

Commission on Disability Meeting
Minutes for February 19th, 2019, 4:30PM
Levi Lincoln Chamber (3rd fl.)
Worcester City Hall

Attendance:

Members Present: Robert Bilotta, Robert Bureau, Nancy Garr- Colzie, Fitzroy Hall, Dee Karuna, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo (via phone), Lindsay Silva, Stephen Stolberg

Members Absent: John Gleason, Paul Keister

Staff: Jayna Turчек, Dawn E. Clark

Guests: Krishna Morrow, Case Manager and Brian, Member of Restart Program; Daniel Racicot, Mayor Petty's Chief of Staff

Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions

Vice chairperson Bureau called the meeting to order. Commissioners introduced themselves. Fitzroy Hall and Steven Stolberg were raised to full member for this meeting.

The Commission held a moment of silence for the passing of former AAB Director Thomas Hopkins.

Approval of January 15th, 2019 Minutes

Commissioner Garr-Colzie noted a typo and moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Myska seconded. All approved.

Conversation with ReStart Brain Injury Community Center

Director Turчек introduced this agenda item by explaining that the clients had reached out to the Mayor with some concerns related to downtown sidewalks and trash and asked about ways to engage with the city. The mayor's staff forwarded the request to the Office on Disability. Office staff worked with the group on these issues and invited the group to share with the Commission.

The presenters introduced themselves. Krishna Morrow, Case Manager and Brian, client, a 27 year survivor of a stroke. Restart Program located on Salem Street in

Worcester provided the following information about the program. The Community Center is a clubhouse for persons with brain injuries. Those that attend are referred to as members with the focus on abilities rather than disabilities using member's skills in real work and being part of the community. This program was built on the International Brain Injury Clubhouse Alliance standards model which is based on a work ordered day. There are four working units that are an integral part of the clubhouse. All decisions include the members.

Attending the clubhouse is like going to work. Members sign in and discussed the work needed to be done that day, updates on clubhouse matters and community news. Participating in the clubhouse build vocational skills, self-esteem, and help members to be be productive and contribute to the community. The day begins at 9:15am as a group and then divides into the four units: Membership, Advancement, Kitchen and Janitorial. They meet at the end of the day to discuss what has been done and what needs to be done the next day.

Both staff and members participate in all aspects of the clubhouse. There is an advisory board that meets quarterly.

Benefits of the clubhouse include increasing vocational skills, prevention of the mental and physical loss of functioning, reducing social isolation, improving quality of life, and assistance with locating needed resources. Clubhouse membership is life long and when someone does not come for a while they reach out to these members in many ways. Transportation is not one of the services offered by the Center. Funds for this service are not allocated. However, there is provision of WRTA bus passes, para-transit service and state provided transportation.

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission funds the center. Recently the Center was awarded a grant from the Brain Injury Program for those members with substance abuse disorder.

There are no people who are Deaf at the moment who would use ASL Interpreters; however, if there were Deaf needing the center services they would be able to provide interpreters. The center does have visually impaired members.

Ms. Morrow thanked the office staff for following up on the letters sent to the Mayor and offered to promote opportunities shared with them including assisting members who are interested in applying to the Commission.

Daniel Racicot, Mayor Petty's Chief of Staff welcomed the presenters and invited them to be part of the city's public discourse.

The Chairperson thanked the presenters.

***20/20 National Census: Discussion on Count & Disability Data Points**

Every ten years the federal government embarks on a national census. The Chairperson referred the Commission to the documents in their packets. He had attended a meeting with 40 or so people in Worcester with a person from the state to review the importance of everyone being counted for the upcoming census in 2020. The numbers reported in the census effect how much money comes to the city or region from the federal government. It can effect representation in Congress.

The question was asked: "Is it possible to count how many people are disabled or Deaf? The census questions are very contentious. One of them is the citizenship question. This issue has yet to be determined and he has not seen the form. The form will be finalized by June of this year.

Director Turchek indicated that the City is responsible for coordinating the local census efforts and a local census coordinating committee is assembling and making preparations.

Questions:

1. What accommodations are going to be made for those people who are visually impaired?
2. What accommodations are going to be made for those people who do not have access to the internet?
3. Are Deaf people going to be counted specifically?

Director Turchek suggested the staff from Economic Development could be invited to the Commission later this summer to discuss the outreach planned for the city and share what is known about the federal form.

Transportation Update (Nancy Garr-Colzie)

Red Cab Taxi still has one accessible cab rather than two on the road.

The WRTA Advisory Board and the Transportation Advocacy Coalition will meet tomorrow.

The Governor's budget for state RTA's is less than the \$90 million dollar anticipated as the shortfall from the Federal government. Advocacy will be needed with the Mas. House and Senate. There are grants for upgrades with technology and other programs, but not for the operational expenses.

Confirmed 2019 Commission dates:

January 15th, February 19th, March 19th, April 16th, May 21st, June 18th, July 16th, August 20st, September 17th, October 22nd, November 19th, and December 17th

***Review of AAB notices and applications: City properties in bold**

Variance Application

- 2 Main Street, Docket # V18 360
- 322 Main Street, Docket # TBD
- 155 Ararat Street, Docket # TBD

Notice of Hearing

- 2 Main Street, Docket # V18 360(2)

Decision of the Board

- 2 Main Street, Docket # V18 360

Suggestions for upcoming agenda items

Snow removal update from the city

Announcements:

- Mass. Health Listening Session on PCA Program, February 28th, 2019, 1-3pm, Worcester Public Library, Salem Square
- Transportation Planning Advisory Group, March 20th, 2019, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster St
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)** March 5th, 2019, 4:00 – 5:30pm, YWCA, Members Lounge
- **Independent Living Day**, March 14th, 2019, State House, Boston

- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** March 14th, 2019, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting:** April 12th, 2019 at 9:00am, 2 Coppage Drive.
- **May 21st COD meeting:** Blackstone Heritage Visitor Center, 3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester

Originally the review of the Woo Sox Stadium was scheduled for the March meeting; this item will now be on the April agenda.

Adjournment: 5:40pm

*Material can be viewed at the Office of Human Rights & Disabilities during normal business hours.