

Commission on Disability Meeting  
Minutes for May 16<sup>th</sup> , 2017, 4:30PM  
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber,  
Room 309, 3<sup>rd</sup> Flr.

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:** Francesca Abbey, Robert Bureau, Herbert Cremer  
Nancy Garr-Colzie, Paul Keister, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph  
Prochilo, Douglas Russell, Jr., Lindsey Silva

**Members Absent:** Robert Bilotta

**Staff:** Jayna Turchek, Dawn E. Clark

**Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions**

Chairperson Garr-Colzie called meeting to order and Commissioners introduced themselves. Commissioner Herbert Cremer was recognized for his service and end of two terms on the Commission. He was presented with a framed picture of the Commission.

Mr. Cremer donated to the Worcester Public Library: The Disability Studies Reader edited by Lennard J. Davis in memory of Jaqueline Norton, former member of the Commission on Disability with the hope that people will learn about the different types of disabilities and act on this knowledge.

**Approval of April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Minutes**

The Commission unanimously approved the April 18<sup>th</sup> minutes as written.

**Presentation on AAB variance application for 2 Washington Square (Docket # C14 073) (Richard Trifero on behalf of Worcester**

## **Redevelopment Authority)**

Mr. Trifero spoke to the variance request made by the Worcester Redevelopment Authority for Luciano's Cotton Club at 2 Washington Square. Prior to his presenting the request on May 8<sup>th</sup> before the Access Architectural Board, he spoke with both Michael Kennedy, Access Coordinator at Center for Living & Working, Inc. and Jayna Turchek, City of Worcester ADA Coordinator. Both supported the variance request.

WRA will be able to comply with the height at the bar area by providing bar service at an accessible table(s) within the bar area. Additionally, the access to the Al Capone's Café will be in compliance at the start of the outdoor dining season. This will be accomplished through the business policy of directing all patrons to enter the patio through entrance located inside the main building. Appropriate signage and appropriate barrier installed.

WRA's variance request speaks to the limitation of the path of travel to the second level patio dining area. The WRA intends to construct a permanent ramp to provide an accessible route to the exterior dining area. It is anticipated the construction of the ramp will reduce the length of travel of the accessible path. This reduction in travel applies also to the restrooms. The ramp is expected to be completed within 90 days. The complainant stated his appreciation of the solution to the variance request.

## **Presentation on AAB variance application for Worcester Common Sidewalk (Docket # C16-332) (Robert Antonelli, Asst. Comm. Parks)**

On December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012 the Commission was presented with a proposal to redo the front plaza of City Hall. At the time there were various types of surfaces including asphalt, grass, large and small blocks.

The proposal presented at that time included: a new concrete walk surrounding the plaza on Front, Main and Franklin Streets and concrete pavers in the middle. The two sets of stairs would be removed to gain more accessibility. The problem and need for the variance is that the Front and Main Street corner of the plaza dips dramatically. That corner already had a high curb, so when the pavers were sloped to meet the corner, the slope was more than the 2% allowed by the building code. The same design was used as used in the Common at the back of City Hall.

The Parks Dept. recently met with Ms. Turchek, City's ADA Coordinator, for guidance for a solution. The proposed variance (yet to be filed) or suggested solution is to ask for a variance from the back of the concrete wall to the stairs and from the planter to the corner of Main and Front streets. The accessible route would continue to be the concrete band around the plaza and the side slopes on Front and Franklin Streets.

The Dept. is also proposing a launch guide program working with Peacock Communication, Inc. This would provide persons with disabilities the ability to orient themselves to get in and around city hall. They are proposing four locations in the back and eight locations in the front and sides where this guide would be located. Mr. Peacock then made the following presentation. An example of the launch guide was handed around to the members of the Commission. Mr. Peacock is in the business of providing people with blind, Deaf, and certain cognitive disabilities with communication access. The launch guide holds a smart phone that when positioned will direct the phone through a QR code to an identified website. When the website loads the phone will read the information in voice or text for the user. These launch guides, made of aluminum rather than wood, would be on a pole at each

crosswalk in front of city hall and at the back side would be mounted to the fence with instructions and which direction to go to. The content for the various City Hall location instructions can be changed by sending an email with the desired verbiage to Peacock Communications, Inc.

Mr. Antonilli provided an example of the “Launch Guide” Pilot Program Simple Language:

Navigating into City Hall:

From this location, you can/will find a handrail that begins here at the bottom of the incline. Walk up the incline, at the top of the incline, walk straight for another 20 feet. Turning to your 3 o’clock position (directly to your right), and walk 2e0 feet to the first of two sets of doors. Enter past the first door, proceed straight ahead for ten feet, and enter past the second door. You are now in City Hall on the first floor. To navigate inside City Hall, click here.

He explained that this variance is separate from the issues with the sidewalks in front and back of City Hall brought to the Commission at an earlier meeting. The City still hold the bond so the contractor is expected to comply with AAB decisions made related to this issue.

Mr. Antonelli sought the Commission’s support for this proposed variance. The Commission voted unanimously to support the proposed variance.

Mr. Antonelli then provided the Commission with Construction Improvement and Master Plan Updates as follows:

Michael Kennedy indicated his appreciation that Mr. Antonelli and his staff sought his guidance on this issue at well. He thanked the Commission for supporting the proposed variance.

**Upcoming Parks construction and Master Plan updates (Robert Antonelli, Asst. Comm. Parks)**

### Coes Knife Playground – Summer 2017:

This involves the walkway, parking lot and playground. At present does not include Stearns Tavern. This is the accessible/multi-generational park the Commission has been following for the last few years.

### Vernon Hill and Beaver Brook Dog Park – Summer 2017

These are the two off leash dog parks. Beaver Brook has gone out to bid and has been awarded. Work will begin soon. Vernon Hill will be going out to bid in the next few weeks. These will have a double gated area including a small area for leashing and unleashing and a larger designated area for the dogs to run free. There will be accessible walkways to this area.

### Vietnam Veterans Memorial – Summer 2017

This project was just about complete for Memorial Day with some minor work to be done. July 1<sup>st</sup> is target completion date. Work included new walkways, edging of and other repairs.

### Shore Park – Summer 2017

Building a walkway between the YMCA and the park as well as a new bathroom facility with accessible walkways.

### Holmes Field – Fall 2017

Getting ready for construction of playground, tennis court, and walkways

### Oread Castle – Fall – 2017

Work on this park is expected to be completed the summer sooner than the planned fall date. The City received a waiver for the two steep areas of the park. A parking area and accessible paths to all features available on the top of hill are being completed.

### Elm Park MHK Bridge Pathway Repairs – Fall 2017

There is a gap between bridge and walkway due the weight on the peat under the walkway. A solution has been designed and project is expected to be completed by fall. The AAB gave the City a time waiver which will be met.

### Playground safety Surfacing Improvements – Fall 2017

This project will be going out to bid soon for five playgrounds to have the current surfaces remove and replaced by poured in place surface making it safer and accessible for playground users.

### Grafton Support Building – Fall 2017

Building a shared use facility is being erected, one side for storage and the other side with restrooms. There will be single use rooms on the left.

### Mulcahy Field Building Rehab – Fall 2017

This building is being rehabbed to make it accessible, changing detail including making the doors wider. It will be going out to bid this summer

### Glodis Field – Spring 2018

This field is the first non-school with synthetic turf.

### Green Hill Golf Course Improvements – Summer 2018

Parks Dept. is doing some upgrades: building a new hole later this summer and a driving range next spring.

### Blackstone Gateway Park– Summer 2018

Art work, benches, and bridges over middle river to see wildlife.

## **Master Plan Updates**

### Rectangular Field Study – at City Council for Review

This plan was approved at the Youth Committee waiting for City Council decision.

### Dog Park Master Plan

At City Council for review waiting for City Council decision.

### Shale Street Playground - at City Council for Review

### Hadwen Park

A grant application has been submitted for a new basketball court and playground. A future master plan is expected to be developed.

### **Review of Nu Checker, Inc. (Red Cab) Accessible Taxi Ride Report 2015 and 2016 (Toni Donovan)**

Ms. Toni Donovan, owner of New Checker Taxi, Inc. (known as Red Cab) gave her annual accessible cab report. She has two accessible cabs in her fleet, #109 & #110. In November 2016 cab #109 was totaled in a non-passenger accident. The replacement vehicle is a 2011 dodge caravan back loading vehicle that is higher and wider and able to take larger size chair than the one that was replaced.

She has started a list of which cab a rider with a particular size wheelchair can fit into which cab making it more efficient to serve the rider. Her staff placed to transportation flyer prepared by the office on the Red Cab website, hoping to serve more people using mobility devices. She said about 14,000 rides have been given since the beginning of the program in 2005. These are mainly related to social service accounts with some cash riders. The cabs cannot take riders in transport chairs because they are not strong enough to be tied down.

Ms. Donovan and manager have attended a safety training class to learn how to assist people in and out of a cab without the passenger getting hurt. Collecting data is not always easy, the suggestion to consider a program to assist this process may help the drivers. The Commission may consider the possibility of collecting injury data. The process for Red Cab to call dispatch and police are notified in the event of an emergency. Cabs are available 24 hours, seven days a week.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Donovan.

### **MOD Municipal Accessibility Grant FY17 and FY18**

A few months ago the Commission was informed that there would be FY 17 & 18 grant monies available for accessibility related activities. Director Turcek announced that the office will be applying for the FY 17 funds and also for the FY18 funds to address the access needs in the city's facilities as prioritized by the Commission. She invited the Commission members to offer additional suggestions that might be included in these proposals.

### **Review of AAB notices and applications:**

#### Variance

52 High Street, Docket # TBD

### **Suggestions for upcoming agenda items**

Road closure on North Lake Avenue

### **Announcements:**

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**  
May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster Street
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)**  
June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 4:00 – 5:30PM, YWCA, Members Lounge



- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 4:30pm.
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting:** November 2017, 8:30 am, Parks Department, 2 Coppage Drive.

**Emergency Preparedness Tip:**

Pack an emergency “Go Pack” with essential life-saving items and store several gallons of water/person at home. Click here for a list of items and other helpful tips: <https://www.ready.gov/>

**Adjourned**