendance:

Members: Rachel Shannon Brown, Herbert Cremer, Deborah Malone,
David Perry

Associate Member: Lynne Towler

Guests: Lenore Montanaro, Jackie Norton

Staff: Derek Brindisi, Dawn E. Clark

The Chairperson suggested we take the agenda out of order to accommodate our guest. There were no objections.

Guest Presentation:

Joseph Borbone, Worcester's Director of Traffic and Engineering, was introduced.

a. McKeon Road Improvements

There has been increased foot traffic along McKeon Road from Southbridge Street along the Holy Cross College side of the road to Walmart. There is presently no side walk from Southbridge Street to the Fire Station. The project seeks to lay a sidewalk and add lights. Pavers would not be used. The Commission reviewed the plans and suggested that the apex ramp (at Holy Cross road coming on to McKeon) which would bring people using wheelchairs out into traffic be turned to be consistent with the flow of the sidewalk. Mr. Cremer asked if count had been done for Walmart. Yes, there was a significant increase in traffic.

b. Winthrop Street Improvements

Project plans call for adding right turning lanes on Winthrop, Providence and Vernon Street with appropriate signalized lights. However, note Vernon Street does not meet standard for signalization. Islands would be

installed as a safety measure for pedestrians. Chirpers would be installed. More work including changing the buttons for lights before the 25% plan goes of to Mass Dept. of Transportation (DOT). Ms. Malone noted that islands would be dangerous for people who are visually impaired. They would not know if a vehicle was turning. Another concern was snow and ice which would be difficult to navigate and put people in the road. Ms. Malone advocated that the City should be a model for other municipalities in how we keep our streets and sidewalks safe and find a solution. Mr. Cremer concurred that safety should be a priority. This project was not at the 25% plan at this time and was four to five years away from being built.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Borbone.

The Commission returned to the stated agenda. Lynn Towler was elevated to the status of member so she could vote.

Minutes:

The May 11, 2011 and June 8, 2011 minutes were approved.

New Staff for the Office on Disabilities in the Executive Office of the City Manager

A Disabilities Intake Worker has been established to carry out the day to day work of the office on Disabilities. One of the responsibilities of the position is to be the liaison/staff to the Commission on Disabilities. Mr. Cremer requested to review the job description. Ms. Clark said she would email the job description to the Commission members for their information. Ms. Clark also explained that she had been hired fir the position. The Commission congratulated her.

Mr. Cremer had attended the Human Rights Commission meeting on Monday. They were going to interview candidates for the position of

Human Rights and Disabilities Director (part time). Mr. Cremer asked if the Chairperson of the Commission on Disabilities is interviewing the candidates. Ms. Brown said she had not been contacted as of the meeting.

Election of Commission Officers:

Commission officers to be elected: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary. Mr. Cremer suggested a Treasurer be elected. He stated that other Commissions he has been involved with around Massachusetts have had treasurers. Ms. Clark explained that the City Ordinance establishing the Commission on Disabilities did not call for a Treasurer. The Commission does not have control over any funds. The members might want to consider establishing a Friends group which would be separate from the Commission. Mr. Brindisi suggested the reason why a Treasurer is not required is may be Worcester's Plan E form of government. If the Commission wanted to pursue the request for a treasurer office further research could be done.

Motion made: The following slate of officers was put in nomination:

Rachel Shannon Brown – Chairperson

David Perry- Vice-Chairperson

Debbie Malone – Secretary

Motion – approved, four in favor with Mr. Cremer refusing to vote.

Mr. Cremer questioned the sensitivity of the officers to the needs of the city's disabled, but was concerned that the mission statement was not being completely followed. Chairperson Brown reminded Mr. Cremer of the many accomplishments achieved including: the progress on the updating of the Transition Plan, the work with the Elections Commission, the review of plans and projects to assure accessibility. She agreed that the transition plan hearings were a disappointment and suggested the Commission members spread the word about our mission.

Mr. Cremer was concerned that elders and people with disabilities were not aware who to contact when the heat hit in late May. He thought that CNAs and PCAs should be reminded of their mandatory reporting obligations. Mr. Brindisi assured the Commission members that the Worcester Health Dept. has reminded the property owners of multi-unit housing of their obligations.

Mr. Cremer asked if we should meet later to accommodate those members who have difficulty making the 4:00PM scheduled time. Chairperson Brown asked Ms. Clark to poll the Commission for their time preference. Also based on previous discussion, places where the Commission would like to meet so that we can better engage the public.

Communications and Reports:

a. Intake Update:

The Commission received the 4/14/11 to 6/30/11 cases. Mr. Cremer was concerned about a police matter reported. The Commission was reminded of the need to keep the confidentiality of individual cases.

b. Construction Project Wish List:

Ms. Clark was asked to follow up on this.

c. Bullying Project:

Herbert Cremer, liaison to the Human Rights Commission, reported that he attended a Conference on Elder Abuse at Holy Cross. Ms. Brown thanked him for his report and encouraged to keep the Commission informed for actions needed by the Commission on Disabilities.

Ms. Brown informed the members that the closing hour of 6:00PM was near and asked if the Commission wanted to end or continue. We agreed to continue.

Recommended Lynn Towler to the City Manager for appointment to the Commission on Disabilities as a full member

Ms. Malone made the motion and David Perry seconded. Motion carried.

ADA Work Group

Chairperson Brown explained that Dawn Clark had resigned her position as chairperson of the ADA Work Group. To be chair of a Commission on Disabilities sub-committee would be a conflict of interest now that she was the paid Disabilities Intake Coordinator. Ms. Brown asked if anyone was interested in being chair. David Perry had expressed interest at the last meeting and was willing to co-chair the ADA Work Group. There being no other volunteers. Ms. Brown appointed David Perry and agreed to co-chair with him

Out going Commission Member Recognition:

Ms. Brown noted that this was Commissioner Grace Clark's meeting and we wanted to thank her for her service to the disability community as a Commissioner. Ms. Brown also recognized Jackie Norton for her long time service as a Commissioner and reminder her that in a few months she would be eligible to apply for another term.

Mr. Cremer suggested an individual who might be willing to serve on the Commission and recommended we outreach to this person.

The hour being late the chair recommended tabling the following items until the august meeting:

- a. Emergency Preparedness Task Force for Elders and People with Disabilities
- b. ADA Transition Plan Work Group
- c. AAB Update

d. Transportation and TPAG (Transportation Planning Advisory Group)

Follow-up to Community Access Training (CAM) Program

Ms. Malone mentioned that she ran into Jeff Dougan at the CAM training. Mr. Dougan had sample guidelines for pedestrian rights of way, which Ms. Malone has obtained. Ms. Malone proposed that a subcommittee should form to review the guidelines in order to decide whether the Commission wants to recommend that the City adopt the proposed guidelines. Ms. Malone will chair the subcommittee and Rachel Brown will participate. Other members are welcome and invited to join this subcommittee.

Announcements:

Jackie Norton informed the Commission that there was a public hearing on July 20 at the main public library about the use of shock treatment.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn E. Clark
Secretary Pro-Tem

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

Wednesday, July 13th 2011

4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Levi Lincoln Room, City Hall

MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions
2. Acceptance of June Minutes
3. Nominations and Elections of Officers
4. Guest Presentation – Joseph Borbone, Director of Traffic Engineering
 - a. McKeon Road Improvements
 - b. Winthrop Street Improvements
5. Communications and Reports: Chairperson and Director
 - a. Intake Update
 - b. Old Business and Updates
 - c. Elections Commission/Anna Maria College Polling Location
 - d. Snow Removal and Moratorium
 - e. Construction Project Wish List
 - f. Bullying Project Update
 - g. Emergency Management Taskforce Update
6. Transition Plan, Accessibility, and Access Board Issues
 - a. ADA Transition Plan Work Group
 - b. AAB Updates
 - c. Transportation and TPAG
 - i. Functional Needs Assessment Letter
7. New Business
 - a. Members' Report
 - b. Announcements and Adjournment

