

Commission on Disability Meeting
Minutes for November 15th, 2016, 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)

Attendance:

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

Members Absent: Paul Keister

Staff: Jayna Turchek

Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions

Chairperson Commission Garr-Colzie called meeting to order and
Commissioners introduced themselves.

Approval of October 18th, 2016 Minutes

Commissioner Abbey moved to approve the October 18th, 2016 minutes
as written. Commissioner Prochilo seconded the motion. All approved.

**Presentation of the Division of Public Health Community Health
Improvement Plan (CHIP) (Dr. Alexis Travis)**

Visit online: [http://www.worcesterma.gov/ocm/public-health/community-
health/chip-cha](http://www.worcesterma.gov/ocm/public-health/community-health/chip-cha)

In 2015, the City of Worcester Division of Public Health as the lead
agency of the Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance, in partnership
with UMass Memorial and Fallon Health, sought to better understand the
health status of the communities of Greater Worcester through a
Community Health Assessment (CHA). That process revealed a number of
priorities our community needs to address in order to best improve health.

Some of those priorities were more immediately apparent such as substance use. Some were more complicated, like economic opportunity.

This is the second Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) undertaken by the Division of Public Health; the first was done in 2012. A lot has been learned in the past two years with stakeholder interviews, surveys, less traditional methods such as neighborhood conversations and attending community events to interact with the community and hear their voices.

They also used an evidence-base method of data collecting that the CDC uses called the MAPF (mobilizing for action through partnerships and funding). The question asked was: What does health and a healthy community mean to them? Responses included a place where one would feel safe, have jobs and where children grew up they would be able to get jobs too.

The second CHIP has nine (9) priority the first Chip had 5. One of the new pieces to the 2016 CHIP is that Health Equities is an overarching goal rather than a single priority as it was in the 2012 CHIP. Another new feature is that the Community is now responsible for implementation.

The 2016 CHIP identifies three core principles:

- (1) Invest in the community,
- (2) Empower, listen to and respect community voice. and
- (3) Eliminate gaps in service

The nine (9) priority areas are Racism & Discrimination, Substance Use, Access to Care, Mental Health, Economic Opportunity, Cultural Responsiveness, Access to Healthy Food, Physical Activity and Safety.

The goal set by the Director of Public Health, Dr. Michael Hirsh, is to make Worcester the healthiest community/region in New England by 2020. Dr. Travis reviewed each priority area.

Racism & Discrimination:

Aim: Improve population health by systematically eliminating institutional racism and the pathology of oppression and discrimination by promoting equitable access to, and use of, health promoting resources in the community, and significantly reduce the structural and environmental factors that contribute to health inequities.

Substance Abuse:

Aim: Create a regional community that prevents and reduces substance abuse disorder and associated stigma for all populations.

Access to Care:

Aim: Create a well-coordinated, respectful, and culturally-responsive environment that encourages prevention of chronic disease, reduction of infant mortality, and access to quality comprehensive care for all.

Mental Health:

Aim: Fosters community response to the mental health of all populations, considerate of all ages and cultures, and resilient to changing environments and demographics.

Economic Opportunity:

Aim: Improve population health by providing all residents with opportunities to engage in meaningful work with living wages and healthy, safe, and family friendly working conditions.

Cultural Responsiveness:

Aim: Enhance the capacity of health and social services agencies to provide culturally-responsive and culturally appropriate services to CMPHA residents to improve healthy equity.

Access to Healthy food:

Aim: Ensure all people have access to healthful foods by building and sustaining communities that support health through investment in the growth, sale, and preparation of healthy foods.

Physical Activity:

Aim: Improve health for those who live, work, learn and play in the region through safe, equitable access to opportunities for physical activity, with special emphasis for youth, vulnerable, and underserved populations.

Safety:

Aim: Ensure all residents regardless of age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, housing situation, family status, or religion will feel safe, secure, respected and live a life free from violence.

To respond to the question “How will the community know that the CHIP has been successful? There are measures used by the State and others as well as guidelines the CHIP has chosen including infant mortality rate, Elementary School attendance, hospitalization due to falls, disability claims and high School dropout rate.

The 2016 CHIP was released in June with new partners including: Coalition for Healthy Greater Worcester which Atty. Elizabeth Myska also sits on and has convened several CHIP work groups. There are nine (9) working groups. There are other partners working on funding, community engagement, etc.

Funding is provided through the Determination on Need (DON) process. Partners are looking at the CHIP areas to see where the priorities align with their work.

There is an Academic Health Collaborative consisting of Clark University, Clark University and University of Mass. Medical School. The students have done 26 projects addressing the CHIP.

Dr. Travis invited the Commission to add their skill set to making the CHIP successful particularly to making the community/regional accessible.

The Chairperson thanked Dr. Travis for her presentation and encouraged Commissioners to offer their skill set to the CHIP process.

Fall Prevention Presentation (Thuha Le & Amy Waters)

The Worcester Senior Center established a Fall Prevention Program in 2014 which related nicely to the principles of the CHIP. Nationally about 62,000 elders are hospitalized annually from a fall. 2.3 million elders are treated in the emergency room and 21,700 died in 2010. Cost is about \$30 billion. In Massachusetts 14% of older adults reported a fall in the last three (3) months and 5% reported a fall related injury. 64% reported fall related deaths were elders 65 years or older. In 2011 the direct cost to fall related injuries was over \$1.1 billion.

Under Mass. Chapter 224, Health Prevention Programs are funded with \$60 million over three years. Worcester is one of nine Fall Programs throughout the State. The Worcester Division of Public Health coordinates the local program which focuses on three areas: Asthma, Hypertension and Falls. Worcester's fall rate is 7.1% verses 5.2 statewide. This is why Worcester has chosen to work on fall intervention. The study indicates that in many cases fall prevention is possible. Worcester has chosen the coordinated approach model working with clinical, linkages and community based services.

There is a potential client base of 2,000 elders to receive these services. In 2014 Family Health Center, Inc. was the clinical partner and in 2015 UMass. was added as a second clinical partner. The Senior Center serves as the hub for coordinating community based services. Other services are provided by Worcester Area Elder Services and Fallon Health, Mass. Housing Alliance, Worcester Healthy Home Program.

Ms. Le explained further how the clinical side of this partnership works. The person is first identified; an in-home screening is done asking three (out of 13) questions:

1. Have you fallen in the past year?
2. Do you feel unsteady when standing or walking?
3. Do you worry about falling?

If they respond yes, the worker would explain the risks of falling and refer them to the falls clinic. A multi-faceted assessment is then done by the whole team looking for the history of falls. A conversation about vitamin D, blood pressure checks, medication and vision checks are done, memory tests are taken. Depending on risk, person will be referred to the Matter of Balance or Tai Chi programs and/or for a home safety assessment.

Over 600 patients have been screened since the program began. 330 have received study assessments by St. Paul's, 215 have been referred to the Senior Center for community intervention.

Amy Waters, Director of the Worcester Senior Center, then explained the Community based service arm of the program provided by the Center. This is an evidence based program developed by Boston University which looked at the prevention and the fear of falling. This way it helps reduce isolation which may come from fear. There are various tai chi classes at the Center to help with balance and strength. She invited the Commission members to offer suggestions that could prevent people using mobility devices from falling.

There are two realms from which one should look at falls: 1. Personal Health and 2. Environment.

Personal Health

- Communicate with health care providers.

- The risk of falling is increased by certain medications as well as taking multiple medications. This includes over the counter and herbal remedies. The staff works with clients to minimize side effects including dizziness and drowsiness.
- Determine appropriate exercise to improve strength and balance: Tai Chi, weight training, walking. It all counts! Be sure to get advice on appropriate footwear for exercise. Watch out for floppy slippers!
- Get advice on nutrition: Improper nutrition make one feel weak, tired and more prone to falls.
- Stay hydrated with plenty of fruits, vegetables and water, keep bones strong with calcium and vitamin D and limit alcohol (be very careful when moving after drinking even a little bit of alcohol).
- Vision is very important: Have eyes checked regularly and give time to adjust to new prescriptions.

Environment:

- Most falls occur in the home
- Get rid of clutter especially in walkways
- Make sure rugs are secure
- Keep electrical cords to the edge of rooms
- Keep environment well lit
- Stairs should have good railings, as well as non-skid tape and/or a bright color, ie yellow, on the edges to help with depth perception
- Don't try to carry too many things at once especially going up/down stairs.
- Bathroom adaptations – some of them may be covered by insurance – ask physician to order an assessment if needed.

- Simple things like night lights and grab bars can make all the difference.
- Use safe step stools, don't pull out a drawer to use to reach things on a high shelf. Keep things used often at convenient height.

Don't ignore a fall. Talk it over with healthcare provider: give details such as time of day, activity performing, how one was feeling? The medical professional may be able to make a change that would prevent future falls.

In closing Ms. Waters encouraged being aware of ones surroundings, not to rush, stay healthy and talk with one's physician/medical professionals about fall prevention.

The Senior Center can help with education and a full range of fitness programs. She brought a copy of "The Fall Prevention Handbook" for all who attended the meeting.

This is a program for Worcester residents that are referred through the falls clinic. Other communities have Councils of Aging and many have similar fitness programs available to senior residents. In addition non-Worcester residents who are patients of UMASS Memorial's Trauma Center may enter this program.

Chairperson Garr-Colzie thanked the presenters and Associate Commissioner Lindsay Silva for suggesting this resource be brought to the Commission's attention.

Informational Communication:

One of the accessible Red Cab accessible vans (#109) is out of service until further notice.

The Office was informed by Red Cab's owner, Toni Donovan, that until a new cab is on the road

- Fares (rides) to the City of Worcester and surrounding towns will not have extended wait times.
- They will provide on-going medical appointments when possible.
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There were no passengers in the cab at the time of the accident. The driver was hurt and is due to return to work soon.

Report back on Uber training at DLC (Robert Bilotta and Liz Myska)

Commissioner Bilotta introduced Michael Kennedy from the Center for Living & Working, Inc. to speak to this matter. Mr. Kennedy attended the meeting along with 80 plus people mostly from the Boston area.

There is a pilot program consisting of about 400 people who use the MBTA/RIDE (Para transit). These people can use Uber or the Ride at the same cost bringing more transportation options for people with disabilities. MBTA is looking at this project as a cost-saving measure and Uber is hoping to increase its customer base.

Mr. Kennedy asked Uber if they were going to expand to other areas in the state such as Worcester. The General Manager said they would like to expand to areas including Worcester. Mr. Kennedy expressed his optimism as a win-win for all.

Commissioner Prochilo informed the Commission according to a study done a few years ago when regional transit companies use private transportation companies for transporting people with disabilities about a billion dollars are saved annually.

Update on Disability Etiquette Program (Nancy Garr-Colzie)

Several years ago, the Office established this program to teach and affirm the knowledge of disability etiquette to community groups and agency staff. Recently we have added volunteers with various disabilities to help present the material. The key word of the training is “ASK” and not assume. The program takes about an hour and there are many resources

for any group. Please contact the office when you learn of an agency or group that would like to receive training in disability etiquette.

Review and vote on 2016 Emergency Preparedness Priorities

This item was tabled to the December meeting.

Public Notice: Main Street Project 75% Plan Review Hearing:

The review hearing will be held on Wednesday December 7th, 6:30pm CMRPC, Union Station.

Review of AAB notices and applications: City properties in bold

Variance Applications:

- 119 Belmont Street
- 6 Brussels Street

Mr. Doug Vogel presented on behalf of petitioner, Jade Silvestri, Jade Silvestri Hair & Makeup Co. 6 Brussels Street is an old mill building that was brought about a year ago and a half ago with the intention of restoring the building. The request is for a 24 month time variance. The Commission voted to endorse this variance request.

Decision of the Board

- **284 Highland Street/121 Russell St., Dockets # C16 025/# V16 305** (Granted variance app for time delay filed 10/25/16) Time variance approved to resurface walkway with appropriate material.
- 55 Lake Ave North, Docket #s V14 353 and C15 089

1183 Main Street, Docket # V10 028

City communication on sidewalk snow removal (Josh Martunas)

Mr. Martunas brought two documents regarding sidewalk snow removal. One is a double-sided flyer called “Walking in Winter” and can be found on the city website

at <http://www.worcesterma.gov/uploads/7d/06/7d0606d06baa8f460ce7969>

[ea94508b2/keep-worcester-walking.pdf](http://www.worcesterma.gov/uploads/91/a2/91a279fa1363c05ac70f1b86534b20b8/keep-worcester-walking.pdf) and the List of Referrals for the Elderly and Disabled, Sidewalk Snow Removal Program, Winter 2016-2017

at <http://www.worcesterma.gov/uploads/91/a2/91a279fa1363c05ac70f1b86534b20b8/snow-removal-organizations.pdf>

These documents will be distributed throughout City Hall.

Suggestions for upcoming agenda items

- Commissioner Bureau suggested we review the “Parking Mobility Application” developed in Texas and used in many communities.
- There is an emergency preparedness app –request help to download onto SMART Phones and possibly laptops.
- Ask the writers of the article on Worcester being the 150th inaccessible city
- Condition of Worcester Polling Locations re: accessibility

Announcements:

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**
January 18th, 2017, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster Street
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)**
December 6th, 2016, 4:00 – 5:30PM, YWCA, Members Lounge
- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** December 13th, 2016, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** December 20th, 2016
4:30pm.
- **Vacancies on Commission on Disability for Associate members to represent Districts 1 and 4**
Apply online: <http://www.worcesterma.gov/e-services/online-submit-forms/boards-application>

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/>

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned.