

Commission on Disability Meeting
Minutes for September 20th, 2016, 4:30PM
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber, Room 309, 3rd Flr.

Attendance:

Members Present: Robert Bilotta, Robert Bureau, Herbert Cremer, Nancy Garr-Colzie, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo, Douglas Russell, Jr., Lindsey Silva

Members Absent: Francesca Abbey, Paul Keister

Staff: Jayna Turчек, Dawn E. Clark

Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions

Chairperson Commission Garr-Colzie called meeting to order and Commissioners introduced themselves.

Approval of July 19th and August 16th, 2016 Minutes

Commissioner Robert Bilotta moved to approve both the July 19th and August 16th, 2016 minutes. Commissioner Joseph Prochilo seconded the motion. The Commission approved by consensus.

Informational Communication related to crosswalk paintings

Over the course of the past 26 days the Department of Public Works has repainted:

- 652 Crosswalks
- 18 miles of White Skip Lines, Lane Lines and Edge Lines
- 53 Miles of double Yellow Center and Edge Lines
- 451 Stop Bars
- 236 Legends and Symbols

The work will continue through the fall. The city will spend \$360,000 repainting streets this year; ensuring roadways are clearly marked for drivers and pedestrians.

There was a discussion about whether crosswalk paintings met all the curb cuts as well as concerns that potholes need to be filled in.

If there is sidewalk that the public feels needs repainting the request should go through the Customer Service number 508-929-1300.

Discussion on drafting sidewalk improvement recommendations

The Commission has an opportunity to suggest sidewalk improvements to city council. There are two ways sidewalks get repaired:

1. Every time a street is resurfaced the sidewalks are also redone
2. Resident petition to City Council

The Commission is discussing how to provide feedback to the City Council regarding the resident petitions. The five district city councilors are given a list of the street in the respective district and an estimate of available dollars. From the list a councilor will make their recommendation for sidewalk repair. The Council will then vote on a city wide recommendation.

The Chairperson encouraged Commissioners to review the list and identify the need for specific repair that are either on the list that has been provided to the Commission or areas that a Commissioner may be aware of that is not on the list. The list is dated June 20, 2016 so streets on the list may have been repaved.

A member of the public noted that the north side Cedar Street sidewalk was in need of repair. This was rated 4. The request was made to have this sidewalk be moved up in terms of category of need.

Director Ms. Turchek clarified for the Commission that the rating system is based on the information provided by the resident and is not a priority rating.

Commissioner Bilotta noted the grade needs fixing at the corner of Harvard and Main Streets.

Please provide Office staff additional requests for street/sidewalk improvement that are not already listed by October 5th.

Announcement of future compilation of COD 2016 Emergency Preparedness Priorities

September is Emergency Preparedness month. Next month the Commission will discuss the top five emergency preparedness priorities to be submitted to Emergency Management Director Richard Fiske.

Report back on Transportation Assistance Event

On August 24th the Commission on Disability along with the Office on Disabilities and the Senior Center hosted a WRTA reduced bus pass and MBTA Blind/Senior Charlie Card Assistance Event from 9AM to Noon. This was a result of the concern raised by Commissioner Myska that visually impaired people were required to go to Boston to apply for a blind Charlie card.

Applications were taken as follows: 65 Senior MBTA Charlie Card, 9 Blind MBTA Charlie Card and 21 WTRA Reduced Buss Fare Passes.

We had expected about thirty-five people (35) and over 10 people were on the doorstep before 9:00AM. This got to be a little overwhelming for all. A separate room was then provided for those with visually impairments. Interpreters for Vietnamese and Iraqi arrived late and assisted individuals. By the large response, it is clear that this event was much needed. One of the take a ways is to provide disability etiquette training for those that use the Senior Center.

Update on work of Uber Boston Disability Coalition (Liz Myska)

The goal is to have more accessible transportation for people with disabilities.

See news story:

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2016/08/11/under-new-law-uber-and-lyft-must-accessible-all/gJ5E4Xvpf60A5la8Ad95HL/story.html>

Informational: One Touch Self-Defense Course

See: <http://www.1touchproject.com/index.html>

One Commissioner indicated safety concern for people with disabilities and offered One Touch-Defense as an example of training on how to protect oneself. There was an expressed words caution in choosing such a program to match one's personal needs with the program's offering.

In October the REDD group is sponsoring a series of Tia Chi sessions. Commission Myska has other options if anyone is interested.

The idea of using chemical spray was discussed.

Informational Communication: Early Voting

For the first time Massachusetts Election Law will allow voters to cast their ballots early from October 24, 2016 through November 4, 2016. Unlike Absentee Voting, an excuse or reason is no longer needed to vote early. If you are registered to vote in the City of Worcester please take advantage of Early voting at any of the 12 Early Voting locations. All early voting sites will be equipped with electronic poll books for voter check-in; so voters are able to visit any site that they find to be convenient.

More info: <http://www.worcesterma.gov/city-clerk/elections>

Update on communication to the Elections Commission regarding accessibility recommendations

There will be a meeting on Thursday, September 22nd at 6:30 in Room 401 (City Hall) to discuss the polling places that the Commission identified as not being accessible. Quinsigamond Community Center, Main South CDC and South Worcester Neighborhood Center

Review of AAB notices and applications: No City properties

First Notice

- 119 Belmont Street, Docket # C16 057

Stipulated Order

- 222 Harrington Way, Docket # C14 131
- 119 Belmont St, Docket #C16 O57

Decision of the Board

- 55 Lake Avenue North, Docket V14 – 353 and C 15 – 089

Suggestions for upcoming agenda items

- Chemical spray information/presenter
- Affirmative outreach about snow removal

Announcements

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**
Wednesday September 21st, 2016, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 50 Foster Street
- **8th Annual Worcester Care About Recovery:** Sunday September 25, 2016, 11 AM, City Hall Common
- **Coalition Against Bias and Hate Community Film Screening and Discussion:** Monday September 26th, 2016, 6-8pm, Holy Cross Hogan Center
- **City Opportunity Fair:** Wednesday September 28th, 2016, 5:30-7pm, Worcester Senior Center
- **DPW Opportunity Fair:** Saturday October 1st, 2016, 10-11:30am, Worcester Senior Center
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)**
October 4th, 2016, 4:00 – 5:30PM, YWCA, Members Lounge
- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** October 11th, 2016, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** October 18th, 2016 4:30pm.
- **White Cane Day:** October 19th, 2016
- **Disability Employment Awareness Training:** October 2016 (Date TBD)

- **Emergency Preparedness Training with Massachusetts Office on Disability:** Wednesday, November 9th, 2016 – Levi Lincoln Chamber, 2:30-4:30pm (RSVP by October 31st, 2016 at 508-799-8486 in order to get a free emergency “Go bag”.)
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting:** November TBD 2016 at 8:30 am, Parks Department, 50 Skyline Drive or if Department has moved meeting will be at 2 Coppage Drive.

Emergency Preparedness Tip: People with disabilities may want to consider having several gallon containers of water per person at home for emergencies.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned.