

DRAFT

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, March 8, 2012

51 Inman Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Cambridge, MA 02139

Meeting was called to order at approximately 5:45pm

Present:

Members: Elizabeth Dean-Clover, Miriam Cooper, Sandy Durmaskin, JoAnn Haas, Bet MacArthur, Naomi Pinson, Rachel Tanenhaus, and Dave Wood.

Alternates: Don Summerfield

Staff: Michael Muehe and Kate Thurman

Absent: Eileen Keegan Bongiorno, Alissa Land, and Kathy Watkins.

Guests: Tanya Iatridis, Senior Director, Harvard University Planning Office; Mary Thomas, Director, Harvard University Disability Services; and Bruce Williams, Roxbury resident.

Documents Used:

- 2011 Harvard University Town Gown Report (www.upo.harvard.edu/reports/towngown/TownGown_2011.pdf)
- Draft CCPD Letter to MBTA regarding proposed fare and service changes
- Memorandum from Traffic Department re. prohibiting bicycle parking to disability/handicap parking sign poles proposal
- Cambridge Public Health Bulletin (http://cambridgepublichealth.org/publications/CPHD_Bulletin_2012--medium%20file%20size.pdf)
- Second Thoughts fact sheet (www.secondthoughts.org)
- Fact sheet from Just-A-Start Corporation about affordable homeownership units available in Cambridge (<http://justastart.org/housing.shtml>).

Minutes: Motions to amend the February 9, 2012 minutes to reflect the following changes were passed by the Commission (changes are underlined):

- Ms. Haas reported that the bicycle parking regulations have not yet been changed and that Sue Clippinger of TPT had told her that it would be reasonable to expect the change to be made in March.
- Ms. Durmaskin made a motion for the Commission to support the installation of continuous concrete sidewalks with brick edging along this segment of Broadway. The motion was seconded and passed.

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

Community Outreach Update: Sandy Durmaskin reported on her experience working a CCPD informational table at the Green Street's Initiative breakfast in February. She said that it was a very positive experience. She reported having a good discussion with representatives from Mass Bikes, whose table was located next to CCPD's, about the importance of not locking bicycles to street poles designating

disability parking spaces. She also reported receiving feedback from several people who stopped by to celebrate all the things they had done to improve access in Cambridge.

Guest Speakers: Mary Thomas, Director of Harvard University Disability Services and Tanya Iatridis, Senior Director of the Harvard University Planning Office, provided an update on their efforts to continually improve access for individuals with disabilities at Harvard.

Ms. Iatridis explained that Harvard University is one of the most de-centralized institutions in the country, wherein each school functions largely as its own entity, with their own processes, for example, for handling requests for reasonable accommodations. Because the University is 375 years old, building renovations often bring up accessibility challenges. Ms. Thomas and Ms. Iatridis are part of the central administration of Harvard and work with each of the University's schools to find solutions to such challenges. They also reported working with Michael Muehe on several occasions to come up with creative solutions to address architectural barriers to access. They passed out copies of the 2011 Harvard University's Town Gown Report, explaining both existing facility conditions and future plans of the University.

Ms. Thomas said that she is working on implementing a standard reasonable accommodation process, trying to centralize and streamline things as much as possible for both students and employees, as well as visitors to campus. She also that she has been working to make commencement services more readily accessible to visitors with disabilities, and to make it easier for them to request any accommodations they may need, such as wheelchairs.

Update on Sidewalk Obstruction Issues: JoAnn Hass handed out copies of a memo from Wayne Amaral of the Department of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation (TPT), outlining proposed changes by Sue Clippinger, Director of TPT, to the bicycle regulations to make clear that bikes may not be locked to street poles designating disability parking spaces. The memo also included a proposal for signage to be added to many of these street poles prohibiting bicycle parking.

A motion to approve Ms. Clippinger's proposed changes to the bicycle regulations as well as the proposed signage was passed by the Commission.

Disability Reframed: There was no update on the Disability Reframed Film Series.

Chair's Report: Elizabeth Dean-Clower said that nominations for the positions of Chair and Secretary will be accepted at the April meeting and that elections will be held at the May meeting. [Editor's note: The May CCPD meeting has been moved to the third Thursday, May 17].

Ms. Dean-Clower handed out a draft letter to the MBTA in response to their proposed fare and service changes.

Executive Director's Report: Michael Muehe reported having a positive interaction with Calvin Lindsay, Director of Cambridge Cable Television/City TV-8, about the need to capture ASL interpreters on screen when broadcasting an event at which interpreters are present. This issue came up after the MBTA's public meeting in Cambridge City Hall regarding proposed fare and service changes in February, which was broadcast live on City TV-8, but without view of the ASL interpreters. Mr. Muehe reported that Mr. Lindsay agreed ASL interpreters need to be included on-screen when present.

Mr. Muehe also reported working with the IT Department on improving the accessibility of the City's website, and said that the City is in the process of hiring a contractor to do an accessibility audit.

He handed out copies of the Cambridge Public Health Bulletin, a new publication from the Cambridge Public Health Department, which includes an article on persons with disabilities.

Mr. Muehe reported receiving applications for variances from Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) code of regulations for two different buildings in Cambridge: 52 Church Street, where a new music hall called The Sinclair is being established, and 33 Brattle Street, where Citizens Bank is renovating a currently inaccessible office space for a new branch. He said he wrote letters to the MAAB opposing each of these applications.

Mr. Muehe said that the 2013 Abilities Expo is being held in Boston September 20-22, 2013 and that the expo's organizers have offered free exhibition space for CCPD to hold an informational booth as long as CCPD agrees to staff the booth for all three days. He said that it may be possible to invite other commissions on disability to participate and help staff the table.

Lastly, Mr. Muehe reported that a group of Massachusetts disability advocates has formed a group called Second Thoughts, which is opposed to the assisted suicide ballot question on which residents will be voting in November. He said that the only true choice that the measure provides is the choice for doctors to prescribe lethal doses of medication without fear of facing any consequences. More information can be found on the group's website at <www.secondthoughts.org>.

Project Coordinator's Report: Kate Thurman announced that 14 new affordable homeownership units have been developed in Cambridge by Just-A-Start Corporation, including one accessible 1-bedroom unit. Just-A-Start is actively recruiting eligible applicants who are in need of an accessible unit. The application deadline is April 20, 2012. Call 617-494-0444, ext. 340 or go to <www.justastart.org> for more information.

Public Input: There was no public input.

Meeting adjourned at 7:29pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kate Thurman, Disability Project Coordinator