

## Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, November 18, 2010

Present:

Members: Laura Brelsford, Elizabeth Dean-Clower, Sandy Durmaskin, JoAnn Haas, Eileen Keegan Bongiorno, Alissa Land, Don Summerfield, Rachel Tanenhaus, and Dave Wood.

Staff: Michael Muehe and Kate Thurman

Absent: Kate Patton Regal, Gordon Slater, and Kathy Watkins

Guests: Cambridge Pedestrian Committee; Stephen Diamond, Agassiz Baldwin Community; Kelly Downes, Cambridge Police Department; Sarah Fresco, Green Streets Initiative; Heidi Hample, ACOD; Kathy Lydon, Cambridge Postmaster; Fred Meyer, Agassiz Baldwin Community; and Peter Montalto, Cambridge Family and Children's Services.

Minutes:

A motion to approve the October 14, 2010 minutes was passed by the Commission.

**Chair's Report:** Rachel Tanenhaus encouraged people to bring food to share at the December 9, 2010 CCPD meeting, which will be shortened to allow for the holiday party. CCPD meetings will be moved back to the second floor conference room at 51 Inman Street beginning in December, as the elevator work will have been completed.

Ms. Tanenhaus also announced that Gary Talbot, the General Manager of System Wide Accessibility for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), will speak at the January 13, 2011 CCPD meeting.

Disability Reframed Film Series: Bet MacArthur reported on the November 13, 2010 screening of "Shooting Beauty," a documentary about a fashion photographer who decided that she was afraid of people with disabilities, so she started visiting them and created adapted cameras that they were able to use in order to document their own experiences. Tony Knight, one of the subjects in the film was the guest speaker. Ms. MacArthur said that it went very well.

She reported that the next film is scheduled for January 8, 2011, and will be another documentary, followed by two feature films.

Executive Director's Report: Michael Muehe reported that the elevator repairs at 51 Inman Street are complete and that it is back in service. He said that he will be moving back to the CCPD office in December.

Mr. Muehe also reported that a new Conflict of Interest (COI) Law was passed by the State legislature. He provided members with a summary of the law and asked each of them to sign an acknowledgement of receipt form, which will be given to the City's Law Department.

## **Old Business:**

Elizabeth Dean-Clower reported that she and Larry Braman visited the Graham and Parks School to give a presentation on disabilities and that it went very well.

## **New Business:**

Bet MacArthur reported that she and Kate Thurman will be conducting a site survey in December at the First Parish Church in Cambridge. She said that they reached out to her and would like to make their facilities and programming more accessible to persons with disabilities.

**Update on Sidewalk Obstruction Issues:** JoAnn Haas reported that she, Michael Muehe, Kate Thurman, and Somerville resident Trouble have been working on a plan to reach out to the local bicycle community about not locking bikes to disability parking sign poles. Artist Marco Jimenez created a cartoon for the CCPD to use in outreach efforts.

There was also a discussion about the importance of increasing the number of bicycle racks in the City.

Michael Muehe reported that the City has a program for designating spaces for bicycle racks and funding the installation of new racks. [this text is sufficient]

## **Joint Meeting with the Cambridge Pedestrian Committee:**

Overview:

Amanda Trombley, the Chair of the Cambridge Pedestrian Committee (CPC), spoke on issues they have worked on in the past year.

Topics discussed in the joint meeting included the following:

- Snow and ice clearance
  - Outreach to residents and business owners
  - “Best Shoveled Block” contest
  - An update from Kathy Lydon, Cambridge Postmaster, about their outreach efforts.
  - Shoveling disability parking spaces
  - The City’s snow clearance responsibilities
- The Green Street Initiative, encouraging people to walk or ride their bicycles instead of driving
- Bicycle Parking
  - The need for greater public awareness
  - Locations of bicycle racks
  - It is a year-round issue
- Vegetation issues
  - Tree branches and other botanical obstructions on sidewalks
  - The tripping hazard of tree roots, particularly for people with visual disabilities
- Sidewalk Cafés & the need to maintain adequate pedestrian clearance
  - Restaurants must re-apply each February for a permit to have sidewalk seating

- Single-stream recycling totes
  - May block the entire width of sidewalk – recycling crews need to be trained to place totes carefully after emptying
  - Heavier than the old recycling bins so less likely to blow around on windy days
  - May make it more challenging to ensure clear sidewalks during the snow season
- Picking up pet waste
  - Some people do not pick up after their dogs
  - Pet waste bag dispensers are helpful
  - Offering trash receptacles in more locations
    - The compacting trash cans are not accessible to some people with disabilities, requiring two-hand operation
  - More enforcement is needed

#### Discussion:

Sarah Fresco of the Green Street Initiative reported working with the Post Office on creating a “Best Shoveled Block” contest. She also said that they are coordinating a “Green Friday” event on the day after Thanksgiving, traditionally known as “black Friday,” with Somerville, in which they are encouraging people to walk or ride their bicycles instead of driving. There will be a walk from the Central Square Post Office to the Union Square Post Office, with a stop in Inman Square. The Green Street Initiative will be sending out an announcement about clearing sidewalks and will include the City ordinance.

Kathy Lydon, the Cambridge Postmaster, reported receiving great results from their outreach regarding the importance of shoveling sidewalks, and said that mail carriers will not deliver mail unless there is a clear passage in which they can safely walk.

JoAnn Haas reported that the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce will be sending letters to local business owners reminding them of the snow ordinance. The letter will also request that they shovel disability parking spaces that are adjacent to their property.

Amanda Trombley said that the Pedestrian Committee is interested in posting a reminder on the City billboard in front of City Hall. She reported that they are trying to come up with different messages and doing a series of billboards covering various pedestrian and sidewalk-related topics, and welcome suggestions.

There was discussion about how difficult it can be for drivers to see pedestrians after dark and that pedestrians don’t always realize how difficult it can be to see them. Cara Seiderman of the Community Development Department (CDD) said that CDD does have reflective materials, which they can make available to residents.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kate Thurman, Disability Project Coordinator