

Commission on Disability Meeting  
Minutes from October 21, 2014, 4:30PM  
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber 3<sup>rd</sup> Flr.

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:** Francesca Abbey; Rachel Shannon Brown; Nancy Garr-Colzie; Herbert Cremer; Paul Keister; Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo; Stephen Stolberg; Susan Swanson

**Members Absent:** Charles Hiamah

**Staff:** Jayna Turcek, Joseph Sansoucy, Sundar Layalu; Dawn E. Clark

**Guest:** Seth Peters, Director of Epidemiology -Worcester Public Health

**Members of the Public:**

William Belcher, Terry Burke Dotson; Susan Fahlbeck; Jo Hart; Jackie Norton and others

**Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions**

The Chairperson welcomed commission members and the members of the public present. After the meeting was called to order, the commissioners introduced themselves.

A motion was made, seconded and voted to take the agenda out of order for the purpose of hearing information related to the outbreak of the Ebola virus.

**Informational presentation on the Ebola virus (Seth Peters, Director of Epidemiology Worcester Public Health)**

Mr. Peters is attending community meetings to let residents to know the facts related to the Ebola virus. Mr. Peters provided the following information about the Ebola virus to the Commission.

The 2014 Ebola epidemic is the largest in history. This outbreak is affecting multiple countries in West Africa. One imported case and two associated locally acquired cases in healthcare workers have been reported in the United States. A person infected with Ebola cannot spread the disease until symptoms appear the time from exposure to when signs or symptoms of the disease appear (the incubation period) is 2 to 21 days, but the average time is 8 to 10 days. Once someone recovers from Ebola, they can no longer spread the virus.

You can only get Ebola from:

- Touching the blood or bodily fluids of a person who is sick with or has died of Ebola
- Touching contaminated objects, like needles.
- Touching infected animals, their blood or other bodily fluids, or their meat

The virus in the blood and body fluids can enter another person's body through broken skin or unprotected mucous membranes in, for example, the eyes, nose, or mouth.

In order to be considered to possibly have Ebola, a person must have:

- Recently traveled to Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone  
And/Or
- Been in contact with a person who is sick with Ebola  
And
- Shown symptoms of Ebola

Early symptoms of Ebola include:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher •Headache •Stomach pain
- Muscle pain •Vomiting •Diarrhea •Unexplained bleeding or bruising

## Protect yourself against Ebola

There is no FDA-approved vaccine available for Ebola. Experimental vaccines and treatments for Ebola are under development, but they have not yet been fully tested for safety or effectiveness.

### To protect yourself from Ebola

- DO wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Do NOT touch the blood or body fluids (like urine, feces, saliva, vomit, sweat, and semen) of people who are sick.
- Do NOT handle items that may have come in contact with a sick person's blood or body fluids, like clothes, bedding, needles, or medical equipment.
- Do NOT touch the body of someone who has died of Ebola.

There are no confirmed cases of Ebola in Massachusetts. The outbreak in West Africa is currently limited to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. If you have traveled to an area with an Ebola outbreak or had close contact with a person sick with Ebola, you may be at risk if you:

- Had direct contact with blood or body fluids or items that came into contact with blood or body fluids from a person with Ebola.
- Touched bats or nonhuman primates (like apes or monkeys) or blood, fluids, or raw meat prepared from these animals.
- Went into hospitals where Ebola patients were being treated AND had close contact with the patients.
- Touched the body of a person who died of Ebola.

You should call your doctor AND check for signs and symptoms of Ebola for 21 days

- Take your temperature every morning and evening.
- Watch for other Ebola symptoms, like severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or unexplained bleeding or bruising.

- Call your doctor even if you do not have symptoms. The doctor can evaluate your exposure level and any symptoms and consult with public health authorities to determine if actions are needed.

During the time that you are watching for signs and symptoms, you can continue your normal activities, including going to work.

If you get sick after you come back from an area with an Ebola outbreak

- Get medical care right away if you have a fever, severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or unexplained bleeding or bruising.
- Tell your doctor about your recent travel to West Africa or contact with a person who was sick with Ebola and your symptoms BEFORE you go to the doctor's office or emergency room. Calling before you go to the doctor's office or emergency room will help the staff care for you and protect other people.

The material presented above was adapted from Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control information. Updated 10/14.

Again, a motion was made, seconded and voted to take the agenda out of order to receive a review of ADA Community Survey Responses.

### **Review of ADA Community Survey Responses (Sundar Layalu)**

Mr. Sundar Layalu was introduced as an intern with the Office of Human Rights and Disabilities.

His first assignment was to prepare a report summarizing the responses of the ADA community survey. 351 surveys were gathered over the past two months. The report included socio-economic information, prioritizing access concerns at city-owned buildings, polling places, sidewalks and other challenges for people with disabilities.

The socio-economic information included:

Age (Under 18: 1%, 18-24: 13%, 25 -34: 20%, 35-44: 10%, 45-54: 22%, 55-64: 21%, 65-74: 21%, Did not respond 5%);

Ethnicity (American Indian and Alaska Native: 2%, Asian: 2%, Black or African American: 5%, Hispanic or Latino: 1%, Multiracial-multiethnic: 2%, White: 75%, Other: 4%, Did not respond: 1%);

Gender (Female 193, Male 136, Other 2, Did not respond 21);

Household Income (<\$20: 18%, <\$30: 9%, <\$45: 10%, <\$60: 12%, >60: 11%);

Worcester resident perceived to have a disability/or family member (41% yes, 59% no).

Prioritized top 5 buildings where approaches and entrances were most important:

- Main Public Library
- Police Headquarters
- Union Station
- Senior Center
- City Hall

Prioritized top 5 buildings where toilet rooms were most important:

- Main Public Library
- Senior Center
- Union Station
- Police Headquarters
- Open Space (Parks)

Prioritized top 5 buildings where additional services were most important:

- Main Public Library
- Senior Center

Union Station  
Police Headquarters  
Open Space (Parks)

#### Website

Use: Yes 46%, No 54%

Problem Navigating: Yes 13%, No/Do not visit 87%

Polling Location Concern: Yes 9%, No/Not used 91%

Area of city presenting most accessibility challenge:

Top 3: Main Street, Belmont Street, Kelly Square

During snow falls and snow emergencies the following areas of the city were identified as not often shoveled by either homeowners or DPW officials:

Belmont Street, Bowdoin Street, Burncoat Street, Clark neighborhood, Elm Street, Grafton Hill side streets, Hope Avenue, Kelly Square, Quinsigamond Village, City bridges, Union Hill, Vernon Street, YMCA-Franklin Street.

When asked: “What is your most important priority in terms of increasing access in Worcester?” The following responses were made:

- Better ADA transportation system
- Better sidewalks
- Clean bathrooms
- Create disability hotline
- Curb cuts and access to buildings that offer life enhancement or entertainment
- Ensure all crosswalk signals are working properly and drivers are alert to the hearing, visual and physically impaired
- More ramps
- Not being ignored by city officials

- Snow removal
- Street signs at intersections
- Update buildings
- Wheel chair accessible door widths

### **Approval of September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Minutes**

Commissioner Cremer moved approval of amended minutes. Commissioner Swanson seconded the motion. The Commission voted approval with 4 yes votes and 2 abstentions.

### **Discussion and vote whether to request City Manager and City Council to expand Commission Membership to nine members**

The Chairperson felt that this action would benefit the Commission. By adding two members it would give more opportunity to get more people involved and as well increase the pool for leadership positions.

Commission members saw the benefit, however, were concerned because this would increase the quorum number. The Commission has had a number of meetings this year when Associates were raised to member status to meet the quorum requirement. The Commission requested the Director to bring back information from the Citizens Advisory Council (the city's voluntary body that interviews interested residents for the various city boards and commissions) as to how many people apply to be on the Commission on Disability and relevant data.

### **Election of Officers: nominations and vote**

In September Stephen Stolberg and Elizabeth Myska were nominated for both chairperson and vice chairperson with no nominations for Secretary at that meeting.

When the nominations were reviewed at this meeting, Elizabeth Myska declined nominations for both positions. There being no other

nominations for chairperson, nominations were closed. Stephen Stolberg was elected unanimously chairperson for FY'15. There were no nominations for either vice chairperson or secretary.

### **Discussion of Chairperson Emeritus**

Chairperson Cremer wanted to give Commissioner Stolberg help when he was Chairperson and suggested former Chairperson Rachel Brown be chairperson emeritus. Commissioner Brown indicated her appreciation of the gesture, but the city charter did not call for a position of chairperson emeritus. Ms. Brown indicated her willing to assist Mr. Stolberg without a title such as this. At this point a suggestion was made that perhaps Commissioner Brown would consider filling the position of vice chairperson of the Commission. After a few words of encouragement she agreed with the caveat that if there was someone else that would take the position she would happily step aside. Commissioner Brown was unanimously elected as vice chairperson.

### **Notice of ADA RFP (Request For Proposal) for survey of polling locations**

The City of Worcester uses facilities as polling places other than city owned properties. This survey request will complement the Self-Assessment Study of city owned buildings, etc. done earlier in the year by the Institute for Human-Centered Design in helping the city achieve ADA compliance.

### **Notice regarding the Mass Department of Transitiona Assistance (DTA) office**

Director Turchek reported that the pathway grade to the recently moved DTA Office to Sudbury Street is geographically inaccessible (the



building is located on the middle of a steep hill) and is working with the public who are having difficulty accessing that office.

## **Review of AAB notices and applications City**

### Variance applications:

- 75 Lovell St, Columbus Park Preparatory Academy

The city has received a grant to make energy conservation improvements to this school. The dollar amount of the improvement meets the threshold requiring the building to meet Massachusetts building code requirements which includes accessibility features.

With the improvement the school does not meet the code. Items of accessibility which will need to be addressed include entrance to the building, accessible bathroom, drinking fountain, phone, accessible parking space/passenger drop off, etc. The cost of which are not part of the energy conservation project.

The city is requesting a variance related to the access of the building. Three options to meet access have been submitted. Each of these options poses difficulties and costs.

Joe Samsoucy reviewed the three options with the Commission:

Option 1: Unenclosed vertical lifts have a rise to 5ft. An enclosed lift would rise to 14ft. with this lift the egress clearance of the doors would be adversely effected. For this lift to work partial demolition of the floor and removal of electrical equipment would have to take place.

Option 2: Adding an enclosed LULU (elevator). With this option a new corridor would route through a kindergarten classroom. This option would cost about \$700,000, ½ the cost of Level 1 Alterations and would lose use of Classroom space.

Option 3: This option would use an incline lift and is considered the best option in terms of dollars and practicality.

There was a question about the need for a second exit for emergency purposes. Mr. Sansoucy indicated that if this was new construction a second accessible exit would be required, but because this is a retrofit project this was not required.

Responses:

- 455 Main St. (railing proposal), Docket #C14-008

The City's Parks Department is proposing to extend the railings on the steps from City Hall to the Common.

The Commission commended the City's willingness to add a third railing on the steps directly in front of City Hall front door as recommended by the Commission on Disability as well as railings at the far ends of the steps.

**Review of AAB notices and applications *Privately owned facilities***

Responses:

- 691 Grafton St., Docket #C14-076
- 255 Park Ave., Docket #C14-071

Decisions and Resolutions:

- 20 Winthrop St., Docket #C14-065
- 102 Russell St., Docket C14-069
- 39-41 Irving St., Docket #V14-106

The question of whether or not to review privately owned buildings was raised. After a brief discussion, the Commission agreed to think about this for a month.

**MA State Lottery Commission ADA Audit (104 Belmont Street)**

This item is similar to an AAB complaint, but is going through the State Lottery ADA audit instead and therefore a separate item. Director

Turcek is working with the state ADA auditor to get the curb cut corrected in front of Tedeschi's on Belmont Street. She has spoken with Joseph Borbone, Director of Engineering for the City who has been in touch with Tedeschi's.

Mass. Department of Transportation will be doing reconstruction of the bridge over I-290 which will include curbs cuts and other amenities to Edwards Street. The start of this project is scheduled for the spring with completion in 2016 and will provide safer access to the hospital.

### **Discussion: Winter break from regularly scheduled meetings**

The Chairperson asked the Commission to consider not holding a meeting in December. After some discussion of the pros and cons of such an action, the Commission voted not to hold a meeting in December this year with a vote of 4 Yeses and 3 Abstentions.

### **Public Comment**

William Belcher – Suggested the Commission not meet in January, February or March due to bad weather.

- Suggested the Commission consider private AAB complaints so people with disabilities would have access to buildings when they need to.

Jo Hart – asked the Commission to review the private AAB complaints .

Jackie Norton – Asked for a list of sidewalks that need to be fixed.

- She indicated a change in Charter's home visit fee of \$30 and was concerned for people with disabilities who needed these visits to be able to use their T.V.s.

Herbert Cremer – Noted the Senior Center has computer classes. He suggested that it would be helpful if some group would have a class every week or two on how to use smart phones and tablets.

- Suggested a list of safe public restrooms be put on the city web-site based on the Commission's work and interest so people will know where they are.
- Use the WRTA disabled persons email list for communicating information about programs and services for disabled persons in the city.
- Provide data based on telephone intake requests for help in order to provide the Commission about the needs of people with disabilities that come to the office.

**The Commission thanked the officers for their service with a round of applause.**

**Announcements:**

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**  
November 19th, 1-2:30pm, WRTA Building, 287 Grove St.
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)**  
November 4<sup>th</sup>, 5-6:30pm, Worcester Public Library
- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:**  
November 11, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Next Commission meeting:** November 18th, 4:30pm
- **Emergency Preparedness Tip:** People with disabilities might want to consider having several gallon containers of water at home per person for emergencies.
- **Emergency Planning Meeting:** (TBD, please check city calendar), 50 Skyline Dr.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Stolberg moved to adjourn with Commissioner Swanson seconding the motion. All approved.