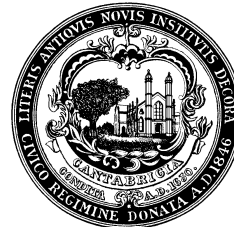


City of Cambridge

Commission for Persons with Disabilities

51 Inman Street · Cambridge, MA · 02139-1732

617-349-4692 voice · 617-492-0235 TTY · 617-349-4766 fax



Alicia Zeh-Dean

Chair

Valerie Hammond

Secretary

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, June 13, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

Gary Dmytryk

Jerry Friedman

Stelios Gragoudas

Nicole Horton-Stimpson

Philibert Kongtcheu

Julie Miller

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ARRIVE BY 5:30 PM

AGENDA

Please turn OFF your cellphones before the meeting begins. Thank you.

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

Rachel Tanenhaus
*Executive Director/
ADA Coordinator*

Kate Thurman
Project Coordinator

- | | | |
|---|---------|--|
| 1. Introductions | 2 min. | |
| <i>If needed, alternates named</i> | | |
| 2. Human Rights Commission Update | 30 min. | Nancy Schlacter, Executive Director |
| <i>Ordinance Updates, Case Trends, etc.</i> | | |
| 3. Update on Assisted Suicide Bills | 15 min. | John Kelly, Not Dead Yet |
| 4. Approval of May 9 Minutes | 2 min. | CCPD Board |
| 5. Announcements | 2 min. | CCPD staff / Board |
| 6. Chair's Report | 10 min. | Alicia Zeh-Dean |
| 7. Executive Director's Report | 10 min. | Rachel Tanenhaus |
| 8. Project Coordinator's Report | 5 min. | Kate Thurman |
| 9. Public Input | 3 min. | general public |
| 10. Old Business | 2 min. | CCPD Board |
| 11. New Business | 2 min. | CCPD Board |

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.

The next CCPD meeting will be held on Thursday, July 11, 2019

Approved 7/11/19

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, June 13, 2019

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

Meeting was called to order at 5:36pm

Present

Members: Gary Dmytryk, Stelios Gragoudas, Valerie Hammond, Julie Miller, and Alicia Zeh-Dean

Absent: Jerry Friedman, Nicole Horton-Stimpson, and Philibert Kongtcheu

Staff: Rachel Tanenhaus and Kate Thurman

Guest Speakers: Nancy Schlacter, Executive Director, Cambridge Human Rights Commission (CHRC)

Documents/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Minutes from May 9, 2019 Meeting

Update from the Cambridge Human Rights Commission (CHRC): Nancy Schlacter, Executive Director, presented

- CHRC enforces the City's Human Rights and Fair Housing ordinances and investigates allegations of discrimination in Cambridge based on a protected class that occurred within the last 180 days of when the complaint is filed.
- City Council recently approved a revised Human Rights Ordinance, which updates the definition of disability and removes the word "handicap" from the language.

Former definition:

"Disability" means any actual or supposed physical or mental handicap of an individual, other than the state of being presently legally incompetent

Updated definition:

"Disability" means a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities, a record of having such impairment, or being regarded as having such impairment.

- The Cambridge Fair Housing Ordinance is in the process of being updated with the same definition of disability, as well as a few other edits, including adding a definition of gender identity. This ordinance must be approved by the State prior to going before City Council.
- Nancy provided the following statistics for cases they've taken within the past four fiscal years:

| Year | Total Cases | Disability-related cases | |
|-------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| FY16 | 12 | 4 total | Housing: 3 |
| | | | Employment: 0 |
| | | | Public Accommodations: 1 |
| FY 17 | 12 | 5 total | Housing: 4 |
| | | | Employment: 1 |
| | | | Public Accommodations: 0 |
| FY 18 | 14 | 9 total | Housing: 7 |
| | | | Employment: 0 |
| | | | Public Accommodations: 2 |
| FY 19 | 15 (to date) | 11 total | Housing: 7 |
| | | | Employment: 0 |
| | | | Public Accommodations: 4 |

- Nancy said that disability-related cases often involve reasonable accommodation and improper inquiries on behalf of the housing management or employer.
- CHRC conducts an intake with a complainant and then writes up the complaint, which after being approved and signed by complainant, gets sent to the party accused of discrimination. The accused may file a rebuttal within 10 days. CHRC's attorney investigator may interview all parties, conduct site visits, review documents, etc.

Oftentimes, conciliation is successful. If it's not, the attorney investigator will determine whether or not there is probable cause. If probable cause is determined, the case is referred to CHRC Commissioners, who conduct a public hearing, consider what remedies might be available, and make a determination. An order from the Commission is issued if they find for the complainant. This can be appealed only by taking the case to Massachusetts Superior Court.

However, if probable cause is determined, the accused tends to be motivated to settle. It is very rare that a case goes to public hearing. Either party has the option of taking the case to the Attorney General's Office if CHRC finds probable cause.

- Disability has been the most predominant form of discrimination that CHRC, MA Commission Against Discrimination, and HUD have seen for many years.
- CHRC staff and commissioners are available to do presentations on discrimination and anti-discrimination law. They recently did a training for restaurant owners and managers on gender identity discrimination in places of public accommodations with regards to restrooms.

Update on Assisted Suicide Bills: John Kelly, Director, Second Thoughts presented

- John explained that the pending assisted suicide (AS) bill would allow terminally ill people who have been told by two doctors that they will die within six months to choose AS. A psychologist must assess the person to be sure they can make an informed choice. He said, however, that there are many problems with this.
- A study in the New England Journal of Medicine found that the top five end-of-life concerns cited by people who are terminally ill are related to disability, such as the loss of autonomy and the ability to do things the way they used to. Proponents of AS bills call this a loss of dignity, which John says is insulting to people living with disabilities.
- He said that there is concern that health insurers will cut coverage for palliative care and other services for PWD. There have been incidents in other states with AS where insurers have refused coverage for such care, but offered to cover the cost of AS.
- John encouraged PWD to submit oral or written testimony at the hearing on June 25 for H1926, The End of Life Options Act.
- He said this same bill was defeated by voters two years ago and that it comes up every legislative cycle, threatening PWD. He asked CCPD to consider writing a letter of opposition.

Minutes:

A motion to accept the May minutes was seconded and passed.

Chair's Report: Alicia Zeh-Dean reported

- River Festival went well; table was in a great location, very big crowd
- We will have 5 board openings in September
 - We received a good pool of applicants
 - Hoping to hold interviews in July

Executive Director's Report: Rachel Tanenhaus reported

- She and Kate have been taking an online course on creating accessible documents in Word, PDF, and PowerPoint. It is offered through WebAIM, run out of Utah State University. It's a four-week online course.
 - Documents must be accessible not just for people who use screen readers, but for those who use all sorts of assistive technology
 - The training has a whole section on plain language
- The War Memorial and CRLS were assessed as potential emergency shelters for future climate change-related disasters, particularly heat issues. Rachel was involved in the assessment.
 - Place to dispense medication, give vaccines, etc.
 - Long-term plan
- Looking at what would need to be done to make these buildings the most useful in such situations

- Rachel attended meetings on the River St. project. DPW held a public walk discussing traffic, pedestrian and disability-related issues. There was also an open house recently for folks to ask questions about the project and provide input in what they would like to be done (or what they don't want to happen).
- She created a spreadsheet for AAB variances and will begin entering variance requests in July.
- The Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities held a public hearing a few weeks ago, which they do each year. Commissioner McCosh and some of her staff testified in front of city council to let them know what they've done in the prior year. Then the public was invited to provide testimony to both the Commission and City Council. Their City Councilors represent particular wards; city councilors can respond to things in their own wards.
- The universal design playground working group visited Menino Park in Charlestown outside Spaulding Rehab Hospital. The design company working with Cambridge designed the Menino Playground.
- She and Kate participated in the planning meeting for the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The Cambridge Public Health Dept. does this as part of their accreditation. This is the last year of the 5-year plan. Rachel and Kate provided input on the plan. There are huge health disparities between people with and without disabilities.
- She and Kate are the voices of accessible pedestrian signals in North Cambridge (Mass Ave, Cedar St, Harvey St. & Cameron Ave)
- Rachel presented on providing good customer service to PWD at the Library's professional development day.
- There will be a large deer sculpture in the Inman square project. The city wants people to interact with it, but the underside is within protruding object range. People who can't see it could walk right into it (it's not cane detectable). Rachel was involved in determining what to do about this.
- She gave a training at a staff meeting of the Inclusionary Housing program at the Community Development Department (CDD).
- She and Kate participated in the Cambridge Health Alliance's focus group for PWD as part of their community health assessment about health access and health related issues affecting PWD.
- The City has a contract with a captioner for City Council meetings, but Comcast is having a technical issue, causing the captioning to appear garbled.
 - The City will be signing a new ten-year contract with Comcast, starting in 2021.

Project Coordinator's Report: Kate Thurman reported:

- The fifth cycle of Participatory Budgeting (PB) has started. Ideas for how to spend \$1,000,000 on capital improvement projects in the City can be submitted through July 31.

- Kate is taking a 7-week training called Making Connections on how to reach out to vulnerable populations.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Kate Thurman