

Accepted June 14, 2012

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, May 17, 2012

344 Broadway, 4th Floor Conference Room, Cambridge, MA 02139

Meeting was called to order at 5:38 pm

Present:

Members: Elizabeth Dean-Clover, Sandy Durmaskin, JoAnn Haas, Alissa Land, Bet MacArthur, Rachel Tanenhaus, Kathy Watkins, and Dave Wood.

Alternates: Don Summerfield

Staff: Michael Muehe and Kate Thurman

Absent: Miriam Cooper, Eileen Keegan Bongiorno, and Naomi Pinson.

Guests: Superintendent Chris Burke, Police Department; Nicole Horton, DHSP Inclusion Specialist; and Jane Rosett.

Documents Used:

- April 12, 2012 CCPD Meeting Minutes

Minutes: A motion was made by Sandy Durmaskin to amend the April 12, 2012 minutes to include the following:

- Members requested from staff a list of the National Organization on Disability award money mini-grant recipients.
- Michael Muehe announced that there will be two Massachusetts Architectural Access Board hearings on June 25, 2012 to discuss two variance applications.
- The board will discuss at the next meeting which summer month to take off.

It was also noted that a few names were misspelled.

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was seconded and passed.

DHSP Inclusion Specialist's Update: Nicole Horton said that she is working on hiring an additional 20 to 30 inclusion aides to work with children with disabilities in summer programs. She reported having about 18 aides on staff during the school year for after school programs, but that the demand is much greater in the summer. Many of the children in the after school programs do not need additional support for the 2-3 hour length of the program, but do need additional support in summer camps, which are less structured and have days as long as 10 hours. Ms. Horton also said that there is an influx of children coming in during the summer that are in out-of-district placements during the school year.

Ms. Horton reported that the number of children with disabilities enrolling in summer programming continues to grow each year, as does DHSP's ability to serve more children with a higher level of need. She said that the Inclusion Advisory Team is working to find new ways of gaining statistical data in order to support the role of the Inclusion Initiative within the City. For example, they are seeking data that will help identify pockets around the City where the incidence of children with disabilities may be higher.

Rachel Tanenhaus mentioned that the Department of Public Health has a lot of data on populations throughout the Commonwealth, all of which is public.

Disability Reframed: Bet MacArthur said that the film series sub-committee has chosen the next four films to be screened, and that there is a possibility of collaborating with the Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities. She also reported applying for a \$1,000 grant from the Awesome Foundation. If awarded, the money will be used to pay for the rights to show independent films. Ms. MacArthur also said that she plans to contact the Boston Jewish Film Festival and ReelAbilities to see how they access films and documentaries that are hard to find.

Michael Muehe added that the Cambridge Human Rights Commission is interested in collaborating with us to screen a film with a disability rights component, specifically *Lives Worth Living*, a documentary about the Disability Rights Movement in the United States from just after World War II ended to the passage of the ADA in 1990. The film is both captioned and audio-described.

The film sub-committee will work on scheduling the screening.

Chair's Report: Elizabeth Dean-Clower reported writing a letter of support for the MA Department of Public Health to be submitted with a grant application.

Nominations for Officer Positions:

Elizabeth Dean-Clower was nominated for Chair at the April meeting. There were no further nominations at this meeting. A vote was taken, and Elizabeth Dean-Clower was elected as Chair with all members present voting for her.

JoAnn Haas was nominated as Secretary the April meeting. There were no further nominations at this meeting. A vote was taken, and JoAnn Haas was elected as Secretary with all members present voting for her.

River Festival:

River Festival is on Saturday, June 2 from noon to 6pm and CCPD will again have an informational table on Memorial Drive at the corner of JFK Street, and the table must be staffed at all times.

Summer schedule:

JoAnn Haas made a motion to take the month of August off. The motion was seconded and passed, with Rachel Tanenhaus abstaining. Thus, CCPD will meet in June and July, but not in August.

October Employment Event:

Ms. Dean-Clower said that she would like to arrange a date for the employment event sub-committee to meet before CCPD's June meeting.

Other:

Ms. Dean-Clower reported that Gayle Johnson, a candidate for Representative Alice Wolf's seat in November, has requested to come speak with the Commission. The appropriateness of inviting candidates for public office to speak at CCPD meetings was discussed, and it was noted that CCPD cannot endorse a candidate for public office.

There was also discussion about whether or not CCPD is permitted to take a position on a ballot question, with specific reference to the "Death with Dignity Act" that will be on the November ballot. It was decided that JoAnn Haas will seek clarification from the State Ethics Commission.

Public Works Update: Kathy Watkins said that there will be a City Council hearing focusing on Kendall Square from 9am to noon on May 30. The hearing is open to the public, but public comment will not be taken.

Ms. Watkins also reported that construction on Western Avenue and on several streets in West Cambridge will begin this summer. She said that the Broadway project from Portland to Prospect Streets will move forward with concrete sidewalks with decorative brick edging, and will begin in June and last for approximately one year.

Ms. Watkins said that more streets have been added to the 5 year plan, which she will discuss at a future meeting. In addition, there is a lot of activity going on about Central Square, with the community process proceeding.

Elizabeth Dean-Clover reported that Ms. Watkins gave a presentation on Universal Design to the Kendall Square Advisory Committee about a year ago, and that Universal Design has been listed as one of the overall goals of the redesign of the area.

Police Community Liaison Update: Superintendent Chris Burke reported on some of the Police Department's efforts around mental health issues. Earlier this year, the Department put together a team to respond to people with mental health issues. He said that when people are in crisis, there is a greater threat to both first responders and to the individuals themselves. They are looking into Mental Health First Aid for Law Enforcement, with the goal of decreasing involvement in the criminal justice system due to mental health issues. Superintendent Burke said that the Department began an effort with school resource officers about five years ago to look at youth, and that they have since had a lot of success working with both the school department and the Cambridge Health Alliance in identifying kids at high risk and getting them the services they need. They have had a lot of success with keeping those kids out of the criminal justice system and are taking the model and hoping to apply it to people with mental health issues. He said that all Police Department personnel will receive this training.

Update on Sidewalk Obstruction Issues: JoAnn Haas reported having problems with the City's recycling contractors leaving bins in the middle of sidewalk. Kathy Watkins recommended calling DPW at 617-349-4800 as soon as possible after collection so that they can send the crew back to reposition the empty bins in such a way as to maximize sidewalk clearance.

Ms. Haas also said that she will email the neighborhood associations about sidewalk obstructions, including botanical, trash and recycling bins, etc.

Lastly, Ms. Haas asked people to let her know if they are interested in working on creating a bicycle parking PSA.

Executive Director's Report: Michael Muehe thanked everyone who participated in the 30 second PSA filming at CCTV on May 7.

He said that he will be attending a MAAB hearing on May 21 related to 30 Brattle Street, where Citizens Bank is opening a branch. The hearing will take place at One Ashburton Place in Boston at 1pm. He reported that the MAAB will be holding two hearings on Monday, June 25: one for the Bowery Boston/Sinclair restaurant/music venue at 52 Church Street and the other for Founder's House at Lesley University on Everett St.

Mr. Muehe reported on behalf of Naomi Pinson that there will be a protest at 10am on June 2 in Canton at the Judge Rotenberg Center, the only school in the country that is permitted to use electric shock aversive therapy on students with disabilities. The protest is being organized by an occupy group.

Mr. Muehe said that he had no intention of indicating any endorsement of CCPD on the assisted suicide ballot question by listing CCPD as the host of a public forum at the Citywide Senior Center on Saturday, May 19 at 2pm. The forum will provide for an opportunity for public discussion on this ballot question.

JoAnn Haas made a motion to ask the State Ethics Commission whether or not CCPD can take a position on ballot questions. Alissa Land amended the motion to include inquiring about the extent of permitted activity. The motion was seconded and passed with no opposition.

Sandy Durmaskin said that CCPD members have at a minimum a role in educating themselves and the community about the ballot question, regardless of whether or not there is a vote on taking a position.

Elizabeth Dean-Clower mentioned the idea of bringing somebody in from the other side to do a presentation in order to provide another perspective.

Michael Muehe noted that CCPD does not have any regulatory jurisdiction or power over anybody and that there is no single person or group in Cambridge that has jurisdiction to affect the ballot question, which will be voted on by all Massachusetts citizens.

Sandy Durmaskin said that while it would have been more ethically comfortable to have had a neutral moderator present on the issue, it is probably not possible at this point. Ms. Dean-Clower added that the forum at the Senior Center is an interactive discussion, but is not designed to give both sides.

Mr. Muehe said that the way the assisted suicide ballot question is being framed in the general public is as a right vs. left, religious vs. non-religious, pro-choice vs. pro-life issue, and that people with disabilities (PWD) are being left out of the equation and the purpose of the event on Saturday is to have a public forum so PWD, who have routinely and systematically have been ignored by the larger society, have an opportunity to discuss the implications of the ballot question.

Project Coordinator's Report: Kate Thurman requested those in attendance to email her with calendar items for the upcoming May-June AccessLetter.

Public Input: There was no public input.

Meeting adjourned at 7:46pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kate Thurman, Disability Project Coordinator