

City of Cambridge

Commission for Persons with Disabilities

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Avril dePagter
Chair

Mary Devlin
Secretary

Loring Brinckerhoff
Keisha Greaves
Valerie Hammond
Nicole Horton-Stimpson
Danielle Jones-McLaughlin
Melissa Miguel
Deepti Nijhawan
Daniel Stubbs

Rachel Tanenhaus
Executive Director/
ADA Coordinator

Kate Thurman
Project Coordinator

The Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities is holding an abbreviated meeting online via Zoom on Thursday, January 11, 2024 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

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|--|---------|--------------------|
| 1. Introductions
<i>If needed, alternates named</i> | 2 min. | |
| 2. Announcements | 2 min. | CCPD staff / Board |
| 3. Approval of December Minutes
<i>See page 4 of this agenda packet</i> | 2 min. | CCPD Board |
| 4. Chair's Report
<i>Member feedback on CCPD meeting format & agenda items</i> | 15 min. | Avril dePagter |
| 5. Public Works Update | 20 min. | Melissa Miguel |
| 6. Staff Report
<i>Developing Strategy for CCPD Office Responsibilities & Initiatives</i> | 30 min. | Kate Thurman |
| 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. Additionally, you may stream CART in a separate URL at <http://bit.ly/CCPDCART>
(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, February 8 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

Draft

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, January 11, 2024 CCPD Meeting

Online via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 6:44 PM

Present:

Members: Loring Brinckerhoff, Avril dePagter (Chair), Keisha Greaves, Valerie Hammond, Nicole Horton-Stimpson, Melissa Miguel, Deepti Nijhawan

Absent: Mary Devlin (Secretary), Danielle Jones-McLaughlin, and Dan Stubbs

Staff: Kate Thurman

Announcements:

- Valerie alerted members to an interesting article on dyslexia in the *Boston Globe* article

Chair's Report:

Avril asked members how the format of CCPD meetings is working for them and to share any feedback they have

- Nicole has been reviewing the bylaws and would like to see what can be removed from the monthly meeting agenda and instead reported on quarterly, for example.
- Nicole would also like to increase CCPD's community outreach and figure out how to fold in youth representation. She recently met with the Director of DHSP's STEAM Initiative, who is putting together a working group on creating employment and internship opportunities for teenagers; maybe CCPD could be involved in some way.
- Nicole suggested advisory board involvement in providing disability awareness trainings. Members and staff could provide training for internship sites, for example.
- She noted that the Inclusion Initiative has a hard time filling part-time positions that support kids with disabilities in DHSP's out of school time (OST) programs. She works with the Office on Workforce Development to recruit applicants but said they have been averaging 1-2 staff members quitting their jobs each day. Many of the inclusion aides have their own disability-related needs. DHSP has been very supportive in placing more staff at sites than is required; some aides bring tremendous value to the team but are unable to work alone with children. Nicole said that DHSP has been very intentional in hiring and supporting inclusion aides with disabilities.
- DHSP has a working group that wants to create internships for young people coming out of high school or the Threshold Program and Lesley who have significant disability-related needs. They're looking at how to best support employees and interns in helping them understand their rights, how to request reasonable accommodation, etc. There are young adults who attended out of school time programs with support from the Inclusion Initiative who would like to return as staff.
- It was noted that there was discussion at the member retreat with a broad perspective of CCPD working groups, but it maybe helpful to narrow the scope of each group
- Valerie said that her son had a few internships through the Academy for Physical and Social Development in Newton, which strives to set children with disabilities up for success. She also mentioned The Academy in Stoneham
- Nicole mentioned the idea of piloting an internship program within DHSP for youth and young adults with disabilities. It's important to consider what valuable employment looks like.

- Deepti suggested having higher cutoff ages for some employment programs, noting that some people with disabilities need additional support later in life.
- Nicole noted that the Inclusion Initiative accepts applications from and works with adults of any age in the OST programs, but that they are struggling with the capacity to provide proper supports in order to ensure success. There's also a need for more training and supports for supervisors in how to best support staff who may have varying levels of ability.
- The STEAM Initiative is looking at creating an internship program modeled after the Mayor's Youth Summer Employment Program, working primarily with CRLS students.
- Deepti mentioned that when the casino Encore was opening, they said they would give preference to Cambridge, Somerville, and Everett job applicants, but every job they listed included a requirement that the applicant be able to lift a certain number of pounds. She suggested creating a portal of information and resources for employers who are interested in hiring PwD.
- Keisha said that Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) could be a good partner in creating internships for disabled youth. Valerie suggested the Perkins School for the Blind as another potential partner.
- Some members expressed confusion over what they're able to do in small working groups outside of public meetings.
 - If members come across articles of interest or have ideas they would like to bring up at a meeting, email Kate and Rachel. We cannot have any kind of discussion, including via email, involving a quorum of members outside of public meetings. However, Kate and Rachel can forward along articles, etc. of interest, blind copying CCPD members to avoid any inadvertent deliberation.

Public Works Update:

Melissa Miguel reported on ongoing construction:

- Port Infrastructure Project- Harvard St.
 - Utility work at Harvard/Windsor intersection 1 -2 weeks in January
 - Utility work between Portland and Davis Street - January through mid-March
- River Street:
 - Utility work continues throughout the winter along the corridor
 - Carl Barron Plaza trees removed, and demolition started at the end of December 2023. Demolition and test pits to continue in this area throughout January.
- Willard Street - Drainage structure installation continues up Willard Street
- Binney Street Park
 - Continued work on landscaping, installation of pervious multi-use path (which is a section of Grand Junction Path)
 - Estimated construction completion: late spring/early summer 2024.
- Harvard Sq. Plaza
 - Includes pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements at Mass Ave., Dunster St, JFK St and Brattle St.
 - Work has been on hold pending coordination with the MBTA
 - There is potential to start the project late Spring 2024
 - The Community Development Department (CDD) has contracted with Culture House and Lesley College to run the Harvard Square kiosk, but the Lesley position and department was eliminated by the college, so now just working with Culture House. CDD will also be collaborating with the Cambridge Office for Tourism. Culture House will do activity planning, art displays, etc. There will be community space with different pop-up events. They're trying to limit food sales so it doesn't compete with Harvard Sq businesses. The kiosk will have big doors where the bookcases used to be that will slide open so the building will feel like a part of the plaza
 - There will be tiered seating behind the Harvard Sq MBTA head house for music, community events, etc.

- Construction is expected to take 18-24 months to complete once it breaks ground because it has to be done in phases to maintain access to the T. There are load restrictions on the plaza because of the station underground, so they have to limit work that can be done per square foot at any given time.
- The plaza will be redone in ADA compliant brick, and the running and cross slopes of the plaza will be leveled out to reach ADA compliance. Because of the slopes, they do have to put in stairs on one side of the kiosk building, so there will also be a pedestrian ramp.
- Melissa noted that this project has been underway for many years, with lots of delays with utility companies and the MBTA
- Chapter 90, Contract 24
 - Huron Avenue – Glacken Field to Aberdeen is complete. Aberdeen to Fresh Pond Parkway will be completed in 2024 construction season
 - Chestnut Street - water main installation continues with completion expected this winter.
- Upcoming projects
 - Port Infrastructure Project: utility work at Harvard and Windsor
 - Mass Ave4 improvements
 - Still digesting comments from their December Open House for the Linnaean-Waterhouse segment.
 - Continuing concept development for segments north of Linnaean to Alewife Brook Parkway.
 - Chapter 90, Contract 25- Contract will be released for bids February 8, 2024. Construction anticipated to start late spring/early summer 2024.
 - Green St- Pearl to Landsdowne
 - Maple Avenue- Broadway to Cambridge
 - Centre St – Dana to Hancock
 - Montgomery St – Harvey to Rindge
 - Sciarappa St- Charles to O’Brien Hwy
 - Chapter 90, Contract 26 - Design and Community process will begin late January/early February 2024. Construction start anticipated late 2024/early 2025.
 - 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
- Deepti asked what’s happening in Harvard Sq with the movie theater, which has been shuttered for many years. Melissa will reach out to Denise Jillson of the Harvard Square Business Association to ask and will let Kate know of any updates so she can share

Staff Report:

Kate reported the following:

- Kate said that it’s a very exciting time in the City, with lots of transformation happening under Yi-An Huang, who started as our new City Manager (CM) about a year and a half ago.
- There is a new Strategy Division, which is housed in the CM’s office. Kate and Rachel are working with Caroline LeMay of that division to bring more structure to CCPD staff work and to address capacity shortages. They are in the very early stages of this work, but it will include over the coming months:
 - Clearly defining the scope of CCPD office work
 - Revising mission statement accordingly
 - Identifying CCPD’s constituent groups, the disability-related concerns each of those groups has, and ways to address those concerns
 - Adding tools and resources to create more efficient workflows (case & project management software, etc.)
 - Looking into the possibility of adding another staff position

- Kate and Rachel will provide updates on this work at CCPD meetings and will be asking for feedback

Meeting adjourned at 6:26 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Thurman