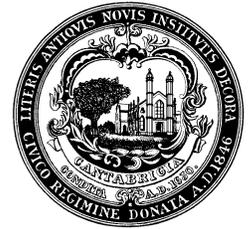


City of Cambridge

Commission for Persons with Disabilities

51 Inman Street · Cambridge, MA · 02139-1732

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Miriam Cooper
Chair

Holly Aldrich
Elizabeth Dean-Clower
Sandy Durmaskin
Kara Falise
Avner Fink
JoAnn Haas
Nicole Horton-Stimpson
Alissa Land
Bet MacArthur
Naomi Pinson

Michael Muehe
*Executive Director/
ADA Coordinator*

Kate Thurman
Project Coordinator

Joanna Berton Martinez
Katie Ashwill
Oscar Anderson
Pro Bono Associates

The next meeting of the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities will be held in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at 51 Inman Street on Thursday, March 13, 2014 at 5:30 p.m.

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ARRIVE BY 5:30 PM

AGENDA

Please turn OFF your cell phones before the meeting begins. Thank you.

NOTE: CCPD meetings are audio recorded for the purpose of taking minutes.

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|---|---------|---|
| 1. Introductions | 2 min. | |
| 2. Approval of Minutes for January 9 and February 20 | 2 min. | |
| 3. Announcements | 2 min. | CCPD staff / board |
| 4. Chair's Report | 5 min. | Miriam Cooper |
| 5. Dialogue with City Manager and Deputy City Manager | 25 min. | Richard Rossi and Lisa Peterson |
| 6. Disability Reframed Film Series | 5 min. | Bet MacArthur |
| 7. DHSP Inclusion Update | 5 min. | Nicole Horton-Stimpson, Manager of Inclusion Services |
| 8. Police Community Liaison Update | 5 min. | Jack Albert |
| 9. Public Works Update | 5 min. | Kara Falise |
| 10. Update on Sidewalk Obstruction Issues | 5 min. | JoAnn Haas |
| 11. Executive Director's Report | 5 min. | Michael Muehe |
| 12. Public Input | 2 min. | general public |
| 13. Old Business | 1 min. | |
| 14. New Business | 1 min. | |

This is a scent-free meeting. In consideration of individuals with environmental illness and/or multiple chemical sensitivity, please refrain from wearing perfume, after-shave or any other scented products to our meetings. Thank you for your consideration.

The City of Cambridge, Commission for Persons with Disabilities, does not discriminate on the basis of disability. The Commission for Persons with Disabilities will provide auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities upon request.



MINUTES – 3/13/2014

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, March 13, 2014

51 Inman Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Cambridge, MA 02130

Meeting was called to order at 5:45 PM

Present

Members: Miriam Cooper, Elizabeth Dean-Clower, Sandy Durmaskin, Avner Fink, JoAnn Haas, Nicole Horton-Stimpson, Bet MacArthur, Naomi Pinson, Debbie Cheng (DPW sub for Kara)

Staff: Michael Muehe

Absent: Holly Aldrich, Kara Falise, Alissa Land, Kate Thurman

Guests: Richard C. Rossi, Cambridge City Manager; Lisa Peterson, Deputy City Manager; Kathy Watkins, DPW; and Northeastern University Journalism Majors – Lamaan Gallecu, Simone Weismen, Olivia Paulin, Rosie Kay, Alyssa Montgana

Documents/Materials Used:

- Minutes from January 9, 2014
- Minutes from February 20, 2014
- Boston Center for Independent Living, Inc. (BCIL) The Alternative Housing Voucher Program FAQ and Draft Letter
- DPW Two Year and Five Year planned construction
- Storefronts-For-All Cambridge Improve Accessibility Card

Minutes: The Minutes for January 9 were unanimously approved. The Minutes for February 20 were unanimously approved with the following amendments:

In the Chair's Report 4th line, items to discuss with the City Manager and Deputy City Manager at the March meeting: change "Bet's" to "Disability Reframed" Film Series. ADD: Closed captioning of City Council meetings.

Announcements: Elizabeth Dean-Clower stated that the Marie Feltin Award event will be held on Friday March 21 at the Fairmont Copley Hotel in Boston. Sponsored by the Boston Center for Independent Living, Inc. (BCIL); Joe Bellil is one of three awardees. It is a fundraiser, so there is a fee to attend.

Chair's Report: Michael Muehe and Miriam Cooper had a meeting with Police Community Liaison Jack Albert (sends regrets that he is unable to attend tonight's CCPD meeting). The City has three LED road signs available. LED's were used last year for bicycle enforcement. Safety messages or general messages regarding people with disabilities could be broadcast in strategic locations around the City (particularly during warmer weather). Some examples of messages to consider: 1) White Cane safety law is a State Law: drivers are *required* to yield to pedestrians using a guide dog and/or white cane in both signalized and unsignalized intersections; white cane day is in October; 2) Disability parking reminders; 3) "Don't Block the Box" (intersections). These are informative messages and need to be specific, pithy, and brief. Perhaps place this on the Agenda for next CCPD meeting when Jack is here for us to discuss it with him.

Allegra Stout alerted us to advocacy that the Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) is doing regarding the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP). FAQ and draft letter distributed. BCIL is reaching out to local Disability Commissions hoping they will sign on to this letter. Program established in 1995 intended to provide Chapter 667 subsidized housing for elderly and disabled persons. This particular program is for persons with disabilities that are not elderly. The need outpaced funding and has been underfunded. Funding cuts, rise in housing costs, and inflation resulted in half the number of persons served as in 1995 (800 down to 400). Advocates are seeing a \$1.55M funding increase which would be enough to fund ~150 more people the opportunity to live independently. CCPD is always concerned with available housing for folks with disabilities so able to live in community instead of homeless or in institutions due lack of available housing.

Michael Muehe explained that the Cambridge Housing Authority has 75 AHVP vouchers. Once an individual/household has a low income housing voucher, find housing in market (not limited to Cambridge) within the ceiling rents of the program and then would pay not more than 30% of income. Program started because HUD (Federal Office of Housing and Urban Development) had established a rule in the 1990's that limited the number of non-elderly disabled people that can live in senior housing developments. Prior to this rule, there was no limit to number of people with disabilities that could live in senior housing. HUD then established 13.5% cap per senior housing development. This led to such long waiting lists that people with disabilities were told they would *never* get into senior housing until age 60 because the housing was already over the 13.5% cap. State of MA established this voucher program in part to ameliorate the shortage created by the 13.5% rule, which is still in effect and limits availability of housing to people with disabilities. [Ed Note: For more info on AHVP, visit www.mass.gov/hed/housing/rental-assistance/ahvp.html.]

The following motion was passed unanimously: "Because of the importance of housing to persons with disabilities that want to live independently, the CCPD signs on in agreement to the letter (attached) being sent to State legislators to request additional funding for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program".

Naomi Pinson: Dental benefits for people on MassHealth are at risk of being cut. Call/or e-mail your State Senator. Legal service agencies working on CORI (Criminal Offender Record

Information) project so that some persons can attempt to seal records or appeal when apply for jobs, housing.

Miriam Cooper: Welcome and thank our guests City Manager Richard C. Rossi and Deputy City Manager Lisa C. Peterson for attending. My understanding we have never had City Manager attend a CCPD monthly meeting before today.

Richard C. Rossi: Thank you for inviting us. We are a stronger team when we understand the work and the goals of the Commission, making sure we are supporting that from City Manager's Office and from all the other City departments. It is our job to back you up and ensure that your work is getting the respect it needs. For example, on affordable housing, City's legislative delegation effectively champions this cause. Marjorie Decker will embrace issue in strong way, encourage you to set up a meeting and City Manager's Office can help facilitate that. Encourage CCPD to describe the issue and how we need her support.

Over 43 years in Cambridge City government, have watched the work of Commission for Persons with Disabilities grow and get more respect and paid attention to. Matters that were once struggles are now routine, part of the regular work of the City, such as how City projects are viewed. Costs are built in to provide access; examples include: Inspectional Services Department (ISD) City Project review, DPW complete, livable streets, better accessibility of curb cuts, sidewalks, and bus stops. It's brilliant having a member of DPW on the Commission. Discussion topics:

- Moving forward, try to have an annual visit from the City Manager at a monthly CCPD Meeting (March or another month).
- Establish a list of items for regular progress review. Send a memo to Mr. Rossi: 'Here are the areas we would like more dialogue about within the City...'
- City Manager's Office can and will help facilitate meetings with people in the City that can help get things done.
- Bring those involved in housing rehabilitation housing and housing creation to CCPD meeting. Include: Affordable Housing, Inspectional Services, Charlie Sullivan (Historical Commission), Community Development Department to CCPD. {As they engage with developers, make sure they understand goals and help so (for example, accommodations in housing are available at all price levels).}
- Possibly determine what the number of persons with disabilities seeking housing is in the City. (Cambridge Housing Authority is the biggest single source of accessible, affordable housing in the City with the longest waiting list. But is there a list/what is the demand beyond that?)
- City Manager's Office is hearing a lot about communication in public meetings so people with disabilities are not disenfranchised. Sound and AV equipment being improved. Lisa

Peterson reports in process of upgrading audio/visual equipment for seven main conference rooms in the City. Sullivan Chamber also will have ramp to the Mayor's rostrum, Assistive Listening Devices, and closed captioning of City Council meetings and hearings on Channel 22. Vendors are being identified for live closed captioning; implementation by FY 2015. City website being made ADA compliant.

- Continue to work with the CCPD on employment and training, better recruitment through Personnel Office and, CCPD Disability Employment Mentoring Day.
- The Commission receives frequent (~weekly) calls asking: What am I required to do in terms of accommodating folks with disabilities who have Service Animals? What is a Service Animal? Michael Muehe has successfully conducted training, for example recently at Harvest Coop and discussion with frontline staff at Animal Control. CCPD has a public service announcement (PSA) on Cambridge's DHSP website and YouTube. Mr. Rossi suggests that a brochure or thumb drive with this information could be given to businesses when they renew their license. DPW 's Kathy Watkins and the Economic Development Group of Community Development have done training regarding the outdoor dining program with groups of small businesses. Lisa Peterson suggests contacting the License Commission and possibly making a brief training at the Annual Meeting of licensees.
- Other topics discussed relating to improving the business climate in the City for people with disabilities: keeping disability parking spaces, sidewalks and curb-cuts clear of obstructions, not attaching bicycles to disability parking signs which can block accesses to businesses, and realizing the value of investment in accessibility upgrades. For example, if a person in a wheelchair is unable to access your restaurant, you lose the catering and dining business of their work, and the associates, friends and family they would bring with them. Need to promote hiring of persons with disabilities also.
- CCPD should draft an outline of talking points for 20-25 minute presentation, Mr. Rossi or Ms. Peterson would use this when speaking before large groups such as Chamber of Commerce, Combined Business Association (quarterly meeting 50-100 attendees). City Manager's Office could assist with getting business, education, City representatives to attend CCPD programs such as the Annual Disability Employment Event. For example, calls through the Office, '...this is important to the City... please send some representatives...'.
- Having the perspective of persons with disabilities, in the room, at the table, is important so consciously include when forming planning and advisory boards. When forming the Kendall Square Advisory Committee, for example, Kathy Watkins (DPW) approached Michael Muehe to recommend a CCPD representative. Elizabeth Dean-Clover was appointed, and then experienced difficulty accessing the meeting because bicycles were locked to the pole on the disability parking space.
- Need *consistent accessibility and ADA compliance across* the City Website. Miriam Cooper expresses the frequent frustration, as a blind person, that when content is up-loaded to multiple departments and they do not have the training and know-how, documents are

often not in accessible formats, even though the website itself is ADA compliant. Enforcement and a culture that takes this responsibility seriously is vital. Lee Gianetti, the new City Communications Director, is taking the lead, developing standards and educating people about this. Consultation from WGBH and CCPD working with Jackie Phillips in training department, and consulting with IT department on this. Group discussed some examples: Not all PDF documents are accessible. If one scans a document and converts it to PDF, it will not be accessible as it is a 'photo' or image of the document. If one converts a Word document to a PDF, with built-in PDF utility, it should be accessible. Suggested CCPD develop list of specifics regarding web accessibility, sent to Lee Gianetti and invite him to CCPD to discuss. JoAnn Haas suggests inviting Jonathan Lazaar, expert in this, 'his whole world' and he will be back in Cambridge 2-3 days per week starting in Summer.

- Be mindful and implement programmatic practices to provide accommodation across disabilities. For example, rather than saying: 'I don't need the microphone', all speakers should use available microphones at meetings. This is preferable without requiring attendees to self identify as unable to hear. Mr. Rossi suggests that Jackie Phillips in training department can do a training session on this for Staff that have responsibilities in conducting public meetings (Michael Muehe to speak with Jackie about this). Once accessible structures are built, there is an on-going obligation to keep them clear and accessible.
- Health Care accessibility, equity and inclusion as effects health and well-being. [Chief Public Health Officer] Claude Jacob works on inclusion; could also be invited to a CCPD meeting.

Miriam Cooper asked: Is there anything particularly important to you around people with disabilities that you'd like the Commission to approach? Any advice or recommendations would be appreciated so that the City Manager's Office can most effectively respond when people with mental health issues approach the City Manager's Office. City is considering an official Ombudsman. Discussed benefits of Social Worker with Information & Referral skills trained to look at the whole person as well as legal professional skills. Need for advocates for those who cannot advocate for themselves, especially when culture, language, disability, may disenfranchise individuals.

CCPD is requested to follow-up with the City Manager's office on the topics discussed.

Disability Reframed Film Series: Bet MacArthur announced she is forming a study group "BiPolar Friends Network". The February 4 event at Main Library was very successful. The next screening will be late April or early May in Boston, probably showing "Lars & the Real Girl". We are alternating film screenings between Cambridge and Boston venues; two Commissions working well together. If anyone has films (<2 hours long) to nominate, send to Bet.

Public Works Update Kathy Watkins reported that Kara is now on maternity leave and Debbie Cheng will be filling in. Two year plan ongoing now; more details on five year plan at next CCPD meeting. A lot of construction going on: Western Ave. soon reaching a milestone, completing

utility work in about a month, then focusing on park, roadway, & sidewalks there. Also, there's a \$100M construction project underway, including sewer separation, streets and sidewalks at Fresh Pond/Concord Ave. & Huron Ave. (10 miles of drain and sewer lines & 15 miles of sidewalks & streets). Sewer separation legally must be completed by the end of 2015.

Bet thanks DPW for their responsiveness to postings on iReport, a free App for Android & iPhone (accessible) that takes reports of potholes, sidewalk defects, snow, etc. iReport provides GPS location that helps DPW respond and can see the status of the issue (# open, closed, etc.)

Update on Sidewalk Obstruction Issues: Enhanced DPW program working well. JoAnn Haas discussed with Becky Fuentes the snow removal problem when there is not a continuous path between MBTA stops, streets and sidewalks, so for example a person can get off the bus but not to the curb due to piles of snow. Tree grates and bricks missing @ 20 DeWolfe St. (corner of DeWolfe & Grant) blocking access; DPW will do flexi pave patch.

Executive Director's Report: Kate Thurman recovering well; no exact date to return to work. Joanna Berton Martinez, Pro Bono Associate, will start part-time soon to temporarily staff the CCPD office. Newly printed "Storefronts-For-All" Cambridge rack card distributed. The new program provides 90% reimbursement (up to \$ 20,000) to Cambridge storefronts (any place of public accommodation such as store, restaurant, medical office) for barrier removal projects to provide ADA compliant accessibility. There has been a phenomenal response from the business community. Michael Muehe also attended MAAB Architectural Access Board variance hearing on February 24 regarding River Street Bridge. No official decision has been received yet. Working with the Traffic and Parking Department, a new hang tag has designed & printed for temporary disability parking. The new accessibility icon is used in the image. Mayor's rostrum in the City Council Chamber which currently has three stairs and is inaccessible will be updated with a well designed ramp. The goal is to complete this over the summer when City Council is not in session.

New Business: The iReport app does not include a category for reporting blocking and interference in disability parking space. DPW has discussed what categories to include in iReport. Parking space issues are Traffic & Parking concern. A problem with a disability parking space can also be e-mailed to CCPD for forwarding to Traffic & Parking. Elizabeth Dean-Clover advises that if a film is shown in an inaccessible theater (for example on a second floor), it is possible to request that a theater switch a film to a different theater in house to accommodate a disability.

Public Input: Northeastern Univ. journalism students chose to attend CCPD from looking on website. Naomi Pinson encourages the students to cover disability rights issues as they move forward in their careers. Michael Muehe suggests "National Center for Disability Journalism" style guide on writing on persons with disabilities, which is much more comprehensive on this topic than the Associated Press (AP) style guide.

Old Business: JoAnn Haas asks about enforcement of bicycles riding through red lights. Miriam Cooper advises that this was discussed with Jack Albert, our Police liaison and they have plans

to enhance enforcement this spring. All materials should be sent to CCPD in advance so they can be filed in our Dropbox and made available in alternative formats for attendees preferring those accommodations.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM