

Commission on Disability Meeting
Minutes for December 19th, 2017, 4:30PM
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber,
Room 309, 3rd Flr.

Attendance:

Members Present: Robert Bureau, Robert Bilotta, Nancy Garr-Colzie, John Gleason, D. Karuna, Paul Keister, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo, Lindsey Silva, Stephen Stolberg

Members Absent: Douglas Russell, Jr., Fitzroy Hall

Staff: Jayna Turcek, Dawn E. Clark

Guests: Tina Grotowski, Project Coordinator, Central MA Tobacco Free Community Partnership and Chris Banthin, Public Health Advocacy Institute

Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions

Chairperson Prochilo called the meeting to order. Commissioners introduced themselves.

Approval of December 19th, 2017 Minutes

Commissioner Garr-Colzie moved approval and Commissioner Myska seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously approved the November 21st, 2017 minutes as written.

Presentation on tobacco and secondhand smoke exposure with focus in multi-unit dwelling

Tina Grosowsky, Project Coordinator, Central MA Tobacco Free Community Partnership and Chris Banthin, Public Health Advocacy Institute were introduced. Mr. Banthin began with background information on tobacco control. Massachusetts has been an international leader on this subject. Half a million Americans die each year from tobacco related causes. This is more than murders, suicides, drug deaths combined. It was a public health epidemic and remains a public health problem. One example of Massachusetts leadership was a smoke free workplace. In the 1990's many municipalities prohibited smoking in the workplace particularly important for people who worked in bars and restaurants and others who worked in

a smoke environment all day. In 2004 the state went smoke free in the workplace and by 2005 smoking in the workplace was essentially eliminated statewide saving thousands of lives and reducing smoke related illnesses.

The problem of smoke exposure in the home still remains. In 2006 the Surgeon General recognized the seriousness of second-hand smoke in the home particularly on the health of children. Any level of second-hand smoke is dangerous. According to the Environmental Protection Agency second-hand smoke is classified as a Class A carcinogen which means there is no safe level of exposure. Asbestos is another Class A carcinogen which nobody wants in the home.

There have been many studies about smoke exposure in multi-unit buildings. The research shows if a family in one unit decides to be smoke free the smoke from a neighbor who smokes can come into the smoke-free family's unit exposing them to this dangerous carcinogen. Studies say that this second-hand smoke can be as much as $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cigarette a day. Imagine a new born baby smoking $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cigarette a day!

This is a significant concern. In Massachusetts 1 out of 6 is exposed to smoke in the home, A person living in a multi-unit dwelling have a higher rate of exposure than one living in a single family home. People with disability have a particularly high rate of second-hand smoke exposure. 25% of people on Medicare are exposed. 17% of people in a behavioral health facility were exposed. Rates of exposure are concentrated in certain socio-economic categories

Tina Grotowski spoke about what the Central MA Tobacco Free Community Partnership is doing. She explained that the Partnership works in three areas: 1. Policy, examples: Keep tobacco products out of the hands of children, in the city no tobacco products sold to people under 21 years 2. Provide cessation material, 3. Smoke free housing.

She addressed area 3. The smoke free housing area – Every city or town has public and/or low-income housing, the partnership works with these entities. For example here in Worcester she is working with the residents of Plumley Village to stop smoking. Plumley Village is planning to go smoke free in June. Sometimes going smoke free is an impetus for people to stop smoking because they don't want to move out of their apartment.

As for enforcement of this new policy, they worked with Plumley's administrators to establish a process the involved the residents remembering this is a significant change for those that smoke. Meeting with residents there was education about why the complex was going smoke free, offering resources and other support where possible. A phase in to the policy may be helpful giving warnings before having to move. Resident participation in the process helps with compliance once the policy goes into effect.

There is third hand smoke. This is the toxin that lingers and resides in hair, clothes, furniture, carpet etc. An example a parent goes out to smoke and comes in and picks up a baby, the toxin on the parents clothing from smoking can be transferred to the baby just by being on the parent's shoulder.

In the non-smoker exposer to smoke increases the risk of heart disease by 20 to 30 %. It increases lung disease, asthma and other respiratory conditions. There is an increased risk of stroke. Second hand smoke is linked to SIDS, low birth weight.

Worcester Housing Authority went smoke free in 2016.

COD 40th Celebration Discussion

Commission members completed a survey to identify key elements related to a COD 40th Celebration. Staff will tally for further discussion at the January meeting.

Review of AAB notices and applications: City properties in bold

Notice of Hearings

- 486 Chandler Street, Docket # V17 302

Decision of the Board

- **140 Mill Street (72 Coes St.), Docket # V17 272**
- 15 Hamilton Street, Docket # V17 294
- 90 Commercial Street, Docket # V17 301

Suggestions for upcoming agenda items

Confirm 2018 Commission dates:

January 16th, February 20th, March 20th, April 17th, May 15Pth, June 19th, July 17th, August 21st, September 18th, October 16th, November 20th and December 18th

Announcements:

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**
Jan. 17, 2018, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster Street
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)**
Jan. 2nd, 2018, 4:00 – 5:30PM, YWCA, Members Lounge
- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** Jan. 11th, 2018, 5-6pm,
22TU <http://www.audiojournal.net/U22T>
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting:** Feb. TBD, 2018 and May 8th, 2018 at
9:00am at 2 Coppage Drive.
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** January 16th, 2018 4:30pm.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.