

City of Cambridge

Commission for Persons with Disabilities

51 Inman Street · Cambridge, MA · 02139-1732

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Nicole Horton-Stimpson
Chair

Debbie Cheng
Elizabeth Dean-Clower
Gary Dmytryk
Sandy Durmaskin
Maria Fontellio
Zahra Kanji
Bet MacArthur
Naomi Pinson
Alicia Zeh-Dean

Michael Muehe
*Executive Director/
ADA Coordinator*

Kate Thurman
Project Coordinator

Katie Ashwill
Pro Bono Associate

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, January 14, 2016 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 may be audio recorded for the purpose of taking minutes.

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|--|---------|------------------------|
| 1. Introductions | 2 min. | |
| 2. Approval of December 10 Minutes | 2 min. | |
| 3. Announcements | 2 min. | CCPD staff / board |
| 4. Chair's Report
<i>MBTA Letter</i>
<i>Visiting Gateway Arts</i> | 20 min. | Nicole Horton-Stimpson |
| 5. Follow-up on State House Rally
<i>Bill regarding AAB Regulations</i> | 5 min. | Gary Dymtryk |
| 6. Disability Reframed Film Series | 5 min. | Bet MacArthur |
| 7. Executive Director's Report | 10 min. | Michael Muehe |
| 8. Project Coordinator's Report | 5 min. | Kate Thurman |
| 9. Public Input | 3 min. | general public |
| 10. Old Business | 2 min. | |
| 11. New Business | 2 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.



Approved 2/11/16

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, January 14, 2016

51 Inman Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Cambridge, MA 02139

Meeting was called to order at 5:50PM

Present

Members: Elizabeth Dean-Clower (by phone), Sandy Durmaskin (by phone), Gary Dmytryk, Nicole Horton-Stimpson, Zahra Kanji (by phone), and Bet MacArthur.

Absent: Debbie Cheng, Maria Fontellio, Naomi Pinson, and Alicia Zeh-Dean.

Alternates: Donald Summerfield

Staff: Michael Muehe and Kate Thurman

Guests: Naeem Ahmed, Community Member

Documents/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Minutes from December 10

Minutes:

A motion to approve the December 10, 2015 minutes was seconded and passed.

Chair's Report: Nicole Horton-Stimpson presented an outline for a letter to the MBTA regarding proposed service cuts to and fare hikes for the Ride. There are many concerns over the eligibility determination process, with some staff doing the evaluations not appearing to know much about disability. There are also concerns that people's eligibility has been cut off with no notice. She asked members to email her with any other points they would like included in the letter.

There was some discussion on the unreliability of the Ride and also that there has been some good effort to train the Ride drivers on accommodating people with disabilities. It would be nice if this training was also provided to the staff at the eligibility determination center.

In regards to the unreliability of the Ride showing up on time, it was pointed out that they use a computer program to do the scheduling and that the schedules are a point of contention. For example, the program does not take into account things like weather or traffic conditions that affect timeliness.

Gary Dmytryk reported receiving a letter from the Ride regarding their new Non-ADA Paratransit Taxi Subsidy Pilot Program.

Ms. Horton-Stimpson reported booking transportation for CCPD members who expressed a wish to visit the Gateway Arts Center on Wednesday, February 10.

She also recently learned about the Power Café in Watertown, which is run by people with disabilities and said that could be another possible fieldtrip.

Follow up on State House Rally: Gary Dmytryk reported attending a rally at the State House last week in support of a bill to strengthen AAB regulations. A few dozen other disability advocates were also there, including Don

Summerfield. He said that they were divided in to groups of 4-5 people, each with a list of legislators to visit. His group visited the Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security. He said that they were very well received.

Mr. Dmytryk explained some of the issues they addressed with the legislators:

- The AAB regulations are different from the ADA standards and this discrepancy causes a number of problems. For example, in a commercial building, Massachusetts law stipulates that any area open to the public must be accessible, but employee-only areas are exempt from accessibility standards, whereas the ADA requires both areas to be accessible. This creates confusion for architects and engineers and can also create legal problems; a building owner could find that they built according to state building code and then later on learn that they are liable for non-accessible employee-only areas. There is a bill pending to revise the AAB regulations to meet or exceed accessibility requirements in the ADA so that architects will have to reference only the state code.
- A bill to increase the amount of funding for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP), which is a housing subsidy for people with disabilities. The AHVP came about because the federal government imposed a 13.5% cap on the number of non-elderly people who can live in elderly housing. However, most accessible units are located in elder housing. This led to a severe shortage of housing available to young people who need accessible units. The AHVP sets aside housing subsidies just for people with disabilities who are not seniors, and it has been very successful, but there remains a shortage of accessible, affordable housing

Disability Reframed: Bet MacArthur reported that Disability Reframed is again partnering with ReelAbilities Boston for a film screening on Tuesday, April 5. The film is a documentary called Mimi and Dona about an elderly woman who is no longer able to care for her adult disabled daughter. The filmmaker, Mimi's granddaughter and Dona's niece, will be attending from Los Angeles. She also said that the Boston Commission is looking into scheduling a feature film before then.

Executive Director's Report: Michael Muehe relayed DPW's report that the Western Ave temporary asphalt has been removed and all truncated domes should now be uncovered.

He also said that the City has developed preliminary conceptual designs for the Alewife bike/pedestrian routes, which could be part of redoing Alewife station in the future.

Mr. Muehe reported that CCPD's proposal for a universal design playground did not get funding through participatory budget (PB) this year. However, there will be another PB process again for the following fiscal year.

He said that Cinderella's Pizza near Central Square made significant renovations last fall that cost more than 30% of the assessed value of their building, triggering AAB code requiring full accessibility. However, they did not create an accessible entrance and have now applied for a variance from the MAAB to exempt them from having to create an accessible entrance. The restaurant owner had been considering the Storefront Improvement Project, which would have provided significant reimbursement for accessibility improvements, but they chose not to pursue that program. There is a hearing at 11:00am on Monday, February 22 at the MAAB at One Ashburton Place in Boston. It is very important that individuals with disabilities attend the hearing to oppose this variance.

He reported being invited along with Elizabeth Dean-Clower by the MS Society to visit legislators to discuss the need for passing Senate Bill 1323 to improve and update the state AAB law. He said that they were very well received.

A motion that CCPD endorse Bill 1323 was made, seconded and passed. Mr. Muehe will draft a letter in support of the bill. [Editor's note: see attached letter]

Project Coordinator's Report: Kate Thurman reported attending the Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting last week. John Nardone of DPW gave a presentation on the City's snow policies and procedures and gave a recap of last winter record snowfall. He spoke about the importance of removing snow in and abutting disability parking spaces. The City does not have the resources to remove snow in these spaces that are in residential areas. He acknowledged that there are times when snow gets plowed into the spaces just because they are often open.

She reported receiving a complaint about tour buses routinely parking in disability parking spaces and/or MBTA bus stops in front of the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Amesbury Street. She reached out to Deputy Superintendent Jack Albert, who responded immediately that he would ask officers to step up enforcement in that area to address the problem.

New Business:

Gary Dmytryk asked Vice Mayor Marc McGovern about the status of proposals to open a medical marijuana dispensary in Cambridge. The City had previously approved two areas where a dispensary could be located: one in the far east corner of the City and one in the far northwest corner of the City. However, there is no appropriate building in either of these districts. Vice Mayor McGovern told Mr. Dmytryk that there is a current proposal to open one on Mass Ave between Harvard and Central Squares, which will likely be discussed at an upcoming City Council meeting. Mr. Dmytryk is wondering if CCPD would like to get involved in the discussion.

Mr. Muehe explained that medical marijuana was legalized by a ballot vote in 2012. The Dept. of Public Health was charged with issuing regulations, and there are now a handful of dispensaries in the Commonwealth. The law states that cities and towns may not ban dispensaries, but they are allowed to enact reasonable restrictions on where medical marijuana dispensaries can be placed. In response to those regulations, the City of Cambridge developed a map and designated a half square mile in the far northwestern portion near Alewife and another corner in the far northeastern corner near North Point as being approved areas for dispensaries.

However, Mr. Muehe said that at least one company has tried but been unable to find a suitable building in either of those corners of the City.

Bet MacArthur suggested that CCPD weigh in on the accessibility of proposed locations for dispensaries.

Mr. Muehe added that a lot of people who are candidates for medical marijuana are people with neurological related impairments. THC is particularly effective in helping things like neurologic pain, insomnia, and spasticity. It can also be helpful with side effects of chemotherapy. The majority of people who are candidates for medical marijuana are people with disabilities. CCPD could think about inviting an expert on the topic. He said that the Disability Law Center has done a lot of work in this area, including holding a statewide conference to discuss the legal issues surrounding medical marijuana. CCPD could also invite someone from the Cambridge Department of Public Health; Mr. Muehe will reach out to both DLC and the CDPH. People with disabilities should have easy access to medical marijuana dispensaries.

Mr. Dmytryk reported that 80% of Cambridge residents voted in favor of medical marijuana.

The meeting adjourned at 7:19PM

Respectfully submitted by Kate Thurman