

Commission on Disability Meeting  
Minutes from Wednesday, July 11, 2012  
Worcester Public Library – Green Room  
4:30PM

**Attendance:**

**Members:** Rachel Shannon Brown, Herbert Cremer, Charles Hiamah, Deborah Malone, Steve Stolberg, Lynne Towler

**Associate Members:** Javier Pena, Pauline Piso

**Members of the Public:** Jackie Norton, Mike Kennedy

**Staff:** Pamela Callahan, Dawn E. Clark, Jayna Turcek

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting began with a call to order and welcome from the chairperson, then around the room introductions.

2. **Minutes:** After input for changes to the May minutes, a motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as amended. Motion carried to accept the May minutes as amended. (5 yes, 1 no, 0 abstained)

After input for changes to the June minutes, a motion was made, seconded to accept the minutes as amended. Motion carried to accept the June minutes as amended. (5:1:0)

3. **Office Nominations and Elections:**

a. Nominations

- i. Chair: Rachel Brown and Charles Hiamah
- ii. Vice Chair: Deborah Malone
- iii. Secretary: Lynne Towler

All candidates accepted the nominations. There was a discussion about the nominees and their qualifications as officers.

Herb Cremer commented that Deborah Malone is the chairperson of REDD and that Rachel Brown is a member. Rachel Brown clarified that she is not a member of REDD, but a friend of the organization.

Clarification was made about voting, quorum, and raising associate members to full status for the purpose of voting. There was a reminder about the duties and responsibilities of Commission members and that the meeting was not the place for members to state personal opinions on the character of other members. There was clarification about the reasons for going into executive session. The Commission did not go into executive session.

After a comment period in which members expressed their supportive comments for nominees a motion was made and seconded to close the nomination and comments period and to move forward with the vote. The motion carried (6:0:0).

b. Voting commenced for each position

i. For Chair (Rachel Brown – 3, Charles Hiamah – 1, Charles Hiamah & Rachel Brown abstained)

ii. For Vice Chair (Deborah Malone – 4 yes, 1 no, Deborah Malone abstained)

iii. For Secretary (Lynne Towler – 6)

Charles Hiamah asked if he could change his vote because there needs to be 4 votes to carry. Motion called and carried to take a revote for Chair. (5:0:1)

On revote for Chair: (Rachel Brown- 4, Charles Hiamah-1, Rachel Brown abstained).

The new officers are: Rachel Brown (Chair), Deborah Malone (Vice Chair), and Lynne Towler (Secretary).

#### **4. Communications and Reports: Chairperson and Staff**

a. Chairperson

i. Future Meeting Space – next meeting will be at City Hall. Any problems or concerns regarding HP parking at City Hall garage, members should inform Jayna Turcek. Discussion about possible

- iv. change in day and time to aid in securing meeting space at City Hall in the future.
  - ii. John Street Church – Rachel Brown explained and showed pictures of the repaired sidewalk. Some discussion occurred about the entire length of John Street, which is inaccessible, but the problem in front of the church has been repaired. There was some discussion about the accessible entrance being open during service times for the church, but it was determined that it was beyond the scope of the commission’s work. If more issues are identified and brought before the commission, they will be discussed then.
  - iii. Commission Annual Report – Motion carried to adopt the report as written. (5:0:1).
- b. Director of Human Rights & Disabilities
- i. Service Animal/ Companion Animal Ordinance – Jayna Turchek gave an overview of survey of state ordinances.
  - ii. DCU Center – Jayna Turchek sent a recommendation to Commissioner Moylan to change one of the 15 minute parking spaces along the DCU side of Foster Street to a HP drop-off spot with a curb. Several members commented that this is an example of a project that went forward without input from the Commission on Disability, and might have been avoided. Also, a reminder was stated that if members hear about any pertinent meetings being held that they let Jayna Turchek know to request member participation.
  - iii. Customer Service – Jayna Turchek is working with DPW to identify when disability related concerns are brought to DPW’s Customer Service.

Disabilities Commission will reach out to see if we can assist in any way.

**6. Member Updates & New Business**

- a. ADA picnic sponsored by Statewide Independent Living Council, Independent Living Centers and others is on July 25, 2012 at Dunn Park in Gardner.
- b. REDD and Common Pathways will be presenting 2 Emergency Preparedness workshops; August 7 and 21 in the Saxe Room at the Worcester Public library.

**7. Adjournment**

- a. Next meeting date is August 15, 2012 at 4:30 pm in the Levi-Lincoln Room at City Hall.
- b. Meeting adjourned at 6:35pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Debbie Malone, Secretary

Remember the *Tornado*; 

*Hurricane Irene* or *the October 2011 Snow*



Were YOU in the **DARK** Without **WATER** or **HEAT** for Hours or Days?

If you're a **Person** with a **Disability**, or **Love** and **Care** for someone with  
a **Disability**, come to

***“Everything you need to know to Prepare for the Next  
Emergency, but were Afraid to Ask!!”***

When: **Aug. 7, 2012 5 PM to 6:30**

Where: **Worcester Public Library, Saxe Room**

Transportation Reimbursement Available (Bus pass or Paratransit tickets)

Refreshments



and Free Emergency Kits



Available

If you need a reasonable accommodation or a travel reimbursement please email Debbie at [deboon2002@yahoo.com](mailto:deboon2002@yahoo.com) by *July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012*.

Sponsored by REDD (Rights, Equality, and Dignity of the Disabled) and the Common Pathways Mini Grant program.





Golden Street  
Baptist Church  
July 22 - July 27  
8:30am - 9:00pm  
\$15.00 per child  
plus materials  
A VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE













**Chairperson**  
Rachel Shannon Brown

**Vice-Chair**  
David Perry

**Secretary**  
Deborah Malone



**City of Worcester  
Commission on Disability**

**Members:**  
Herbert Cremer  
Charles Hiamah  
Stephen Stolberg  
Lynne Towler

**Associate Members:**  
Javier Pena  
Pauline Piso

TO: Michael V. O'Brien, City Manager

FROM: Jayna Turcek, Director of Human Rights and Disabilities  
Staff Liaison, Commission on Disability

DATE: July 12, 2012

RE: 2011-2012 Annual Report of the Commission on Disability

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The Worcester Commission on Disability is pleased to submit this annual report to the City Manager to discuss our undertakings, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations over the past year. Despite this having been a year of transitions, especially with respect to staffing for the Commission and the Office on Disabilities, we are pleased to report the following:

As a continuation of our interest in accessible voting and our work with the office of the City Clerk, in August and September 2011 members of the Commission on Disability conducted training sessions to train election wardens and clerks on the Americans with Disabilities Act, "people first" language, accessible voting requirements, and best practices. The Commission also worked with the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board regarding our concerns for accessibility at the City's (now former) Anna Mara College polling location. We also wrote to local newspapers to share information about accessible voting, specifically highlighting the AutoMARK machines that are available at all Worcester polling locations. After elections, we provided feedback to the City Clerk regarding our first-hand observations as to the set-up of polling sites and the conduct of election workers.

One member of the Commission on Disability continued his three (3) years as liaison with the Human Rights Commission, sharing information with the two Commissions about bullying of the disabled and the fragile elderly, both in the City of Worcester and elsewhere.

Members of the Commission participated in the City's Emergency Preparedness Taskforce, which helped evaluate the accessibility of proposed Worcester sheltering locations. Participation in the taskforce meant numerous location visits for Taskforce, and Commission, members. Commission members remain concerned about transportation under the City's Emergency Preparedness plans.

The Commission also continued its work towards updating the City's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan. Self-assessments were distributed to various City departments in early 2011. One of the Commission's major goals in the next twelve (12) months is to reconvene its ADA Transition Plan Subcommittee, as staffing permits, to evaluate the completed self-assessments and to make recommendations as to how to fully update the City's plan.

As in years past, transportation is an ongoing theme for the Commission on Disability. Members regularly shared information about transportation concerns in Worcester. Members also attended, and then shared details of, the Transportation Planning Advisory Group that is hosted by the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA). We supported a local disability grass-roots group, REDD (Rights, Equality, and Dignity of the Disabled) in its efforts to reach the WRTA about its automated call-out system. We contacted the WRTA to express our support for functional needs assessments as part of the WRTA's paratransit application process. We also met with WRTA Administrator Stephen F. O'Neil regarding the WRTA's plans for a new transportation hub, and we provided feedback regarding visibility, accessibility, and restrooms, among other topics. Later, we were visited by Wendy Steinhilber and Jim Delage from PBSI (the WRTA's paratransit brokerage service), who shared information about paratransit and accessible services offered by the WRTA. They shared

information about local service, the application process, the service area and service limitations, and present/future projects for the WRTA. The Commission also reviewed usage of the City's accessible taxicabs.

The Commission continued to share feedback with City officials regarding construction projects in the City of Worcester. For example, at our July 2011 meeting, we met with Joseph Borbone, Director of Traffic Engineering, to review plans for, and suggest improvements to, McKeon Road and Winthrop Street. The Commission requests that City officials continue to seek comment from the Commission on Disability regarding proposed construction projects. The Commission further requests the support of the City Manager in requiring City officials to seek Commission comment on those projects.

We also hosted guest speakers who could encourage public awareness of disability issues. For example, in August 2011, we were visited by Dr. Dale Magee, then Commissioner of Public Health, who provided the Commission with a Power Point overview of the Health of Worcester 2011 report.

Staff of the Office on Disabilities has kept the Commission up-to-date on the types of complaints that citizens have regarding disability-related issues. In response to one such complaint, the Commission has proposed a change in the City's service animal ordinance; we look forward to working with the Law Department to finalize that ordinance and hope that the Department will consider extending free licenses to those who utilize companion animals for disability-based reasons. We have also continued to monitor the City's response to a complaint received about accessibility of sidewalks relating to a church located on John Street.

Snow removal continues to be of interest to the members of the Commission on Disability. We had previously encouraged the members of City Council to reconsider a moratorium that had been passed that failed to guarantee that all sidewalks in Worcester would be cleared following a snowfall. This year, the Commission continued to remind the public, both

at meetings and through a letter to local papers, about the importance of snow and ice removal and about what to do if a property owner has failed to fulfill snow and ice removal obligations.

The Commission has continued its discussions about accessible parking in Worcester, most notably focusing on handicap placard violations. The Commission contacted the Department of Public Works and Parks to encourage ticketing those who violation accessible parking laws, and provided follow-up information about areas where violations appear to be particularly high.

In response to public inquiry, the Commission reviewed a proposed policy that would address accessibility at temporary events in the City of Worcester. The proposal included suggestions, for example, about requiring events that use temporary bathrooms to also reserve accessible port-a-potties. The policy has been forwarded to the City Manager's office for consideration.

We were delighted to meet with Mayor Joseph M. Petty at our May 2012 meeting, at which we described some of our goals and shared concerns about accessibility and inclusion in the City of Worcester. We invite our City Councilors, and other members of City government, to attend our meetings.

The Commission was pleased to provide input as to the number of accessible parking spots that should be allotted within the newly-renovated City Hall garage. We thank the City for increasing the number of accessible spots.

Following the departure of Fran Manocchio from the Office of Human Rights and Disabilities in January 2011, the Commission's Chair (in conjunction with the Chairs of the Human Rights Commission and the Status on Women Advisory Committee) contacted both City Manager Michael V. O'Brien and then Mayor Joseph C. O'Brien to encourage the City to refill that position as swiftly as possible. After the decision was made to re-staff that position on a part-time basis, the Commission's Chair



participated in applicant interviews. The Commission is delighted to now be working with Jayna Turчек, Director, and commends Dawn Clark, Derek Brindisi, and Christina Andreoli for their hard work, willingness to provide support to the Commission, and dedication to disability and accessibility issues.

Although the Commission is pleased to be working with Ms. Clark and Ms. Turчек, the Commission notes that Office on Human Rights and Disabilities staffing is still less than what was available when these two offices were separately maintained. We encourage the City to continue increasing staffing so that these issues may be fully and holistically supported in Worcester. We also encourage the City to explore whether this Office could be supported by the use of volunteers or interns.

Finally, we request that the Office on Human Rights and Disabilities be moved, in its entirety, to City Hall. Not only is it disruptive to have Ms. Turчек and Ms. Clark in separate locations in the City, but also it is imperative that the services of this office be located at a central location that is easily accessible by public transportation.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Shannon Brown

Chair, Worcester Commission on Disability

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY  
Wednesday, July 11, 2012  
4:30 PM – 6:30 PM  
Worcester Public Library, Green Room

DRAFT MEETING AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions**
- 2. Acceptance of May and June Minutes**
- 3. Officer Nominations and Elections**
- 4. Communications and Reports: Chairperson and Staff**
  - a. Chairperson
    - i. Future Meeting Space
    - ii. John Street Church
    - iii. Commission Activity Report
  - b. Director of Human Rights and Disabilities
    - i. Service Animal/Companion Animal Ordinance
    - ii. DCU Center
    - iii. Temporary Event Accessibility Policy
- 5. Old Business and Updates**
  - a. Discussion: Advisory and Executive Commissions
  - b. AAB Updates
  - c. October “Bully” Event
- 6. Member Update and New Business**
- 7. Announcements and Adjournment**

**8. Items for Future Discussion:**

- a. Construction Project Wish List
- b. Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Management
- c. Library Accessibility
- d. Friends of the Commission
- e. Transportation and TPAG
- f. Transition Plan Update
- g. Bullying Project