

**Commission on Disabilities – Meeting Summary**  
**January 12, 2010**  
**Worcester City Hall, Esther Howland City Council Chamber**

Present: Rachel Brown, Grace Clark, Jacqueline Norton, Dawn Clark (late). Fran Manocchio, staff

Guests: Chris Montiverdi, Emergency Management, City of Worcester, Herb Cremer, John Bird, Mike Kennedy, Christi Berry, Mary Healey, Debbie Malone

1. Meeting called to order at 4:06 pm by Rachel Brown, Vice Chair.
2. Emergency Preparedness/Special Needs Registry: Chris Montiverdi provided reported that he, Kerry Clark and Fran Manocchio met with staff from the City's Technical Services Department to discuss implementation of the registry for people with special needs. Chris thanked all members of the Commission on Disabilities for their assistance with development of the registry and for raising very thoughtful questions and concerns. Through discussion with Technical Services, we learned:
  - a. The current registry form is too lengthy. Technical Services staff recommend essential information only and using as many "radio buttons" (bullets that you check or click) as possible.
  - b. With a reduced form, Technical Services can enter the data into an Excel Spreadsheet. This would take just a few days. An Excel Spreadsheet would allow Emergency Personnel to access information by street, by zip code, by type of disability, by type of housing, etc. Each of the questions on the Registry would have a corresponding column on the Excel Spreadsheet.
  - c. If we request a new computer program specifically for the Registry, we would wait 18 months to 2 years, given the current workload at Technical Services.
  - d. It is unclear who will be responsible for the actual data entry.
  - e. The Registry would be available on the City's website and would be available for the user to translate (the City uses Google translation). The user could also change font size. Mary Healey and Debbie Malone inquired if the format would be accessible for people with visual disabilities. Fran will check.
  - f. The Registry is a voluntary database.
  - g. We could explore the possibility of a kick-off event and invite partners and social service agencies.
  - h. Is it possible to include information about the Registry in the City's annual census? Fran will check with the City Clerk.

- i. Could we possibly have the Registry Forms available at physician's offices?
  - j. Chris, Fran and Dawn met and reduced the form to essential information and to 3 pages. Revised form (#5).
  - k. Unknown at this time: transportation to shelters and which locations have been identified as shelters.
3. Transition Plan, Accessibility and Access Board Issues
- a. Jackie Norton reported on the first meeting of the ADA Transition Plan Work Group. In attendance: Rachel Brown, Jackie Norton, Mike Kennedy, Debbie Malone and Dave Johnson. Positive meeting; Fran distributed the original Transition Plan to all. The group discussed locations to keep on our list, locations to add, and locations to explore whether they should or should not be on our master list. The group also discussed the process of conducting the next Transition Plan Update and would like to explore the possibility of Massachusetts Office on Disability conducting an accessibility training session for Commissioners, community partners, and possibly, local college students. See attached notes (revised on 2/2/10).
  - b. Mike Kennedy reported through email that we have not received any notices from the AAB in the last month.
  - c. Follow-up on Mass. Highway Hearing re: Belmont Street: Debbie Malone reported. Rachel Brown, Mike Kennedy, Jackie Norton and Debbie attended the meeting held at Worcester Public Library in November. They had an opportunity to speak directly with the state Engineer to discuss recommendations, including no brick sidewalks, audible 4 way pedestrian lights and removal of any sidewalk barriers.
  - d. Blackstone Canal District Project: Dawn Clark, Jackie Norton and Mike Kennedy attended the meeting at Union Station which drew about 60 people. Dawn reported that the project managers are very amenable to not using bricks, reducing lighting, increase benches and trees while taking accessibility into consideration. Mike reported that many merchants attended the meeting and it appeared that there was support for use of stamped concrete for sidewalks/walkways. There is an example of this type of concrete in front of the Hanover Theatre which Mike will test out. (Commissioner noted that Dept. of Public Works & Parks removed the benches from Federal Plaza as part of a downtown project. However, are they scheduled to restore the benches?)
  - e. Crompton Park Plans: Mike Kennedy reported that Fran recently received the site and building plans from Lamoureux Pagano Associates, Architects for the renovations at Crompton Park. Mike and Fran reviewed the plans and Mike sent a letter to the architect with a few questions:
    - i. The pool has a circular slide and ladder; is this feature accessible?
    - ii. Will 5% of the picnic tables accommodate wheelchairs?
    - iii. Does the placement of trees provide any barriers to people with disabilities?

- iv. There appears to be one bathroom or changing room marked Family (M/F). Is there a reason why?

Based on the drawings, the renovations appear to be in compliance with ADA. Fran will follow-up with Rob Antonelli, Assistant Commissioner, Parks.

4. Discussion: Process to prioritize street repairs, curb cuts, ramps in order to communicate with Dept. of Public Works & Parks: Held until February meeting. Discussion held regarding issue of lack of designated handicap parking around the DCU Center during construction. Rachel Brown made a motion to write a letter to Commissioner of the Dept. of Public Works & Park, Robert Moylan, to express the concerns of the Commission on Disabilities. Grace Clark seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Rachel will draft a letter.
5. Transportation and TPAG: Mike Kennedy reported that the WRTA had a meeting with residents at Seabury Heights and Green Hill Towers to discuss proposed reductions in service. Debbie Malone attended the last TPAG meeting and reported that the WRTA is improving their complaint/feedback process. In addition, PBSI wants to distribute a customer survey; REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled) will give input.
6. Announcements and Adjournment:
  - a. Fran reported that DPC (Disability Policy Consortium) has requested that the Commission on Disabilities co-host a regional meeting for Commissions on Disabilities located in Central Massachusetts. All members agreed that we should do so. Fran will work on logistics.
  - b. Snow Ordinance: Brief discussion about complaint process regarding snow ordinance. Motion made and seconded to send a letter to the City Manager and Commissioner Moylan regarding this situation and offer to assist.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Fran Manocchio  
Director, Office of Human Rights and Disabilities  
February 4, 2010