

Draft

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

## Minutes for Thursday, October 14, 2021

Online via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm

### **Present:**

Members: Loring Brinckerhoff, Avril de Pagter, Mary Devlin, Gary Dmytryk, Jerry Friedman, Stelios Gragoudas, Valerie Hammond, Nicole Horton-Stimpson, and Dan Stubbs

Absent: Jackie Jones and Phil Kongtcheu

Staff: Rachel Tanenhaus and Kate Thurman

### **Presentation: Transportation and Parking for People with Disabilities:**

- Stephanie Groll, the City's Parking and Transportation Demand Management Planning Officer, said that the City is considering updating parking rules. She came to the meeting seeking input on how parking and lack thereof affect people with disabilities. On the one hand, the City has policies to encourage walking, biking, and using public transit, but on the other, the City understands that some people will need to continue using cars.
- The City is evaluating all parking policies; Stephanie is not involved in any one particular street redesign.
- In wanting to learn how people's life experiences affect their relationships with parking, Stephanie posed two questions to members:
  - What do you need in order to get around in your day?
  - How is parking a part of that?
- Summary of the discussion:
  - There is a need for more charging stations for electric cars
  - The communication between drivers and cyclists is toxic; at public meetings about proposals, people yell over each other. This needs to be addressed.
  - We need to support people who rely on cars and accessible parking due to their disability
  - There was only one community meeting about the quick build bike lane project on North Massachusetts Ave; input from marginalized communities needs to be captured and considered
  - Many residents didn't know about the quick build project on N. Mass Ave until it was implemented, so they didn't have an opportunity to provide feedback
  - The proponents of the quick build bike lane projects are primarily younger people; older residents did not have much of a voice
  - There was a request that the raw number of existing designated disability parking spots not be reduced even when other parking is removed
  - It was noted that it can be difficult to keep the designated disability parking spaces in front of 51 Inman clear because there's only one space for loading, so trucks will often pull into them
  - Disability parking spaces need to remain curbside to make them accessible
  - What is the policy around carpool spots, such as the one on Inman next to 344 Broadway?
  - Be sure to keep intersectionality in mind. Some areas of the City have more accessible parking than others

### **Public Works Update:**

- TJ Shea and Brian McLane of DPW gave the annual City of Cambridge Winter Operations presentation (see attached). Key points included the following:
  - There were 2 parking bans last year; one in mid-December and one in February

- Bike lanes are challenging because when plows go down the streets, the snow gets moved into the bike lanes. DPW uses smaller equipment to then clear the bike lanes.
- The City has a bike ordinance that is requiring the construction of about 5 miles of bike lanes per year for the next five or six years.
- Last winter, DPW received almost 800 complaints for snow violations. Around 180 citations were issued and about 50% of those were paid within six months.
- DPW plows the accessible parking spaces abutting City property (about 150-200 spaces total), but does not have the capacity to clear residential and other disability parking spots.
- The City has been making its own brine (a mixture of salt and water) a few years ago and now has a brine farm at Danehy Park. They pretreat streets by spraying brine on them before snowstorms. The brine solution allows them to treat streets 2 days before the expected storm, as it sticks well to the street. Using brine has resulted in a dramatic reduction of the amount of salt being put in the environment
- They urged residents to use See, Click, Fix to report incidents such as un-shoveled sidewalks and bike lanes

### **Executive Director's Report:**

- Rachel reported on the MA Architectural Access Board (MAAB) variance process. MAAB is the state body that writes and enforces the state accessibility codes. MAAB regulations are building codes, whereas the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law. Key points included the following:
  - Compliance with MAAB regulations is triggered in existing facilities when a certain amount of renovation is done.
  - Variances are issued based on technical infeasibility or excessive cost without substantial benefit to people with disabilities
  - CCPD staff sometimes write letters of testimony, either in support or opposition of variance applications.
- Rachel noted that the November CCPD meeting falls on Veterans' Day, so it cannot be held on that date. Loring made a motion to skip the November meeting, which was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **Chair's Report:**

- Phil was not present, so there was no Chair's report

Meeting adjourned at 6:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kate Thurman