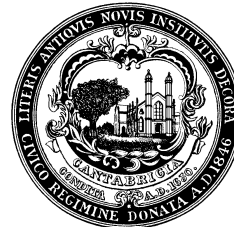


City of Cambridge

Commission for Persons with Disabilities

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Philibert Kongtcheu
Chair

Gary Dmytryk
Secretary

Loring Brinckerhoff
Avril de Pagter
Mary Devlin
Jerry Friedman
Stelios Gragoudas
Valerie Hammond
Nicole Horton-Stimpson
Jackie Jones
Daniel Stubbs

Rachel Tanenhaus
Executive Director/
ADA Coordinator

Kate Thurman
Project Coordinator

**The next meeting of the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities
will be held online via Zoom on Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 5:30 PM**

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO JOIN BY 5:30 PM

AGENDA

Please keep your microphone muted when you are not speaking

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

- | | | |
|---|---------|--------------------|
| 1. Introductions | 2 min. | |
| <i>If needed, alternates named</i> | | |
| 2. Approval of February 13 Minutes | 2 min. | CCPD Board |
| 3. Announcements | 3 min. | CCPD staff / Board |
| 4. Member Discussion on Disability
Experience during the Pandemic | 35 min. | CCPD Board |
| 5. Chair's Report | 15 min. | Phil Kongtcheu |
| <i>Unintended Consequences of Covid Policies on PwD</i> | | |
| 6. Public Works Update | 10 min. | Jerry Friedman |
| 7. Executive Director's Report | 10 min. | Rachel Tanenhaus |
| <i>The ADA & Covid Policies</i> | | |
| 8. Project Coordinator's Report | 5 min. | Kate Thurman |
| 9. Public Input | 3 min. | general public |
| <i>See following pages for instructions on providing public comment</i> | | |
| 10. Old Business | 2 min. | CCPD Board |
| 11. New Business | 2 min. | CCPD Board |

CART/closed captioning will be provided for this meeting.

Captions can be turned on within the Zoom platform. Additionally, you may
stream CART in a separate URL at <https://bit.ly/30KYYye>
(captions will not appear until the meeting has started)

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.

The next CCPD meeting will be held online on Thursday, November 12

Due to the pandemic, CCPD is not meeting in person for the foreseeable future.

Draft

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Thursday, October 8, 2020

Online via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 5:31 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: Dan Wagner, Cambridge Police Department

Documents/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Minutes from the February 13, 2020 Meeting

Minutes:

A motion to accept the February 13 minutes was seconded and unanimously passed.

Member Discussion on Disability Experience during the Pandemic:

- Each member spent a few minutes speaking about their professional and/or person experience during the pandemic as it relates to people with disabilities. Themes included the following:
 - The transition to at-home standardized test taking for high school, college, and graduate students and the changing needs for reasonable accommodations
 - School systems having to move school online overnight
 - This exacerbated systemic issues faced by students with disabilities
 - There was and is the additional challenge of supporting teachers in learning how to use the different online platforms
 - The idea of inclusive classrooms has really shifted with online school, which has been a real challenge in accommodating students with disabilities and other needs.
 - Feelings of loneliness & isolation, particularly for those who live alone and/or are unable to get out, as well as those who thrive on social interaction
 - The exacerbation of mental health issues for many people
 - There is a real shortage of mental health providers, making access to services difficult or even impossible for people who need them more than ever
 - The additional struggle for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who don't understand what's going on, why they need to wear masks, etc.
 - After school programming having moved online, which also presents additional challenges for many kids with disabilities
 - Many people with disabilities lacking the support they need in order to go out into the community. The pandemic has affected PCA services.
 - People who experience domestic violence and are forced to stay at home in place with abusers
 - State colleges more than doubling the cost of room and board as they've had to spread students out, exacerbating inequalities
 - The added challenge for people with hearing disabilities to communicate without being able to read lips, as well as the unexpected benefit of being able to follow meetings more easily in a virtual, video format

- The difficulties for employees who suddenly lost childcare or are high risk (or live with others who are high risk)
- The added challenges for the Police Department when the social service agencies to which they typically refer people in need suddenly closed their doors
- There has been some benefit for PwD in the adjusting of policies. For example, it used to be that individuals had to file police reports in person with an officer, but telephone reporting has now been implemented, making filing reports accessible to more people
- Transportation issues, and the potential risk of exposure to Covid on public transportation, which has reduced the independence of some PwD
- With public meetings being held online now, more people are able to attend and provide feedback to City departments. The pandemic has forced the City to change the way outreach is conducted into a much more inclusive model; this has been especially evident in DPW and the Traffic, Parking & Transportation (TPT) Dept, with more residents engaged in the public process of various projects.

Chair's Report:

- Phil noted that some well-intentioned Covid-related policies that work well for the general public do not work as well for many PwD. For example, common areas in some elderly/disabled buildings were closed in an effort to protect residents from potential exposure. This resulted in severe isolation for many people. Another example of policies disproportionately affecting PwD is that many transportation companies, such as taxicabs, Uber, & Lyft, are not allowing passengers to ride in the front seat in order to better protect both drivers and passengers from potential exposure. Some people can only ride in the front seat for disability-related reasons.
- Providing reasonable accommodations for PwD is in many cases requiring more creative problem solving than it did prior to Covid. Reasonable accommodations are being redefined during this era.
- Phil also noted that some people who have respiratory issues are unable to breathe sufficiently through masks. He expressed interest in learning more about reasonable accommodations for folks who are unable to wear masks for disability-related reasons.
- On a personal level, he mentioned that he was able to re-open his office because everyone else in the building has moved to remote work.

Public Works Update:

- Jerry reported that construction was shut down right away in March when Covid hit and did not get its usual start in April, so it has been a shortened construction season. DPW had to make sure that contractors had all the Covid protocols in place prior to resuming work in the City and this required a lot of training and education.
- However, with traffic significantly reduced, they were able to get a lot of work done in a shorter amount of time than usual.
- DPW has a frontline role in making sure that City buildings were safe for returning employees.
- Crews for trash and recycling pick-up and other essential duties had to be reworked in order to ensure social distancing.
- With outdoor dining, they have had to re-imagine street space, including bike lanes and space for pedestrians.
- There has been an increase in public feedback on the River Street and Inman Square reconstruction projects since public meetings have moved online, which has been great.
- DPW is working on plans for snow removal and making sure crews are distanced from each other so they can work safely.

Executive Director's Report:

- Rachel mentioned that the MA Department of Public Health is doing a survey asking MA residents about their experiences during the pandemic. This is a good opportunity for PwD to inform them of ways they have been disproportionately impacted by Covid.
- She reported that, as of October 8, 100 Cambridge residents had died of Covid-19 and that 72% of those cases were in folks who were living in institutional settings such as nursing homes. There has been a hugely disproportionate rate of cases and deaths in these settings all across the country.
- CCPD has gotten several calls from individuals with disabilities who are upset about interactions they've had with others around Covid. This has been especially difficult for PwD who are unable to wear masks for disability-related reasons and are constantly being questioned or told to put on a mask.
 - While the state mask mandate does exempt such individuals, it gets a bit tricky in terms of accommodations that entities such as grocery stores and restaurants are required to provide under the ADA. Generally speaking, entities that are covered under the ADA are required to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures in order to provide equitable experiences to PwD, so long as doing so doesn't fundamentally alter their program or business. However, there is an exception under the ADA when providing the necessary accommodation would result in a direct threat to others, meaning a substantial risk of serious harm. Most federal agencies who are charged with enforcing the ADA have come out and said that the potential spread of Covid is considered a direct threat.
 - This means that while these entities are required to accommodate PwD who are, for example, unable to wear masks, they are not required to allow people to enter their place of business without masks. Accommodating someone in such a case might mean taking a list of groceries needed by the individual and bringing them to that person outside. In other words, they have to serve PwD who are unable to wear masks, but they are not required to let them enter their place of business. They could, for example, take payment over the phone, and place the bags of groceries outside at a safe distance from the customer.
 - Providing reasonable accommodation during the pandemic is requiring a lot of creative problem solving
- The City has implemented a new, temporary remote work policy that includes employees who wouldn't normally be covered under the ADA, such as those who have lost childcare. Some policies are more expansive than they would have been in the past.

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Kate Thurman