

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, October 13, 2011

Present:

Members: Elizabeth Dean-Clover, Miriam Cooper, Sandy Durmaskin, JoAnn Haas, Eileen Keegan Bongiorno, Alissa Land, Bet MacArthur, Naomi Pinson, and Rachel Tanenhaus.

Staff/Volunteers: Joanna Berton Martinez, Michael Muehe, and Kate Thurman

Absent: Kathy Watkins, and Dave Wood.

Guests: Chris Burke, Cambridge Police Department; Sue Clippinger, Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department; and Kara McSweeney, Cambridge Department of Public Works.

Minutes:

A motion to approve the September 8 minutes was passed by the Commission.

Announcements:

Elizabeth Dean-Clover reported that Nicole Horton's DHSP Inclusion Initiative update is postponed until the November meeting.

Naomi Pinson announced that a presentation will be given on the Hearing Voices Network will be giving a presentation on client-driven services and Mount Holyoke on October 25. [Editor's note: for more information on the Hearing Voices Network, please see <www.hearingvoicesusa.org>].

Michael Muehe announced that he will be conducting a site visit at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Center on November 18 at noon if members are interested in joining him.

Rachel Tanenhaus reminded those in attendance that the Transitioning Boundaries Conference, at which she will be presenting, will be held from November 11-13 at the Massachusetts Mutual Center in Springfield. [Editor's note: please see <transitioningboundaries.org> for more information].

Miriam Cooper announced that October 14 is National White Cane Day.

JoAnn Haas reminded people that October 14 is also Harvard University's 375th anniversary and that thousands of people are expected to attend.

Ms. Dean-Clover announced that Kelly Downes has accepted a new position with the Commonwealth, so is no longer with the Cambridge Police Department. Superintendent Chris Burke will now be attending CCPD meetings, providing a liaison to the Police Department.

Police Community Liaison Update: Chris Burke, Superintendent of Support Services, introduced himself. Superintendent Burke explained that he is the Commander of all non-uniform Police divisions, including records management, the detail office, investigative units, training and certification, information technology, property, evidence and identification. He said that he is looking forward to working with CCPD and that he also works with the Human Rights and GLBT Commissions.

Update on Bicycle Parking Issues:

Sue Clippinger, Director of the Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TPT) reported meeting with Elizabeth Dean-Clover, JoAnn Haas, and Michael Muehe to discuss problems associated with bicycles being locked to sign poles designating disability parking. Ms. Clippinger said that the following two action items grew out of the meeting:

1. Make changes to Traffic Department regulations that make it clear that bikes should not be parked to these poles.
2. Create signage to add to those poles so that bicyclists are aware.

Ms. Clippinger said that the TPT construction period is nearing an end and that they have therefore been very busy, but she is hoping to have drafted more specific language for the bicycle regulations by the next month or so.

Ms. Dean-Clover informed members that it is within Ms. Clippinger's authority to change the bicycle parking regulation language. She also said that CCPD would be happy to contribute to ideas for signage, suggesting something small that could be added directly to the affected poles to indicate that bicycle parking is prohibited.

JoAnn Haas reported dropping off copies of the CCPD bicycle parking flyer at local bike shops. She said that she has gotten a really good response and is working on a public awareness campaign and educational outreach.

Ms. Clippinger said that CCPD's collaboration with TPT on this project is great.

Ms. Haas noted that Vinny Best of the Department of Public Works is the City's only bicycle parking compliance officer and, thus, there is no enforcement over weekends, holidays, etc. She asked Superintendent Burke if it would be possible for police officers to also issue tickets to illegally parked bicycles, which he agreed to look into, although any enforcement that the Police Department is able to provide would not begin until the newly clarified regulations are in place.

Ms. Clippinger noted that TPT's bike rack installation program is an important component of this project. [Editor's note: residents may request that bicycle racks be installed in specific locations on public property by going to http://www2.cambridgema.gov/cdd/et/bike/forms/bike_rack_form.cfm or emailing bikerack@cambridgema.gov].

Chair's Report: Elizabeth Dean-Clover reported on the preparation for CCPD's Disability Employment Awareness event, which will be held at the Cambridge Public Library on Wednesday, October 19 from 6-8pm. She requested that volunteers arrive by 5pm to assist with set-up.

Michael Muehe added that he has requested parking consideration from TPT, allowing non-residents to park in resident-only on-street parking spaces within a two block radius of the Library. He also said that the Library garage contains three designated disability parking spaces, but that TPT would be providing an additional six for the event by installing temporary signage. Furthermore, The RIDE vehicles, including vans, can drive into the garage to drop-off and pick-up individuals.

Ms. Dean-Clover tabled the discussion on CCPD's priorities until the November meeting due to time constraints.

Proposed Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines: Joanna Berton Martinez, pro bono associate, provided an overview of the proposed accessibility guidelines for public rights of way. [Editor's note: please see <www.access-board.gov/prowac> for more information, including a copy of the proposed guidelines and instructions on how to submit comments. The public comment period closes on November 23, 2011].

Disability Reframed Film Series: Bet MacArthur reported postponing the October 1 film to allow members and staff to focus on preparation for CCPD's October 19 Disability Employment Awareness event. She said that the next film will likely be *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*. Ms. MacArthur also expressed the need for more volunteers to assist with the film series, and particularly with publicity of screenings. She said that she is always looking for more films to add to the list. Films must be under two hours in length. Ms. MacArthur particularly looks for films that contain a dialectic or tension between what the movie portrays and what goes on in real life. For example, she said that disabled characters are often treated really well in films, but not in real life.

Elizabeth Dean-Clower added that the film series has been relying too heavily on staff for preparation and set-up. She said that one more film will be shown this calendar year and that going forward, it would be helpful to have a list of the next two or three films and screening dates.

Kate Thurman said that assistance is particularly needed with creating film flyers, posting them both locally and online, acquiring copies of the DVDs, in addition to set-up on the day of screenings.

Both Miriam Cooper and Alissa Land expressed an interest in joining the film series sub-committee.

Executive Director's Report: Michael Muehe reported that the Cambridge License Commission has added a page on their website for taxi issues, including accessibility guidelines for accessible taxicabs, and a fact sheet on providing good customer service to people with disabilities who use service animals. [Editor's note: see <www.cambridgema.gov/license/hackney.aspx>].

Mr. Muehe also reported conducting a disability sensitivity training for staff at the JFK residential building, which was very well received.

Mr. Muehe said that he met with the architect who is working on the renovation of the old police station. The building will be gutted and, once finished, will house the Multi-Service Center, Community Learning Center, and Cambridge Housing Authority administrative offices. He said that the Western Avenue building entrance will be made accessible, in addition to the Green St. entrance. Due to structural limitations, a Massachusetts Architectural Access Board variance may be needed for one classroom.

Mr. Muehe met with the Water Department on September 20 to discuss accessibility issues at Black's Nook, which is part of the Fresh Pond Reservation. He also recently conducted site visits at restaurants on Cambridge and Prospect Streets.

Lastly, Mr. Muehe said that he did a training on disability parking issues for new Cambridge Parking Control Officers (PCOs) on the day of the CCPD meeting. He said he that works closely with Kitty Kramer, who oversees the City's 33 PCOs.

Project Coordinator's Report: Kate Thurman thanked Maureen Coyne and Sandy Durmaskin for their help with the *AccessLetter* mailing.

She also thanked Elizabeth Dean-Clover for her hard work on the preparation for CCPD's October 19th event, as well as that of Library staff Marilyn Gagalis and Warren Pearson.

Old Business:

Elizabeth Dean-Clover said that the Mayor's reception for Commission members was a very nice event and that she would like to suggest that staff be invited to future events for the City's Commissions.

New Business:

Miriam Cooper said that a Cambridge resident reported to her that a taxi driver refused to provide service to a person who uses a service dog, citing allergies as the reason. The driver told the resident that he has a letter documenting his allergies on file with the License Commission. Ms. Cooper asked what the timeline is for drivers to have a partition installed in their cabs after notifying the License Commission of a severe allergy to dogs, and said that there needs to be a procedure in place to deal with situations like this.

Michael Muehe asked that the resident provide details so that the incident may be investigated and a complaint filed.

Public Input:

There was no public input.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kate Thurman, Disability Project Coordinator