

## **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)**

Minutes for Thursday, December 8, 2011

### **Present:**

Members: Elizabeth Dean-Clover, JoAnn Haas, Alissa Land, Bet MacArthur, Naomi Pinson, Rachel Tanenhaus, and Dave Wood.

Alternates: Laura Brelsford and Don Summerfield.

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

Absent: Miriam Cooper, Sandy Durmaskin, Eileen Keegan Bongiorno, and Kathy Watkins.

Guests: Chris Burke, Cambridge Police Department; and Ricky Leiserson, Cambridge Resident.

### **Minutes:**

A motion to approve the November 10 minutes was passed by the Commission.

### **Announcements:**

Michael Muehe announced that the Winter 2011 issue of *Disability Issues* featured a front page article, "One of the Largest Minorities and the Workplace," covering CCPD's October Disability Employment Awareness Month event, at which Christine Griffin gave the keynote address. He and others noted that the event's planning committee and volunteers did a great job. [Editor's note: the article may be found online at <[www.workwithoutlimits.org/DisabilityIssues](http://www.workwithoutlimits.org/DisabilityIssues)>].

Kate Thurman announced that the Housing Division of the Community Development Department is holding a series of walk-in information sessions with housing personnel available to discuss the City's affordable rental and homeownership programs over the next several months at different locations throughout Cambridge, with the next session scheduled for Monday, Dec. 12, 6-8 p.m., at the City Hall Annex, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 344 Broadway. [Editor's note: for more information, please contact Michelle Moran at <[Mmoran@cambridgema.gov](mailto:Mmoran@cambridgema.gov)> or 617-349-4622].

Rachel Tanenhaus announced that she is now the contact person for the Department of Public Health's Healthy Aging and Disability Unit, as the director has left her position.

**Police Community Liaison Update:** Chris Burke reported meeting with crime analysis staff at the Police Department (PD) to generate information on reported crimes of bias. He said that eight such crimes had been reported this year, one of which was committed against a person with a disability (PWD). However, Superintendent Burke noted that a lot of crimes go unreported. He will report back at the January meeting as to whether or not that statistic includes all reported crime against PWD, or only those that are categorized as bias crimes. He said the Department uses a program called Bridge Stat to report on trends in crime by neighborhood. These reports are put out each Friday.

JoAnn Haas noted that street lights near disability parking spaces are often burned out, at which Superintendent Burke said that the PD can facilitate replacement of bulbs with the Department of Public Works. [Editor's note: please see Executive Director's Report for information on iReport, a new smart phone app allowing individuals to report certain issues to DPW, including burned out street lights].

**Chair's Report:** Elizabeth Dean-Clover thanked CCPD members for their work in the 2011 calendar year on both new and continuation of progress on various projects. She cited as examples work on snow and ice clearance, holding an informational table at River Festival, and the successful October event.

Ms. Dean-Clover also reported that Kathy Watkins will be giving a presentation on the sidewalk improvement portion of DPW's Five Year Plan at the January meeting, and that Mary Thomas, the new Director of Disability Services at Harvard University, will speak at February's meeting.

### **Update on Sidewalk Obstruction Issues:**

#### Development of Snow & Ice FAQ

Joanna Berton Martinez, pro bono associate, handed out copies of a draft Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document that she prepared addressing questions about snow and ice shoveling that CCPD staff often receive from residents with disabilities during the winter months. She noted that she took information from past CCPD minutes, correspondence and DPW's website to compile a list of questions and answers, but requested feedback from those in attendance.

JoAnn Haas reported feeling like the document is more focused on City efforts and responsibilities and ask that it be revised to include property owners, as well.

Laura Brelsford suggested breaking the document down into sections, such as "Parking," "Owners" and "Renters", etc.

It was decided that members would email their feedback to Ms. Berton Martinez, who will have a second draft prepared for January's meeting. [Editor's note: members of the public may send comments to [kthurman@cambridgema.gov](mailto:kthurman@cambridgema.gov)].

Michael Muehe and Kate Thurman reported receiving numerous phone calls in the winter months from residents with disabilities who have questions and/or concerns about shoveling their own sidewalks, as well as other snow-related issues, such as disability parking, curb cuts, etc., and that one goal of the FAQ would be to clarify snow- and ice-removal responsibilities, while potentially reducing the amount of staff time required in addressing such routine inquiries.

Mr. Muehe said that DPW and the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department will need to review CCPD's final draft before it is distributed.

#### Action Item:

- Members will email Joanna Berton Martinez with feedback on the Snow & Ice FAQ.

#### Update on Initiatives to Improve Snow & Ice Clearance

JoAnn Haas reported forwarding an email to the neighborhood associations summarizing the discussion from October's meeting with the associations and DPW to discuss sidewalk accessibility during the winter.

Ms. Haas also said that she is looking for feedback from individuals with visual disabilities on how snow and ice on sidewalks affects them.

**Disability Reframed Film Series:** Bet MacArthur said that she is working on reconstituting the Film Series sub-committee, stating that it has moved too far onto staff when it started as more of a volunteer effort of the disability community and allies. She would like to meet with people who are interested in working on the series, including Miriam Cooper and Alissa Land, and possibly holding the next film in February. [Editor's note: if you are interested in volunteering to help plan and run screenings, please

contact Kate Thurman at <kthurman@cambridgema.gov>, 617-349-4692 (voice), or 617-492-0235 (TTY)].

**Executive Director's Report:** Michael Muehe reported that a new app for smart phones called iReport was developed for Cambridge and is available on both Android and Apple platforms. iReport allows users to report a pothole, defective street or park light, rodents, graffiti, or missed rubbish & recycling pickup. The report then gets sent directly to the DPW staff person responsible for the issue, and users may check iReport for status updates. The app does not currently have an option for reporting unshoveled sidewalks, and Mr. Muehe said that he would ask Kathy Watkins if that could be added and will report back in January.

He also reported conducting site visits at Knuckle Bones and Atwoods Tavern, as well as visiting the Recovery Learning Center in Somerville.

He said that the new accessible taxicab, MV-1, was on display at a recent Cambridge Taxicab Advisory Sub-Committee meeting, and that at least two medallion owners expressed in interest in purchasing one.

Mr. Muehe reported attending a presentation on the MBTA Green Line Extension Project, along with the ADA Coordinators from Medford and Somerville. He said that the MBTA is constructing a new, accessible Lechmere Station, and seven new stations in Somerville and Medford.

He also said that he spoke with a class of adult learners at the Community Learning Center about ADA issues, what CCPD does, etc.

Lastly, Mr. Muehe said that the deadline for the February-March, 2012 issue of *AccessLetter* is Friday, January 13, just before the Martin Luther King holiday.

Action Item:

- Michael Muehe will ask Kathy Watkins if an option for reporting unshoveled sidewalks is on DPW's list to be added to the iReport app and will report back to the Commission at the January meeting.

**Project Coordinator's Report:** Kate Thurman said that she received an email from the coordinator of Cambridge's new Winter Farmer's Market asking if CCPD would be interested in holding an informational table on one of the market dates. The Market will be held at the Community Center (5 Callender Street) from 10AM to 2PM every Saturday between January 7 and April 28, 2012. She offered to get more information if members are interested in participating.

**Public Input:** There was no public input.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm and was followed by a holiday celebration.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kate Thurman, Disability Project Coordinator