

Draft

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Thursday, December 12, 2020

Online via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm

Present

Members: Loring Brinckerhoff, Avril de Pagter, Mary Devlin, Gary Dmytryk, Jerry Friedman, Stelios Gragoudas, Valerie Hammond, Nicole Horton-Simpson, Jackie Jones, Philibert Kongtcheu, and Daniel Stubbs

Staff: Rachel Tanenhaus and Kate Thurman

Guest Speaker: John Nardone and TJ Shea, Department of Public Works

Documents/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Minutes from the November 12, 2020 Meeting
- City of Cambridge Winter Operations
- COVID Case Info for Cambridge

Minutes:

A motion to accept the November 12 minutes was seconded and unanimously passed.

DPW's Annual Snow Presentation:

John Nardone, DPW's Deputy Commission, and TJ Shea, Superintendent of Streets, gave DPW's annual presentation on snow operations, reviewing years past and discussing plans for the winter of 2020/2021. See attached presentation, City of Cambridge Winter Operations.

Highlights included:

- When it comes to clearing snow, DPW's first priority is ensuring that emergency vehicles can access City streets. If after plowing any given street, emergency vehicles still cannot get down it, the Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department (TPT) will declare a parking ban.
- DPW works in close coordination with several City departments during snow emergencies, including Human Services, the City Manager's Office, Police & Fire Departments, Emergency Communications, Water Department, School Department, etc.
- Residents are required to clear snow and ice from their sidewalks within 12 hours if snow stops falling during the daytime and by 1:00 PM if it snowed during the night.
 - The Council on Aging maintains an exemption list for residents with disabilities who are unable to shovel snow and who meet income eligibility guidelines.
 - Danehy Park staff clear the snow and ice from sidewalks abutting these residents' homes.
- DPW clears sidewalks and their curb cuts abutting City buildings and property, which is approximately 25 miles. They also clear disability parking spaces abutting City property.
 - DPW does not have the capacity to clear other disability parking spaces around the City
- DPW, in coordination with CCPD, has identified high priority bus stops over the last fifteen years or so and clears those, as well as the nearby curb cuts and crosswalks. This program has grown significantly over this time period.
- Space savers are not permitted

- Bikes lanes present unique challenges and have required the purchase of additional equipment for removing snow. 20 additional miles of bike lanes are being added in the next year. Specialty equipment is required if regular sized trucks cannot get down them.
- DPW started using brine, a saltwater mixture, in 2018. This has significantly reduced the amount of salt the city has used, reducing the environmental impact. Additionally, brine can be put down on streets up to 3 days before a storm hits.
- Restaurants that have been approved for street set-ups have the option of maintain their set-up through the winter and until one month after the pandemic is declared over. There are about 17 restaurants who plan to keep their outdoor seating open.

Chair's Report:

- Phil said that he would send members a survey to get input on how members feel the board has been doing and on what can be improved. He'd like to know what members are passionate about and what they would like to work on.

COVID Data and Trends:

- Gary spoke about how to access COVID data and trends online through the City's COVID website (<https://www.cambridgema.gov/covid19>)
- See the attached "COVID Case Info for Cambridge"

Executive Director's Report:

- Rachel said that the design team for the City's universal design playground will present on their progress and plans at next month's meeting
- In the past, the board had the following sub-committees:
 - Community outreach
 - Disability Reframed Film Series
 - Media & Technology
 - Advocacy & Access

Members can discuss going forward if they would like to form sub-committees in their interest areas.

Project Coordinator's Report:

- Kate has been asked to join the City's new Language Justice Working Group, which will meet for the first time in mid-December. The goal of the group is to create policy around City communications with the hope of making them more accessible to all residents, including those with disabilities, as well as those for whom English is not their native language.
- The City has a new dedicated budget for communication access realtime translation (CART), which has provided communication access for many additional meetings.
- The City continues to work on transitioning from CART to closed captioning for City Council meetings. Comcast is in the early stages of running tests with new equipment that will eventually allow for the transmission of the captioning signal. Once closed captioning is in place, residents will be able to access it when watching meetings both online and via CityView 22.
- She asked if board members would be interested in a virtual board retreat. Given the interest expressed, she and Rachel will speak with Ellen Semonoff about the possibility of working with a consultant to hold one.

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Kate Thurman