

**City of Worcester
Commission on Disabilities**

Type of Meeting: Regular
Date and Time Convened: July 15, 2009
Place Where Convened: Esther Howland City Council Chamber
Members Present: Grace Clark, Jacqueline Norton, John Cronin, Rachel Brown, Dawn Clark, Joseph Sinasky
Associates Present: None
Unable to Attend: Associate Member Jill Swerzenski
Staff Present: Fran Manocchio
Public Present: Mike Kennedy, Mary Healy, Herb Cremer, Robin Miller
Guests: Jimmy Savage and Axl Mora, Common Pathways; Dominique Ruegg, Legal Assistance Corp. of Central MA

1. **Call to Order and Introductions.** Meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.
2. **Acceptance of Minutes.** Motion to accept minutes for June by Jacqueline Norton, seconded by John Cronin; approved.
3. **Update from Executive Office of the City Manager.** No one from the Executive Office of the City Manager was present. Rachel Brown recommended that the Commission send a letter to City Manager Michael V. O'Brien expressing disappointment about the lack of communication. Members of Commission on Disability are anticipating an announcement from the City Manager regarding appointment of the ADA Coordinator. In addition, Commission members have not received an update from Michael Gilleberto, Office of City Manager, since his attendance at the April 2009 Commission meeting.
4. **Information and Education: Common Pathways Neighborhood Conversations While** Dawn Clark worked at the Center for Living and Working, she served on the Steering Committee of Common Pathways. Common Pathways, is a coalition of Worcester residents and organizations working together toward a healthy community for all. Common Pathways subscribes to internationally upheld principles of healthy community, engages residents in dialogue, and provides research on a broad spectrum of indicators. This summer Common Pathways has engaged community organizations to host a series of "Neighborhood Conversations", geared towards health and healthy living. Dawn requested that the COD host a series of 3 conversations specifically for people with disabilities. Jimmy Savage and Axl Mora from Common Pathways provided the following information: Neighborhood Conversations will occur as a means to obtain personal experiences from residents in Worcester regarding health, healthcare access and the impact of social determinants of health. Outcomes, including themes, will be

shared with Common Pathways. An end of the year festival or celebration will be held for all participants. Dawn encouraged Commission members to attend the Neighborhood Conversations and to help with community outreach. Fran will send out an email notification as soon as the details are in order.

5. Communications and Reports.

- a. **Chairperson's Report.** Dawn Clark announced that she is no longer working at Center for Living and Working. Dawn deferred her report in order to focus on the Neighborhood Conversations.
- b. **Director's Report.** Fran Manocchio provided:
 - i. an update on the accessibility audit for Worcester Public Library. Lucy Gangone, Head Librarian, reported that the Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Board of Directors approved the audit and is planning to move forward on two recommendations: Installing 2 HP designated spaces on Library Lane for easier access to the main entrance and improving the ease of travel from the municipal parking lot across Library Lane to the main entrance. The Committee is holding on the third recommendation regarding improvement to the curb cut at the corner of Salem Street and Library Lane.
 - ii. There is an increase in WRTA customer complaints.
 - iii. Fran distributed a table detailing 5 months of usage of the Worcester Red Cab 109 and 110 Commissioners inquired about possible reasons for the increase in service for Cab 109 in April and May. Recommendation made to have Fran contact Red Cab for more details.
 - iv. Several members of the Commission on Disabilities and the Human Rights Commission, as well as Human Rights staff, attended a very well received Fair Housing Training on 6/24/09. Leticia Medina-Richman, Coordinator of the Worcester Fair Housing Project based at Legal Assistance Corp. conducted the training which had a focus on fair housing issues that affect people with disabilities.
 - v. Fran responded to 15 requests for information/referral and complaints from people with disabilities.

5. Transition Plan, Accessibility, and Access Board Issues.

- a. **Updates on City and School Dept.** Stacey DeBoise Luster, Human Resources Manager of Worcester Public Schools, will attend the August meeting. Members inquired about the City's ADA Grievance Procedure; Fran will research.
- b. **Sidewalks, Curb Cuts, and Chirpers.**
 - i. **List of Chirper /Audible Signal Locations.** Fran distributed a Memorandum received from Joe Borbone, Director of Engineering for the Department of Public Works & Parks detailing the chirper locations. Discussion held regarding related issues regarding pedestrian crosswalks. Recommendation made to develop a public awareness campaign, perhaps in partnership with the Worcester Police Dept. Traffic Unit. Members inquired about the most problematic intersections in the city; Fran will attempt to gather this information. Jackie Norton discussed a

recent meeting held with State Sen. Michael Moore regarding the topic of transportation and suggested that the Commission contact with him.

- c. **HP Parking Fines.** No update.
- d. **ADA:** Members discussed that the ADA requires the City have three documents available: Plan, Grievance Procedure and Self-Evaluation. The Plan is accessible on the City's website. Rachel Brown recalled that at some point a Grievance Procedure was on the website. Members did not recall a Self-Evaluation.

6. **Transportation and TPAG**

- a. **Buses and Para-transit.** Discussion regarding customer complaints and process. Rachel encouraged members and staff who hear about complaints to refer individuals to Legal Assistance Corp. of Central MA where they can explore possible legal remedies.
- b. **Taxicab Statistics.** See Director's Report.

7. **Old Business**

- a. **UMASS Valet Services.** While we had indications from UMASS Memorial Health Care that the issues had been resolved, Dawn Clark recently received a complaint from a person with a disability who attempted to use valet service. Dawn and Fran will conduct a "test" and report at the next Commission meeting.

8. **New Business**

- a. **ADA Coordinator.** Item tabled.
- b. **Washington Heights.** Rachel Brown, Mike Kennedy and Fran Manocchio continue to respond to tenant issues at Washington Heights.
- c. **Emergency Preparedness/Special Needs Registry.** As discussed at the May meeting, the Commission agreed to work with Chris Montiverdi and Kerry Clark to finalize the Special Needs Registry this summer/early fall. Commissioners will work on initial revisions and then host a meeting with stakeholders for their input.

9. **Announcements and Adjournment.**

- a. **Announcements.** Recent agendas and minutes have not been posted on the City's website. Fran will address this.
- b. **Elections:** Rachel Brown reminded members that it's time for elections for Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk of the Commission. Dawn's term expires May 2010 and she would like to have a new Chair this fall.
- c. **Robbin Miller/REDD.** **i.** Through the efforts of City Councilor Phil Palmieri, a flashing light was installed on Belmont Street in front of UMass Memorial Healthcare, Memorial Hospital. This is a step in the right direction. **ii.** Since chirpers are donated to the City, could the Commission invite Joe Borbone to a future meeting?

- d. **CMRPC.** Dawn Clark announced that the Central MA Regional Planning Council is hosting a meeting this evening, 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Mt. Carmel Church Hall regarding a proposed regional mobility study. Dawn will attend.
- e. **Documentary on Foreclosure.** Rachel Brown announced that several law students produced a documentary regarding the foreclosure crisis. A viewing will be held at Legal Assistance Corp. on 7/22/09 from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm.
- f. **Adjournment.** Motion to adjourn at 5:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Fran Manocchio
Director, Office of Human Rights and Disabilities

2009-7-15 Minutes