

Commission on Disability Meeting
Minutes for September 18th, 2018, 4:30PM
Levi Lincoln Chamber (3rd fl.)
Worcester City Hall

Attendance:

Members Present: Robert Bureau, Robert Bilotta, Nancy Garr-Colzie, John Gleason, Fitzroy Hall, D. Karuna, Joseph Prochilo, Lindsey Silva, Stephen Stolberg

Members Absent: Elizabeth Myska, Paul Keister

Staff: Jayna Turcek, Dawn E. Clark

Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions

Chairperson Bilotta called the meeting to order. Commissioners introduced themselves.

Approval of August 21st, 2018 Minutes

Commissioner Garr-Colzie moved approval and Commissioner Silva seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously approved the August 21st, 2018 minutes.

Public Concern: Foreclosure – Housing Court Complaints

Ms. Grace Ross and Housing Foreclosure Coalition members requested an opportunity to speak before the commission. Many members shared the experiences they had when their case came before the Worcester Housing Court. Many involved unsatisfactory ADA accommodations that were requested.

Although this issue was out of the realm of the Commission's role, they were very concerned for the stories told. The Office will work to follow up.

Review summer 2018 tours of City Hall for Persons with Disabilities

This was the sixth year of this very successful program. Again this year tour offerings include tours specifically for visually impaired people (VIP) and people who are Deaf.

Originally, the office on Disability and Preservation planned six (6) tours as follows:

Thursday, June 28th – 10AM – Noon - Chinese Elder Group (Traditional Chinese Interpreter was provided)

Thursday, July 12th – 10AM – Noon - Geneses Club

Thursday, July 26th – Visually Impaired People (VIP) (sighted guides provided)

Thursday, August 2nd, Deaf - Cancelled

Thursday, August 9th, Seven Hills Family Services

Total Participants - 69

Planning began in February conferring with staff at Preservation Worcester who once again agreed to provide docents for the program. With this assent office staff reserved the Esther Howland Chamber.

The morning program consisted of the tour, introductions by the Mayor's staff, staff from Preservation Worcester (slide show) and Office of Disability, which took the lead for the program's implementation, Mock City Council with former City Councilor Anthony Economou as emcee and the Tour (Preservation Worcester docents). City Clerk's office (election staff) review voting procedures (absentee ballot etc.) and demonstrated the Auto MARK (voting machine for independence – all voters can use) followed by completing the tour evaluation.

The Commission suggested working with the college Disability Services Offices, Worcester Public Schools (high schoolers) and other groups from the Senior Center.

Red Taxi: Accessible Cab Update

Ms. Donovan, Red Cab owner was not able to attend. The Commission discussed the service. As the result the following questions were asked:

1. How many days were the vehicles off the road due to accidents this year?
2. Is there a long term goal for increasing number of accessible cabs? The Commission agrees that demand exists. One Commissioner noted that they often hear that cabs are booked out for weeks and are unable to schedule. Contradictory to that the Commission has received past reports from Red Cab that cabs are used for the general population because they are not being utilized by persons with disabilities.
3. When will Red Cab acquire a new placement for the cab that was recently totaled? Will the replacement be a more up to date vehicle?
4. How many requests have been denied due to availability?

Review of COD FY19 Goals

The Chairperson wants to flesh out these goals for specificity and the ability for Commission members to take tasks to achieve them. The Commission; voted to table this discussion.

Commissioner Garr-Colzie suggested the Commission review the document “Benchmarks for Inclusion” to track the Commission’s work.

Update on planning for COD 40th Anniversary

Dee Karuna reviewed the program as follows:

Set up Art Work - Tucker Collins

4:15PM – Music –Cellist: Alex Jordan

4:30PM - Welcome Statement: Joe Prochilo

4:35PM – Recognition of State and City Officials

Emcees: Robert Bilotta & Robert Bureau (alternate at podium)

Bob will intro Mayor for proclamation and City Manager

4:45PM - Our Journey: Nancy Garr-Colzie

4:50PM - “Connecting the Dots” -video interview with Larry Raymond hosted by Elizabeth Myska

5:05PM – Thank you to Larry Raymond, former Director of the Disability Office

5:10PM — Panel members: Moderator: Elizabeth Myska

Joy Spurlin – Center for Living & Working, Inc.

Joseph Bellil – Easter Seals of Massachusetts, Inc.

Rachel Brown – Community Legal Aid, Inc. and past COD Chairperson

William Henning – Boston Independent Living Center, Inc. (raised in Worcester)

Panel questions

How do you see your role in the disability movement?

What have been the highlights?

What are our challenges and how do we move forward?

5:55PM Closing Statement - Joseph Prochilo

6:00PM Reception with vendor tables and history/education boards and videos

Tables: Multiple Sclerosis Society, Easter Seals of Massachusetts, Senior Center, Commission for the Blind, Center for Living & Working, Inc. Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Reequipment Program

Thanks go to: Transportation Advisory Coalition, Jack Peacock (editing video),

WCCA for video, Alex Jordon (Cellist), Tucker Collins Photographer and Dell's Eatable Creations.

Review of AAB notices and applications: City properties in bold

Variance Application

- 100 Front Street, Docket # TBD
- 670 West Boylston Street, Docket # TBD

Decision of the Board

- **455 Main Street, Docket # V18 232**
- 50 Franklin Street, Docket # V18 237

Suggestions for upcoming agenda items

Understand the Housing Court's ADA Coordinator's role

Announcements:

- **Transportation Travel Application Assistance (WRTA/MBTA)**
September 19th, 10am-12noon, Worcester Senior Center
- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**
September 19th, 2018, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster Street
- **Abilities Fest:** Sunday, September 23rd, 2018, 10am – 2pm, Institute Park, Salisbury Street, Worcester
- **Public Safety Day for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**, Saturday September 29th, 10am-4pm, RSVP jphilip@centerlw.org
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)** October 2nd, 2018, 4:00 – 5:30pm, YWCA, Members Lounge
- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** October 9th, 2018, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Wheelchair Stroll- West Boylston Street** October 11th, 2018, 1-3pm
Contact disabilities@worcesterma.gov
- **White Cane Awareness Day Wednesday October 17th, 2018, 9am-12noon.**
Contact disabilities@worcesterma.gov
- **SAVE THE DATE:** Commission on Disability 40th Anniversary Celebration
Tuesday October 16th, 4:30pm-6:30pm, Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber

- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting:** Nov 6th, 2018 at 9:00am at 2 Coppage Drive.
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** November 20th, 2018 4:30pm

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.