

City of Cambridge

Commission for Persons with Disabilities

51 Inman Street · Cambridge, MA · 02139-1732

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Nicole Horton-Stimpson
Chair

Elizabeth Dean-Clower
Sandy Durmaskin
Kara Falise
Maria Fontellio
Zahra Kanji
Bet MacArthur
Naomi Pinson
Alicia Zeh-Dean

Michael Muehe
*Executive Director/
ADA Coordinator*

Kate Thurman
Project Coordinator

Katie Ashwill
Pro Bono Associate

The next meeting of the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities will be held in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at 51 Inman Street on Thursday, November 12, 2015 at 5:30 p.m.

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ARRIVE BY 5:30 PM

AGENDA

Please turn OFF your cell phones before the meeting begins. Thank you.

NOTE: CCPD meetings may be audio recorded for the purpose of taking minutes.

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|---|---------|------------------------|
| 1. Introductions | 2 min. | |
| 2. Approval of October 8 Minutes | 2 min. | |
| 3. Announcements | 2 min. | CCPD staff / board |
| 4. Chair's Report | 20 min. | Nicole Horton-Stimpson |
| <i>Follow-Up: Universal Design in the Workplace</i> | | |
| <i>Trip to Gateway Arts Center</i> | | |
| <i>Reminder: Holiday Potluck at December 10 Meeting</i> | | |
| 5. Public Works Update | 10 min. | Debbie Cheng |
| 6. Police Community Liaison Update | 5 min. | Jack Albert |
| 7. Disability Reframed Film Series | 5 min. | Bet MacArthur & |
| <i>Re-cap of La Casa Linda Screening</i> | | Kate Thurman |
| 8. Executive Director's Report | 10 min. | Michael Muehe |
| 9. Project Coordinator's Report | 5 min. | Kate Thurman |
| 10. Public Input | 3 min. | general public |
| 11. Old Business | 2 min. | |
| 12. New Business | 2 min. | |

This is a scent-free meeting. In consideration of individuals with environmental illness and/or multiple chemical sensitivity, please refrain from wearing perfume, after-shave or any other scented products to our meetings. Thank you for your consideration.

The City of Cambridge, Commission for Persons with Disabilities, does not discriminate 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.



Approved 12/10/15

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, November 12, 2015

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

Meeting was called to order at 5:39PM

Present

Members: Elizabeth Dean-Clower, Sandy Durmaskin (remote participation via phone), Gary Dymtryk, Maria Fontellio, Nicole Horton-Stimpson, Zahra Kanji, and Bet MacArthur.

Absent: Debbie Cheng, Naomi Pinson, and Alicia Zeh-Dean.

Alternates: Donald Summerfield

Staff: Michael Muehe and Kate Thurman

Guests: Naeem Ahmed and Theresa Tirella

Documents/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Minutes from October 8

Minutes:

A motion to approve the October 8, 2015 was seconded and passed.

Chair's Report: Nicole Horton-Stimpson reported speaking with the Gateway Arts Center about having CCPD visit their facility. They are able to host us at around 1:15pm on a Tuesday or Thursday. A few members indicated that Thursday would be a better option for them.

Ms. Horton-Stimpson said that the universal design workshop by Oce Harrison of the New England ADA Center was very successful and was attended by many City employees, including both the City Manager and the Deputy City Manager. Ms. Harrison invited CCPD to tour the Institute for Human Centered Design.

There was discussion about the MBTA's proposal to again increase rates for The Ride to help offset the rising cost of operating it. Michael Muehe explained that in order to be eligible for The Ride, an individual must have a disability that severely restricts them from taking buses or trains. The MBTA has contracted out to a private firm to conduct the in-person eligibility reviews. Apparently, not all reviewers have much knowledge in disability issues. There is an appeals process if an application is denied. It has happened that individuals who have been using The Ride for years suddenly receive a letter in the mail stating that they need to be recertified and in some cases, they have been terminated. Mr. Muehe also said that some people are approved for conditional eligibility.

There was discussion about the difficulty many people with disabilities have in using MBTA buses and trains. For example, some passengers become impatient when a wheelchair user needs to be accommodated on a bus.

Cambridge resident Naeem Ahmed said the people making the decisions for The Ride are not well versed in disability at all.

Don Summerfield said that it's mostly the drivers who have disability awareness training, and that the administrative staff does not have that training. The eligibility review process is new; people conducting the reviews don't have a lot of exposure.

Ways2Go provides individualized training for people with disabilities who want to learn how to better use buses and trains.

One member mentioned an incident in which she appeared for her eligibility review and ended up helping another woman fill out paperwork with confidential medical information because she was unable to do so independently and did not realize that she would be required to do so. There was no one on staff who could help her with this.

The unique challenges of hidden disabilities were also discussed. People with visible disabilities may not have to explain their need for The Ride to the extent that people with hidden disabilities would be required to.

It was noted that the MBTA has an Access Advisory Committee that holds monthly meetings that are open to the public. Individuals can also write letters to the Committee. Nicole Horton-Stimpson said that she would be happy to attend a meeting and read letters aloud.

The idea of CCPD writing a letter expressing concerns about The Ride fare increases and eligibility determination process was discussed. Kate Thurman recommended that any such letter include suggestions on how to make things better rather than just point out problems. For example, it could suggest other cost saving methods, such as partnering with taxicab companies, which would both take pressure off The Ride and provide opportunity for taxi drivers at a time when ride sharing has disrupted their business.

It was decided that members will email Ms. Horton-Stimpson with any comments they would like included in the letter from CCPD regarding The Ride.

Disability Reframed Film Series: Kate Thurman said that the November 7 screening of *La Casa Linda* was very successful, with an engaging panel discussion and about 75 people in attendance.

Ms. Horton-Stimpson would like to offer a screening of the film for City employees during the week. She said that having the filmmaker there was really influential. She suggested inviting other commissions on disability to the film screenings. Michael Muehe said that he would set up a conference call with the Boston Commission to discuss the film series.

Ms. Horton-Stimpson also mentioned that some local movie theaters offer family friendly screenings that are accommodating to those with autism spectrum disorder.

Kate Thurman will send Disability Reframed's list of films to CCPD members.

Executive Director's Report: Michael Muehe reported that he received a call from a woman who frequently uses the pool at the Hyatt Hotel. She was upset because they had a pool lift that had been broken for a period of time and she wasn't getting any answers as to when it would be fixed. Mr. Muehe sent her a Department of Justice document on the requirement for making pools accessible, which she shared with hotel management and they had a new lift within a week.

Mr. Muehe reported that the city has kicked off a Municipal Facility Improvement Plan. The initial stages will include a detailed survey of 41 city buildings, looking at accessibility, HVAC systems, structural soundness, air leaks, energy efficiency issues, roofing, etc. The ultimate goal is to develop a capital improvement plan and set priorities. The City hired a firm named Arup, a Cambridge based engineering and architecture firm. They have a code compliance expert who is very knowledgeable about accessibility code. This process will bring City buildings into compliance with the latest ADA Standards, which were updated in 2010.

He also reported that the City's participatory budget process is underway. He submitted a proposal to design and build a universal design playground. [Editor's note: residents may vote online at pb.cambridgema.gov through December 12]

There is a new group called Alliance of Commissions on Disability, organized by Colin Killick, the Chair of the Somerville Commission and employee of the Disability Policy Consortium. The group will be holding a conference call on the first Wednesday of each month at 1pm.

Public Comment:

Naeem Ahmed mentioned that there is a mosque on Prospect Street that has an old lift that has not worked in many years. Michael Muehe explained that while houses of worship are exempt from the ADA, they are not exempt from MAAB regulations, which state that accessible features need to be maintained.

Old Business:

Don Summerfield said that he filed a complaint with the MAAB against Crema Café, and that the MAAB ordered them to provide priority seating on the first floor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:54PM

Respectfully submitted by Kate Thurman