

City of Cambridge

Commission for Persons with Disabilities

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Keisha Greaves
Chair

Danielle Jones-McLaughlin
Secretary

Loring Brinckerhoff
Avril dePagter
Rayna Jhaveri
Melissa Miguel
Deepti Nijhawan
Emma Pan
Zach Solomons
Daniel Stubbs

Rachel Tanenhaus
Executive Director/
ADA Coordinator

Kate Thurman
Deputy Director/
Assistant ADA Coordinator

Maya Friedrich
Administrative Assistant

The Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities is holding an abbreviated meeting online via Zoom on April 10, 2025 from 5:30 – 7:00 PM

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO JOIN BY 5:30 PM

AGENDA

Please keep your microphone muted when you are not speaking

- | | | |
|--|---------|--------------------|
| 1. Introductions | 2 min. | |
| 2. Announcements | 2 min. | CCPD staff / Board |
| 3. Approval of February and March minutes
<i>See pages 4 & 7 of this agenda packet</i> | 4 min. | CCPD Board |
| 4. Chair's Report
<i>CCPD Retreat Planning</i> | 20 min. | Keisha Greaves |
| 5. Staff Report | 10 min. | Rachel Tanenhaus |
| 6. Public Works Update | 10 min. | Melissa Miguel |
| 7. Public Input
<i>See pages 2&3 of this agenda packet for instructions on providing public comment</i> | 3 min. | general public |

CART/closed captioning will be provided for this meeting

Captions can be turned on within the Zoom platform or streamed in a separate URL at <https://bit.ly/CCPDcaptioning>.

(captions will not appear until the meeting has started)

The City of Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities, does not discriminate, including on the basis of disability. The Commission for Persons with Disabilities will provide auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities upon request.

**The next CCPD meeting will be held on
Thursday, May 8, 2025 from 5:30-7:00 PM**

Members of the public: See instructions on pages 2 & 3 on how to watch the CCPD meeting and provide public comment via Zoom

Approved 5/8/2025

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, April 10, 2025 CCPD Meeting

Online via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 5:36 PM

Present:

Members: Keisha Greaves, Zachary Solomons, Melissa Miguel, Avril dePagter, Dan Stubbs, Emma Pan, Loring Brinckerhoff, Rayna Jhaveri, Danielle Jones McLaughlin

Absent: Deepti Nijhawan

Staff: Rachel Tanenhaus, Kate Thurman, Maya Friedrich

Other: Deputy Superintendent (DS) Buckowe Yam

Announcements:

- Kate announced that the CCPD board retreat will take place Saturday, May 31 from 12pm-5pm at Dan's office building in Boston (225 Franklin Street).

Approval of Minutes:

- The February CCPD meeting minutes were unanimously approved.
- The March CCPD meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Chair's Report:

Keisha Greaves reported:

- We are continuing to plan the upcoming board retreat:
 - CCPD staff had a meeting last week with Keisha, Danielle and Ora Grodsky (the consultant helping us plan the retreat). We discussed which activities will be helpful to get to know each other and make the most of our work.
 - CCPD staff, board Chair, Secretary and Ora have another planning meeting on Monday 4/14—Keisha asked for feedback on what we should discuss in next week's meeting.
 - A board member mentioned that CCPD had previously discussed creating some kind of orientation materials/process for new board members and asked if that was still on the retreat agenda—it will be.
 - Keisha said she wants to revisit former working groups (from the retreat 2 years ago) to see where they are/get those meetings back in order if group members are still interested.
 - Another member also wants to use retreat time to discuss the format of board meetings (agenda template)/find ways to improve it.
 - Keisha wants to spend some retreat time strategizing on how we can leverage social media so people know that we exist. Relatedly, Kate shared that we are working with the DHSP communications team to update our website so hopefully that will help increase our visibility.

Staff Report:

Rachel Tanenhaus reported:

- Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) variances: a variance request was submitted for the Museum of Science (half of which is in Boston and half in Cambridge; the construction is happening in Cambridge)—they are making a lot of accessibility changes and asked for a time-based variance so they can stagger construction of different sections based on their funding timeline. When they consulted Rachel she did not have much feedback, and the request was approved by MAAB on the condition that regular updates about the construction progress are provided.
- Rachel shared two announcements from external organizations:
 - Massport (Logan Airport) is conducting an ADA self-evaluation and transition plan, and they want to hear from both disability-focused organizations and individual members of the public. They want people with disabilities who have used Logan Airport’s public facilities to fill out the [Public Accessibility survey](#) which will be available until May 5.
 - Keisha asked if it would be possible and helpful for someone from Massport to speak at one of our CCPD meetings and share updates about accessibility in their facilities. Rachel said they would likely be able to speak about accessibility from an administrative perspective/related to how the airport itself runs but would not be able to speak about areas like TSA or airline operations since they don’t oversee those things.
 - The City of Melrose is putting on a storytelling event for people with disabilities! They are reaching out to various communities (not just Melrose) and the event itself will take place in Somerville on April 29 at the Arts at the Armory café. The theme is “Disability is Diversity: Snapshots of Life with a Disability”, and they especially want to hear from folks who have never told their story before. If you’ve never done a storytelling event before they will give you a coaching session! You can [apply to perform as a storyteller here](#).
- 5/31 CCPD Retreat—**please get back to Maya with lunch orders and whether you are using the shuttle** (the shuttle will leave from Central) so we can coordinate everything as quickly as possible. We need to submit lunch orders to fiscal folks ASAP because our fiscal year is ending, and we need to pay the vendor.
- We are continuing our work to formalize the process for internal employee accommodations—once the process is developed, this responsibility will be transferred to Human Resources. Rachel expressed feeling privileged to have started this work with people with disabilities who work for the city, but we want the process to work as smoothly as possible. On the theme of “nothing about us without us”, our involvement has been necessary to make sure PWD are involved with creating that process—for example, we’ve updated the medical accommodation form and other materials to make them less jargony and make it more clear that folks aren’t required to disclose their specific disability but rather how it impacts their work and why they need accommodation.
- Kate addressed concerns brought up earlier about the format of our meeting structure—in the next retreat planning meeting we can speak about this with our facilitation consultant Ora. Kate knows we aren’t making the best use of everyone’s time and wants to make sure that everyone feels supported and like they are making a meaningful impact. This is the board’s retreat and it should provide an opportunity for us to get to know each other and for people to engage in projects that interest them. We have our May board meeting before the retreat, so there will be more opportunities to share ideas there. Board members can also email ccpd@cambridgema.gov to send staff specific thoughts about the retreat (board members cannot email the whole board due to open meeting laws).
- Kate shared a “semi-update” on transitioning to hybrid meetings: there are plans to renovate our conference room to make it more accessible (since the pandemic it has been used for storage and is cluttered, also needs new furniture—this was supposed to happen this fiscal year? Kate will check in with DHSP administrative folks about where that stands) but we are trying to make hybrid meetings happen again soon.
- Kate and Rachel will be attending the virtual National ADA Symposium at the beginning of May and will report out at the next meeting about what they learn.
- Elections are next month. Currently our 2 members of leadership are eligible to run again but so can anyone else on the board—the elected positions are the Chair and Secretary. People can have up to 2 terms (Keisha and

Danielle have both had 1 so far) and anyone can self-nominate or nominate other people. Nominations are open now and will close at the beginning of our May board meeting (May 8) when we vote.

- Keisha described her position as Chair: responsibilities include communicating with Kate and Rachel to help plan meetings and come up with our agendas, and mentioned that she tries to advertise meetings on LinkedIn so members of the public know they are happening, but her main role is to work on meeting agendas/suggest ideas for them and facilitate board meetings.
- Danielle said her role as Secretary is about supporting the Chair (Keisha) with whatever ideas she has, and to run meetings if Keisha isn't available.
- Danielle nominated herself for Secretary again.
- Keisha nominated herself for Chair again.
- Rayna and Loring seconded the nominations for Keisha and Danielle, and shared they appreciate their "energy and good vibes".
- Rachel clarified board terms:
 - Members serve for 3 years and then can be appointed for an additional term.
 - Chair/Secretary positions serve for 1 year and then can run for an additional term—you must be a current board member to run for these elected positions.
- Maya reminded everyone to submit lunch orders ASAP and RSVP to the board retreat. A member asked about food allergy accommodations, and Maya said to make sure to include allergy information in your RSVP (Kate said the restaurant was very accommodating to dietary needs at the last retreat).

Public Works Update:

Melissa Miguel reported:

On-going construction:

- **River Street:**
 - Utility work to continue along River St towards Memorial Drive
 - Significant construction continues in and around Carl Barron Plaza. There will be pedestrian detours and MBTA bus stop relocations ongoing for several months. Contractor to pay special attention to accessibility features – we will monitor closely.
- **Harvard Sq. Plaza:**
 - Phase 1 Sidewalk reconstruction on pause until phase 7 is completed. (No Roadwork during winter months)
 - Phase 7 on going – Demo existing granite and reinforced concrete.
 - Phase 7 duration - ~ 33 weeks
 - Phase 7 involves Granite seating and wall, plaza re-grading, brick paver replacement, utility installations (water, sewer, drain) and electrical and telecommunication conduit work
 - **Estimate Contract Completion Date – November 2026**
- **Chapter 90, Contract 24:**
 - Huron Avenue – Complete
 - Park Avenue - Complete
 - Chestnut Street
 - brick sidewalk install continues
 - top course paving complete – Pearl to Pleasant
 - Elm St
 - Some sidewalk work remains

- Final paving Spring 2025
- Webster Ave – Complete
- Dodge Street
 - Utility work complete
 - Full depth road reconstruction underway
 - Sidewalk work beginning 4/14
- **Chapter 90, Contract 25:**
 - **Maple Ave** Full depth road construction to commence week of April 14th (weather pending).
 - **Montgomery Street** Curb and sidewalk work starting April 2025.
 - **Dana/Centre Streets** - Utility work to continue April 2025.

Contract Streets

- Green St- Pearl to Landsdowne
- Maple Avenue- Broadway to Cambridge
- Centre St – Dana to Hancock
- Montgomery St – Harvey to Rindge
- Sciarappa St- Charles to Winter

Upcoming projects:

- **Linear Park:**
 - <https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/communitydevelopment/linearparkredesign>
- **Port Infrastructure Project:** Clement Morgan Park and Streets in Phase I contract will be bid late spring, with construction beginning late summer.
- **Mass Ave4 improvements:**
 - Mass Ave Partial Construction Phase 1A
 - Construction on Waterhouse Street to Linnaean Street is set to begin this Spring. A Construction Open House will be held for attendees to understand what to expect during construction of this section and to view the final design for upcoming improvements. The Construction Open House is set for Wednesday, March 26, 5:30-7:30 PM, Lesley University, University Hall Atrium, 1815 Mass Ave, 2nd Floor (accessible by elevator).
 - Project Area - Massachusetts Avenue Between Waterhouse Street and Forest St
 - Contract was awarded to Newport Construction
- **Chapter 90, Contract 26: *Second round of community meetings are currently in progress***

Contract Streets

- Chetwyn Road – Newell St to End
- Gray Street – Martin to Linnaean
- Haskell – Rindge to Mass Ave
- Norfolk – Broadway to Somerville City Line
- Shepard – Garden to Mass Ave
- Avon Hill Street – Linnaean St to Upland Rd
- Hillside Ave – Avon Hill St to Washington Ave

If you are interested in receiving email notifications/updates for Chapter 90 - Contract 26, please email Melissa Miguel, P.E. at mmiguel@cambridgema.gov and you will be added to the contact list.

- DPW is doing an accessibility project on the Moore Youth Center on the entrance/surrounding area focused on improving crossings and eliminating hinge points. The design plan came from Parks Department and Melissa will share the graphic with Kate and Rachel (includes improvements on sidewalk, removal of planters, etc.).
- Avril mentioned that this year's Participatory Budget (PB) ballot projects focused on accessibility did not win enough votes and she wonders if DPW funds could fund these (she specifically mentioned the portable "beach mats" that can be rolled out on grass at events for wheelchair users). Kate said that these kinds of projects are outside of the scope of DPW but shared that DHSP will be funding the submersible wheelchair project which was not funded at the PB.

Public Comment:

- A member of the public asked if people with disabilities can access free masks and COVID-19 tests through the CCPD office. She said the health department used to do that and that it should be done for everyone—Rachel responded that this might be something that the Cambridge Public Health Department could address. A board member mentioned that [Boston Covid Action](#) offers a program where people can order free masks/tests to be delivered to them (you can request up to 10 covid tests per month and around 30 masks for free). The attendee said she appreciated Boston Covid Action but knows they have recently stepped back due to limited capacity. The person shared that as a taxpaying member of Cambridge she would like to see the city pay for that.
- Keisha shared that she feels there should be a separate participatory budget process serving accessibility needs and feels Cambridge should prioritize funding accessibility needs. Rachel shared that she agrees that people with disabilities shouldn't have to fight for civil rights and be subject to an "undue burden" clause, and unfortunately the people most likely to vote on participatory budget initiatives are people with the resources and abilities to access the process (the process itself may exclude people with disabilities). Kate said that we want to be integrated/included in the PB process rather than seen as separate, especially because accessibility efforts benefit everyone.
- Kate suggested that we should invite Melissa Liu, who runs the Participatory Budgeting process to come to one of our board meetings to talk about what works for getting out the word on our initiatives and help us work on what we can be doing as a commission to garner more support at future PB votes. Kate was very excited to see 3 accessibility proposals on the ballot but disappointed to see none of them selected for funding. The PB event had its highest turnout yet this year, but despite being a participatory process, only a very small portion of Cambridge residents show up to vote. Kate said when she discussed the CART program, she framed it as something not just useful for people with disabilities, but also for language justice issues, immigrant/English learners, and people with non-hearing related disabilities. Kate mentioned studies conducted on the Cambridge PB processes have found no correlation between what gets voted on and the cost associated with it.
- Danielle asked if people could request CART/ASL interpreter services or other accessibility accommodations for non-city sponsored events, and Kate clarified that CCPD can help connect them to providers but can't pay for them or provide them for private events.
- DS Buckowe Yam shared that Cambridge's body cam program started on April 1 and there are already around 3000 recordings. He also shared that the Cambridge Police Department (CPD) will be getting an ADA compliant transport wagon that is also an electric vehicle—Cambridge will be the first PD in the state to have one!
- A member of the public commented in the Zoom chat: "PB takes voting sessions right into CRLS to make sure students and younger people vote. Why can't they make a similar *extra effort* to site PB voting in, or example, any housing complexes in which there is a high proportion of disabled residents."

Meeting adjourned at 6:46PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Maya Friedrich