

**Commission on Disability  
Tuesday July 21, 2020, 4:30 PM Minutes**

**Virtual meeting with WebEx platform**

**Live streaming on City's website:**

**<http://www.worcesterma.gov/video-on-demand>**

**Call-in conference line and ASL interpreters provided**

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:** Robert Bilotta, Robert Bureau, John Finn, Nancy Garr-Colzie, Fitzroy Hall, Dee Karuna, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo, Stephen Stolberg

**Member Absent:** Paul Keister

**Staff:** Jayna Turчек, Miriam Nyante, Dawn E. Clark

**Guests:** from Lamoureux Pagano Associates - Eugene Caruso, Rob Para Jr. Chris Lee, Christina Bazelmans

**Call to order, instructions for virtual meeting, introductions**

Chairperson Bureau called the meeting to order and requested Director Turчек to provide the technology instructions for access to the meeting. Commissioners then introduced themselves.

**Support of solidarity with Black people and all those living through this pandemic and time of uncertainty**

Commission members expressed solidarity with Black and all people of color living through this pandemic and time of uncertainty with a commitment of making an effort to inform groups and agencies about the Commission's work bringing them together with the opportunities and services the City provides, advocating for ways to include and support all people with disabilities.

### **Approval of January 21, 2020 minutes**

The Chairperson recognized this meeting was six months ago and this is the first meeting the Commission has had since January. Commissioner Prochilo moved to approve the January 21, 2020 minutes. Commissioner Garr-Colzie seconded the motion. All approved.

### **Review of Doherty High School plans (Lamoureux, Pagano Associates)\***

The following project overview was presented.

- New 420,000 GSF High School for 1670 Students, located adjacent to existing Doherty Memorial High School building. The existing facility will be occupied until the Fall 2024 occupancy of the new building. Demolition of the existing building and the remaining site work are planned to continue into spring 2025. The project is currently at the Design Development Stage.
- Process to date: Massachusetts School Building Program (MSBA) funding and process.
- Feasibility Study: Reviewed and ranked all district sites available, and limited alternate sites.
- School Building Committee selected New Construction on the existing Doherty Site as the preferred option.
- Required building area is based on detailed programming, MSBA guidelines, added Career/Vocational Technical programs and state Special Education requirements.
- Sustainable goals: LEED Certified or Silver
- Schedule and Phasing
  - Design /documents to Jan 2022
  - Construction /occupancy June 2025
  - Fields & site completion May 2025

Concerns from the Commission:

- There are two elevators central to the learning pods. Commission member noted these may not be enough especially if one is not working.
- How is hazardous waste and dust contained during demolition? There are regulations for this. Also this would be done during the summer and there will be a person responsible on site.
- Special education is on all floors (light blue color on drawings)
- Given the current situation about in person learning in school, what is the classroom capacity for students? There is more room than in the past and there are interactive white boards.

The chairperson thanked the presenters for their presentation.

**Discussion: Impact the Covid-19 pandemic, violent acts against black people in our country, and local and national protests over the last five months have had on residents and our community and suggestions for items to be added to FY21 Commission workplan to better understand and advise the City in these regards**

Commission members offered the following activates to be included in the FY'20 & FY'21 Work Plans.

- Reach out to minority groups in the community to introduce the Commission and municipal services
- Acknowledge and recognize people of color with disabilities experience higher levels of health disparities than general population as well as disability population as a segment of the population.
- What counseling is available to people that help people get through times like these. Could City sponsor counseling in schools? Are there group counseling possibilities? There are many ways to overcome trauma. Talk to other groups they may offer their services.

- City has the Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health: The Commission may want to have a seat at this table.
- Important to have people with disabilities voice heard during this time. Need support from physicians, learn resources available etc.
- City and UMass. have a memorandum of understanding to learn how Covid-19 is affecting Black and Latino residents. Suggest Commissioner Mattie Castiel come before the Commission to report on information gathered. Also the Task Force is presenting to the Human Rights Commission when this happens the Commission would be notified.
- Provide community resources to people with disabilities.
- Recognize the collective trauma and not to forget the essentials such as social and basic challenges.
- We need to be at the table to voice needs for others as well as ourselves.
- Advocate for special education students. On-line learning, IEP updates.
- There are school reopening concerns. Director Turchek will follow up on these issues with the School Department. A second Zoom meeting will be held tomorrow night with the School Department.

Director Turchek noted that this pandemic has propelled the municipality into obtaining and using technology and online forums faster than would have happened under ordinary conditions. If members of Commission need assistance or have ideas for increasing accessibility through these technology platforms please let the office know.

**Review of AAB notices and applications: City properties in bold\***  
Variance Application

- 670 West Boylston Street, Docket # V19 170
- One Salem Square, Docket # V19 320
- 275 Pleasant Street, Docket # V20 105

- 559 Plantation Street, Docket # V20 063
- **DOT Worcester Sts-Rt. 290, Docket # V19 341** (no action taken)

Hearing Notice

- 559 Plantation Street, Docket #V20 063

Notice of Action

- 275 Pleasant Street, Docket # V20 105

Decision of the Board

- One Salem Square, Docket # V19 320 (2)
- 2 Main Street, Docket # V19 390
- 100 Institute Road, Docket # V19-223
- 670 West Boylston Street, Docket # V19 170
- 218 Shrewsbury Street, Docket # 307

**Notice of request for Commission on Disability name change to Accessibility Advisory Commission**

This item is scheduled to appear on city council agenda July 21, 2020. By September we could anticipate the Commission has a new name. The name of the office would also change.

**Saturday, July 26, 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup> Americans with Disabilities Act Anniversary**

There are various celebrations around the country this week including a virtual one in Boston. Worcester’s was cancelled due to the pandemic. The Mayor will be promulgating a proclamation announcing Sunday is ADA day in the city.

**Suggestions for upcoming agenda items**

Update Polar Park conversation about accessibility – Director Turcek will follow up on Commissioner’s Prochilo original review and email on distribution of seating. We have not received detailed reply. Chairperson asked that the email get resent and follow up with phone call.

## Announcements

- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled) August 4, 2020, 4:00 – 5:30pm, For questions email: jbellil@yahoo.com**
- **Next Commission on Disability virtual meeting: August 18, 2020 4:30pm**
- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting: September 16, 2020, 1-2:30pm, Contact: CMellis@cmrpc.org**
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting: TBD**

Adjournment: 6:20pm

\*Material can be viewed at the Office of Human Rights & Disabilities during normal business hours.