

Commission on Disability Meeting
Minutes for March 21st, 2017, 4:30PM
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber,
Room 309, 3rd Flr.

Videotape of this meeting can be found on the City of Worcester's
Website:

[http://view.earthchannel.com/PlayerController.aspx?PGD=worcema&el
d=835](http://view.earthchannel.com/PlayerController.aspx?PGD=worcema&el
d=835)

Attendance:

Members Present: Robert Bilotta, Robert Bureau, Herbert Cremer,
Nancy Garr-Colzie, Joseph Prochilo, Douglas Russell
Jr., Lindsey Silva, Paul Keister, Elizabeth Myska

Members Absent: Francesca Abbey

Staff: Jayna Turchek, Dawn Clark, Simon Elliott

1. Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions

Chairperson Commission Garr-Colzie called meeting to order at 4:35 and
Commissioners introduced themselves.

2. Approval of February 21st, 2017 Minutes

Commissioner Prochilo to approve the February 21st, 2017 minutes as
written. Commissioner Bureau seconded the motion. All approved.

**3. Conversation with Dr. Malika Carter, Chief Diversity Officer for
the City of Worcester**

Tabled. Dr. Carter was unable to attend the Commission meeting.

**4. Conversation with the City's Quality of Life Taskforce (Dan
Cahill)**

The City Manager's Quality of Life Taskforce works under the Department of Inspectional Services, and is an interdepartmental team comprised of the Worcester Police Department (WPD), Inspectional Services, Department of Public Health, Department of Public Works, and Health and Human Services. Its mission is to respond rapidly and proactively patrol issues and situations pertaining to the police, Inspectional Services, the homeless, illegal dumping, fake and problem properties, abandoned vehicles, unregistered vehicles and needles, among other things.

The Taskforce approach is one of education and active prevention, and has high rates of compliance (around 75 or 80 percent of compliance) when they request compliance and action from private property owners.

Working with the WPD, the Taskforce issues "drug letters," which require the landlord of the offending tenant to move to evict the offender from the property.

The Taskforce works with Katherine Calano and Dr. Mattie Castiel of Health and Human Services, going through wooded areas to seek out homeless individuals in order to provide them with the services they require, including healthcare, mental health, and most importantly, housing.

The Taskforce also organizes neighborhood sweeps in order be proactive in addressing quality of life violations and improving quality of life across the City.

Things learned from commissioner's questions:

-All complaints are anonymous, and Cahill encourages that Commissioners and the public call the following number with specific complaints so that the Taskforce can address them: 508-929-1300

-During winter months, the shelters do not turn away any people seeking shelter. St. John's Church is an overflow shelter open in weather under 20 degrees.

-The Taskforce works closely with the SMOC Triage center, Community Health Link, Central Mass Housing Alliance, and other shelters in the Worcester area, and does sweeps around the City to help connect homeless individuals with services.

-Cahill recognized the complicated issue it is to resolve the problem of fraudulent snow removal, and that the Taskforce should plan

-The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), which deals with situations pertaining to mental health and substance abuse. Officer Rivera, who leads the CIT work hand-in-hand with the Taskforce, and members of the Taskforce have all participated in the CIT intervention training, and cited multiple examples of the mutual work done between the CIT and the Taskforce.

-The Taskforce began in September 2015, and had the first goal being the cleaning up of the Worcester Commons.

-Any time there is an issue with snow removal, also please call 508-929-1300.

5. Discussion on Massachusetts Office on Disability Municipal ADA Grant

The period for application for the Massachusetts Office on Disability Municipal ADA Grant is now open. Director Turchek informed the Commission that she will be working to draft a grant on behalf of the City of Worcester, and sought the input and advice of the members of the Commission. The Grant is divided into two areas: those towns and cities that do not already have an ADA self-evaluation and a transition plan, and for those that do. The City of Worcester is eligible for the second category, which focuses on providing funding for the projects as outlined in cities and towns' transition plans and for the removal of obstacles to

equal accessibility. Turchek stated that the timeframe for completion and application of the grant is generous, the due date being June 30th, 2017.

Director Turchek informed the Commission that the Office is currently using municipal funding to work on the City Hall second floor service counters as well as comprehensive signage program for City Hall.

Chairperson Garr-Colzie asked that the Commissioners consider the ADA self-evaluation and select some possible project highlights for the coming grant proposal.

6. Review of flyer for accessible transportation options and complaints

Chairperson Garr-Colzie presented to the Commission the flyer for disability accessible transportation options and ADA-related transportation complaints. Commissioner Bilotta pointed out that the pamphlet is highly useful since it outlines a complaint procedure as well the ongoing activism around transportation and disabilities. He noted that the Commission met with the WPD and had a productive meeting that opened a new line of communication with the Licensing Commission.

Commissioners Bilotta, Bureau, Prochilo, Garr-Colzie and Silva voted yes. Commissioners Cremer, Myska and Russell voted no. The motioned passed 5-2 for the distribution of the flyer with the endorsement of the Commission.

7. Planning for Wheelchair Stroll (Joe Prochillo)

Commissioner Prochilo informed the Commission that there are three possible dates in May to do a wheelchair stroll around six segments of downtown Worcester that will be two to three hours. The purpose of this stroll is to raise awareness among able-bodied people about the various

challenges and issues in the City around accessibility. To that end, Commissioner Prochillo went out on Sunday March 19th, 2017 to observe the problems with snow removal in the City and has collected evidence to that end.

Commissioner Prochillo relayed to the Commission that the signing-up of able-bodied individuals to participate in this training, the locating of wheelchairs to be used and involvement from the media remain to be finalized. Commissioner Prochillo motioned to approve that the Commission forward this information onto the DPW and to the Quality of Life Taskforce. Commissioner Bureau seconded. Unanimously approved.

8. Review of specifications and construction details that relate to temporary pedestrian management for Main Street Streetscape Project

Director Turchek brought this document to the Commission in anticipation of MASSDOT's "Courthouse to Courthouse" plan for the reconstruction and redesign of much of Main Street. MASSDOT will select the contractors for the project and these specifications are the guidance that the contractor's will use in setting out the pedestrian management during the construction period. MASSDOT is responsible for the project while the management and execution of the plan will remain in the hands of the contracted company.

9. Review of AAB notices and applications: City properties in bold Hearing:

- **2 Washington Street, Docket # C14 073**

Decision of the Board

- **455 Main Street, Docket # V16 332**

This item was brought before the Commission last month, but the official decision document is being provided this month.

- 112 Harding Street, Docket # V16 346

Suggestions for upcoming agenda items

-Commissioner Prochilo observed that the City of Worcester should create a mobility plan for individuals with disabilities so that there is a guide for how to move through the City from one place to another, and that best practices approaches could be used, as Boston, New York and Los Angeles have such guides. As a best practice, the Commission could look toward the Independent Living Center of the North Shore and Cape Ann, as they have such a directory.

-Commissioner Russell noted that the Commission could have someone come and present about employment to the Commission.

-Commissioner Bureau informed the Commission that he has been unable to connect with the designers of the mobility parking smartphone application but that he hopes to connect with them shortly.

Announcements:

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**
April 19th, 2017, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster Street
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)**
April 4th, 2017, 4:00 – 5:30PM, YWCA, Members Lounge
- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** April 13th, 2017, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** April 19th, 2017 4:30pm.
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting:** May 9th 2017, 8:30 am, Parks Department, 2 Coppage Drive.

Disability Etiquette Tip:

- Want to help? Not sure what to say, always ask the person with a disability.

Emergency Preparedness Tips:

Pack an emergency “Go Pack” with essential life-saving items and store several gallons of water/person at home. Click here for a list of items and other helpful tips: <https://www.ready.gov/>

Public Comment:

-The TPAG meeting cancelled last week has been moved to this coming Thursday, March 23rd, 2017. Attendance at these meetings is important, as the push to get Uber or Lyft to Worcester would greatly benefit members of the community with disabilities.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:36PM.