

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)
Minutes for Thursday, February 10, 2011

Present:

Members: Laura Brelsford, Elizabeth Dean-Clower, Sandy Durmaskin, JoAnn Hass, Alissa Land, Don Summerfield, Rachel Tanenhaus, and David Wood.

Alternates: Bet MacArthur

Staff/Volunteers: Michael Muehe and Joanna Berton Martinez, Associate.

Guests: Heidi Meyer, Cambridge Resident; and Bobby Vilinsky, Cambridge Resident.

Absent: Eileen Keegan Bongiorno, Gordon Slater, Kate Thurman, and Kathy Watkins.

Minutes:

A motion was made to amend the January 13, 2011 minutes to reflect that the Commission was in agreement to send a letter to Department of Public Works Commissioner Lisa Peterson.

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was passed by the Commission.

Announcements:

Michael Muehe reminded those in attendance that City Council's Committee on Traffic, Parking and Transportation was addressing snow removal issues in the Sullivan Chamber at the same time as the CCPD meeting and invited people to go back and forth between the two meetings, which is why the CCPD meeting was relocated to City Hall.

Mr. Muehe also announced that Kate Thurman was not able to attend the meeting and will be back in the office on March 1st.

Don Summerfield announced that Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) will be holding a client lobby event on Monday, February 28, 2011 at the Massachusetts State House from 10 am to 12 noon. He said that people should call Linda Lank at GBLS for more information. Her number is (617) 603-1606.

Alissa Land announced that an exhibit of work by 100 self-taught artists with disabilities called "Unfiltered: Gateway Raw," is on display in Brookline Village from February 10 – March 26, 2011. She said that more information can be found online at www.gatewayarts.org.

Chair's Report: Rachel Tanenhaus said that the Commission has some upcoming vacancies. She also reported that her term as Chair and Dave Wood's term as Secretary are almost up and that nominations will be taken at the April meeting.

Ms. Tanenhaus also reported follow-up about a Cambridge taxicab driver who believed it was up to his discretion to deny a ride to a person with a disability using a service animal: Cambridge Police Officer Szeto, of the hackney division, was helpful negotiating the situation, including the issuance of a fine and informing that driver that Michael Muehe could give him remedial ADA & disability awareness training (in lieu of Ms. Tanenhaus, who, under the circumstances, was not comfortable doing this herself). This training would be similar to the ADA & disability awareness training which has been provided to potential taxicab drivers through the Cambridge Taxi School for over 16 years. Currently, the three people who teach the ADA & disability awareness portion of Taxi School are Michael Muehe, Rachel Tanenhaus, and Kate Thurman.

Discussion included informing dispatchers alongside future drivers; notifying all five cab companies; stating clearly what fines and penalties the driver is subject to in the event he or she does not allow access for persons with service animals.

A motion to send a letter to the License Commission in regards to taxi drivers and service dogs was approved by the Commission. Rachel Tanenhaus recused herself from the vote.

Disability Reframed Film Series: Bet MacArthur said the next film will be the bio-pic of Temple Grandin, starring Claire Daines. It will be held March 12 from 2-5 pm. Ideas on promoting the event were discussed. Ms. MacArthur will post an announcement through on-line listings, Ms. Tanenhaus will make her local book club aware of it, and Cambridge resident Heidi Meyer offered to post flyers in various places around the City.

Update on Snow & Sidewalk Issues: JoAnn Haas was at the City Council Committee meeting on snow removal. Members at the CCPD meeting raised the following issues:

- The snow banks were way too high on curbs abutting disability parking spaces; even if a vehicle could be parked in the space, the snow banks block access into and out of many cars.
- It was noted that a resident wanted to attend the February 10th meeting, but the snow and ice proved an effective hindrance.
- If the curb ramp is a part of the sidewalk... who is responsible? What is the law?
- It is unclear who is responsible for what, such as clearing snow from disability parking spaces in front of businesses or in proximity of, such as across the street or near a U.S. Post Office
- Waiting until next year or after this year's thaw to sort out these details seem too long into the future to resolve.
- Anybody can report an unshoveled address or street corner. [Editor's note: complaints regarding snow and ice on sidewalks may be filed online at <http://www2.cambridgema.gov/theworks/services/snow/complaint.aspx> or by leaving a voicemail message at 617-349-4903].

Executive Director's Report: Michael Muehe reported that Gary Talbot, Assistant General Manager for Systemwide Accessibility at the MBTA, will be presenting at the CCPD meeting on April 15th. He said the office received an email from a social justice art group, the New Wave Feminists, who are starting an ASL Speakout Project and asked if there was anyone at the

meeting who would like to see what they were about. He said that he and Kate Thurman would be meeting with her in March.

Ms. Haas returned from the snow removal meeting and said she had the chance to speak in front of the committee and there was more time if the CCPD meeting attendees would like to share their thoughts.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Berton Martinez, Associate