

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, November 10, 2011

Present:

Members: Elizabeth Dean-Clover, Sandy Durmaskin, JoAnn Haas, Eileen Keegan Bongiorno , Bet MacArthur, Naomi Pinson, Rachel Tanenhaus, and Kathy Watkins.

Alternates: Don Summerfield

Staff: Michael Muehe and Kate Thurman

Absent: Miriam Cooper, Alissa Land, and Dave Wood.

Guests: Chris Burke, Cambridge Police Department; and Nicole Horton, Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) Inclusion Specialist.

Minutes:

A motion to amend the October 13 minutes to correct the name of the conference announced by Rachel Tanenhaus to “Transcending Boundaries” from “Transitioning Boundaries” under the Announcement section was passed by the Commission.

The minutes were approved as amended.

Announcements:

Sandy Durmaskin announced that the Greater Boston Employment Collaborative will be holding a Fishbowl Event on November 29 from 3:30-5pm on the 4th Floor of 29 Windsor Street in Boston, which is near the Park Street MBTA station. This is an opportunity for consumers with disabilities and job developers to have an open dialogue and anonymously ask each other questions by writing them down and placing them in the fishbowl to be drawn for answers. [Editor’s note: RSVP to Kimberley Warsett at kwarsett@jvs-boston.org or 617-399-3229 by November 28th if you would like to attend].

Don Summerfield announced that the Boston Center for Independent Living will be holding their annual meeting at 6pm on November 16 in the 2nd Floor Conference Room of 10 Park Plaza in Boston.

Michael Muehe announced that former CCPD Commission member David Peterson passed away. He said that Mr. Peterson was beloved by both the disability and GLBT communities. A memorial service will be held on Friday, November 18 at 4pm at the Harvard-Epworth United Methodist Church.

Elizabeth Dean-Clover reminded those in attendance that the December 8 CCPD meeting will be an abbreviated meeting followed by a potluck holiday party.

DHSP Inclusion Specialist’s Update: Nicole Horton reported that the number of children with disabilities participating in DHSP out-of-school programs saw a big increase between the summer of 2010 and 2011. In 2010, there were 113 children on individual education plans (IEP, also known as “special education”) participating in summer programming. That number jumped to 205 in the summer of 2011 (see chart below). Ms. Horton explained that each IEP denotes a level of need, which is measured

by the amount of time that children are receiving special education services. She said that the Inclusion Initiative has been working hard to reach out to children with a high level of need in order to increase and improve services available to them.

Ms. Horton said that one of her biggest challenges is finding and hiring appropriate one-to-one aides who are available to work with children in after-school programs. Once an aide is hired for a child, they begin by attended lunch with the student at school and working in the after school program for a week before the child starts so they can both get to know the student and the program before the child starts.

Ms. Horton also noted that there are a lot of unique needs and barriers within immigrant populations.

DHSP Inclusion Initiative		
Data comparison for summer 2010-2011		
Total Enrollment		
2010	2011	
(total enrollment # not available)	973	
Total # Children with IEPs		
113	205	
Level of need	Number of children	
	2010	2011
Level 4 - High	33	50
Level 3 - Moderate	35	48
Level 2 - Low: 2-5 hrs/wk	20	48
Level 1 - Low: <2 hrs/wk	25	44

Cambridge Police Department: Superintendent Chris Burke reported speaking with Police Commissioner Haas about the issue of bicycles being locked to sign poles designating disability parking. He said that he is confident that between CCPD, the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TPT), the Department of Public Works, and the Police Department (PD), this issue will get resolved. He also noted that a lot of new bike racks have been installed in the City, which will hopefully help. He said that he will reach out to both DPW and TPT to explore the possibility of further enforcement by police officers.

Superintendent Burke also said that he heard the definition of Service Animal under the Americans with Disabilities Act has changed and he wants to be sure that the Police Department’s policy is updated appropriately. He will follow up with Michael Muehe.

A few members expressed concern about traffic enforcement in Central Square and elsewhere in Cambridge. Superintendent Burke said that the Police Department has had some success at reducing traffic-related accidents in many areas, but that it is a constant problem and Police are not available to monitor intersections at all times.

Kathy Watkins reported that there is currently state legislation pending about allowing camera enforcement of red light running, which would have an impact because police cannot be present all the time at every intersection.

Rachel Tanenhaus expressed concern about cyclists running lights and expecting pedestrians to yield to them, at which Superintendent Burke said that the Police Department has stepped up their bicycle enforcement, as bicycles are held to the same traffic regulations as other vehicles.

Ms. Tanenhaus also mentioned the recent uptick in armed robberies in Cambridge, noting that persons with disabilities (PWD) are disproportionately victims of crime.

Superintendent Burke said that they have more police officers, both uniformed and plainclothes, patrolling the areas where the robberies have occurred, and that most of the victims of these recent robberies were walking and talking on their cell phones at the time of the robberies. He noted that this string of robberies is unique because the perpetrators are not using the stolen credit cards, making them more difficult to catch.

Ms. Tanenhaus suggested looking into having somebody from the Disabled Persons Protection Committee present on personal safety issues for PWD.

Chair's Report: Elizabeth Dean-Clover handed out compiled results from the ten evaluations received after CCPD's October 19 event [see attached].

Feedback and suggestions from members for future events included:

- asking participants for feedback about how they heard about the event
- allowing more time for set-up prior to the event
- limiting the amount of time devoted to each question during the question & answer period so as to allow others the opportunity to have their questions addressed, as well
- broaden the audience and focus on all the players of employment, including job developers, managers and employers, as well as PWD
- sub-committee should begin planning as early as January
- being cognizant of what current employment environment is like when planning topics. For example, many people with disabilities are more concerned with how to get a job today than they are communication issues.
- inviting Susan Loukes, a Cambridge resident and Director of Greater Boston Employment Collaborative (GBEC), to attend a CCPD meeting to discuss the outreach they have done to local employers regarding the importance and benefits of hiring PWD.
- Providing volunteers with job descriptions prior to the day of the event, including when and where to report for their assignment.

The discussion of CCPD priorities for 2012 was tabled due to time constraints.

Update on Sidewalk Obstruction Issues: JoAnn Haas reported sending an email out to neighborhood associations about snow removal and said that she will resend it with the next snowstorm as a reminder. She also said that she would like to email the associations with a reminder of the importance of clearing leaves from sidewalks and reporting potholes to DPW before snow falls.

Ms. Haas reported that the Best Shoveled Block Contest's nomination deadline has been extended to March this year, and that DPW will include the Contest's brochure in their mailing to all residents regarding snow removal obligations. She said that member of the Agassiz Neighborhood Association is helping her get in touch with realtors and management companies in the City.

Disability Reframed Film Series: Bet MacArthur said that she would like to meet with Miriam Cooper and Alissa Land, both of whom expressed an interest in joining the film planning committee, and do a shared analysis of what would take weight off the staff more effectively.

It was decided that the next film would be held in early 2012.

Executive Director's Report: Michael Muehe reported meeting with Community Development Department (CDD) staff on October 24 to discuss revising guidelines for large-scale residential developments addressing how to create a neighborhood atmosphere with front porches while also complying with accessibility regulations.

He met with MBTA staff on October 25 to discuss elevator replacement at the Central Square MBTA station. Mr. Muehe said that the MBTA is hoping to hold a ribbon cutting ceremony once the newly constructed elevator at Harvard Square is completed and put into service.

Mr. Muehe reported that several City staff members met to compose comments on the proposed Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines, which they will submit to the United States Access Board.

He also said that he attended a meeting in Shrewsbury on October 28 regarding accessible transportation services. SCM Transportation, which provides paratransit services in Cambridge and neighboring towns, received a \$200,000 federal grant to coordinate accessible transportation services.

Mr. Muehe reported meeting with Chris Basler, who runs CDD's facade improvement program, to consider a more accessible design for an existing hardware store on Brattle Street. He said that the entrance will be ramped.

He also reported meeting with Mary Thomas, Harvard's new Director of University Disability Services. He said that Ms. Thomas has done ADA compliance work for both Duke University and the Penn State University system. He extended an invitation to her for attending a future CCPD meeting.

Mr. Muehe said that he will be touring the Cambridge Somerville Community Learning Center in Somerville at noon on Friday, November 18 and invited interested CCPD members to join him.

Lastly, Mr. Muehe announced that the MV-1, a new, purpose-built, fully accessible vehicle being manufactured in the U.S., will be on display at the November 16 Taxicab Advisory Subcommittee meeting, which will be held from 11:30am-1pm at the Cambridge License Commission, 831 Massachusetts Avenue.

Project Coordinator's Report: Kate Thurman handed out copies of the State Ethics Commission Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law, as well as acknowledgement of receipt forms for CCPD members to sign and date.

Ms. Thurman reported working with the Cambridge Arts Council (CAC) on improving the accuracy of accessibility information regarding private homes and studios that participate in the Cambridge Open Studios (COS), which will be held in May, 2012. She said that the CAC reached out to her after receiving complaints last year about some studios being listed as wheelchair accessible in COS publication

materials when they in fact were not. For example, an artist's home may have had a zero-step entrance to get inside, but then required climbing stairs to reach the open studio area. Because artist's self-report on whether or not their spaces are accessible, she drafted a basic checklist of features to help them determine whether or not their open studio areas are *minimally* accessible to individuals who use wheelchairs. This information is on the COS registration webpage (www2.cambridgema.gov/CAC/Community/Cambridge_Open_Studios.cfm), which is now open for the 2012 COS.

Ms. Thurman reminded those in attendance that the deadline for submissions to the December/January *AccessLetter* is November 15, and encouraged members to email her with details on any local events of interest to the disability community of which they may be aware so that she may include them in the calendar of events.

Public Input:

There was no public input.

New Business:

Rachel Tanenhaus suggested inviting somebody from the Disabled Persons Protection Committee to present at a future CCPD meeting on crime-related issues regarding persons with disabilities.

Ms. Tanenhaus said that the Cambridge Health Alliance recently received a grant for Mass in Motion, which is a policy change initiative around health eating and physical activity to reduce chronic diseases. She will find out who the contact person is, and hopes that they will involve individuals with disabilities.

Naomi Pinson said that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has a wellness campaign, noting that individuals with psychiatric disabilities die an average of 25 years early than people without psychiatric disabilities.

Meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kate Thurman, Disability Project Coordinator