

Commission on Disability Meeting  
Minutes for August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 4:30PM  
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber,  
Room 309, 3<sup>rd</sup> Flr.

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:** Robert Bureau, Robert Bilotta, Nancy Garr-Colzie, Paul Keister, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo, Douglas Russell, Jr., Lindsey Silva

**Staff:** Jayna Turcek, Dawn E. Clark, Luis Martinez, Intern

**Guests:** Dan Marino and Ben Li from OFO

**Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions**

Chairperson Prochilo called meeting to order and Commissioners introduced themselves. Robert Bureau was recognized as having been appointed a full Commissioner.

**Approval of August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Minutes**

Commissioner Garr-Colzie moved approval and Commissioner Keister seconded. The Commission unanimously approved the August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 minutes as written.

**Discussion on OFO, station free bike sharing** <http://www.ofo.com/>

How OFO Works: OFO bikes have GPS embedded in them so people who want to use them can use their phone to locate a bike. The bike can be unlocked with the code in the app and taken for the needed ride. The bike has a locking mechanism with the kickstand and locks when ride is finished. Tools needed to use the bike are a smart phone and a credit card.

OFO is in negotiations with the City to bring 100 to 400 bikes to the city. OFO has no meaning. If you spell it out in small letters it looks like a bike. OFO would work with the city to educate pedestrians and bike riders about bike etiquette and the rules of biking such as not to ride on or lock a bike on a sidewalk. Discussion about bike racks and bike gathering places need to take place with the City as well. OFO bike retrievers bring bikes back to appropriate places in other cities. General public can report a bike in the “wrong” place.

If a bike has not moved for a while an OFO worker would check on it. The fee of an unlocked bike applies to the last rider.

The bikes are for the convenience of the residents solving the “last mile problem”. Cost is based on an hourly basis. The per ride fees is part of the conversation with the City of Worcester. In other cities there has been an opportunity to purchase a monthly or yearly pass.

These yellow bikes are of good quality withstand rain and limited snow. In other cities OFO stores the bikes when the snow comes. Each bike has a basket and solar powered reflectors/headlights.

The Law in Massachusetts requires the use of a helmet for users under 16 years of age. OFO does encourage riders to wear helmets.

There are no OFO bike sharing programs in New England to date. The company was due to start up in Seattle, Washington this week and will be monitoring the programs progress. They are in 150 cities in the world and have provided 1 billion rides in three years. Issues include parking and bike condition.

Currently OFO is looking at alternative bikes to serve various audiences. They do not currently have an accessible bike for persons with physical disabilities.

OFO wants to provide a safe and environmentally friendly service.

### **Review Shrewsbury Wheelchair Stroll July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

About 16 people including the leaders participated. They were divided into four groups beginning on either end of Shrewsbury Street and on both sides of the street. The stroll took place at the height of the dinner hour. Often chairs were forced to use the street because the café dining tables did not allow passage of chairs.

As a result of the stroll a list of 77 truncated domes were identified as needing repainting or replacing (in Commission’s packet). Between the May 23<sup>rd</sup> stroll and the July 20<sup>th</sup> stroll 217 access issues were identified, 117 are pavement issues and 100 are non-pavement issues. Commissioner Myska appreciated learning from the stroll/walk and encouraged people to take the opportunity to participate in a stroll to have a firsthand experience with the issues.

Director Turcheck referred to the stroll evaluation summary in the packet which tells of the human experience and challenges of the stroll. She has not yet received a response from the list of concerns that was given to DPW staff at the June meeting. She views these strolls as necessary to educate, identify barriers, and make recommendations regarding the city's ADA obligations. The city does not have a comprehensive review of sidewalk conditions and elements for accessibility at this time, so these walks enable the Commission to examine specific neighborhoods and make recommendations. She encouraged the Commission to move this list forward.

Commissioner Bilotta moved to forward this list of truncated dome needs to the city's Department of Public Works for action. Commission Bureau seconded. All approved.

The Chairperson noted there is a wheelchair stroll planned for Webster Square to include Coes Pond area in September/October time frame.

### **WRTA Tour and Update**

Commission members Prochilo, Keister (via conference call), Garr-Colzie and Director Turcheck made a visit on August 9<sup>th</sup> to the WRTA Hub to review accessibility features. They found that a person with a visual impairment would not know when a bus arrives or departed or where to find the bus. Buses pull in to an open spot and not a predesignated spot for the particular bus. The computer time sequencing had a two minutes delay from real time. The display is different from the audio announcement and the four audio announcements come in at four different times.

A summary of the issues identified by the Commission in the last three years at the WRTA Hub was in the Commission's packet. Some of the issues remaining were either not addressed or have now reoccurred.

Commissioner Bureau made a motion the a letter addressed to WRTA stating issues identified in the 2014 -2016 summary and those discussed at this meeting asking for a time frame for correcting them along with a request to make such a presentation to the Commission. The motion also includes having a ride the bus day with the visually impaired inviting Commission members and WRTA staff. Commissioner Keister seconded. All approved.

In the past, members of the Commission have attended the Transportation Planning Advisory Group((TPAG). This is group that advises WRTA on accessibility issues related to people with Disabilities. The next meeting is September 20<sup>th</sup> from 1-2:30PM at the Hub. Commissioner Garr-Colzie. Commissioner Prochillo and Bureau will bring these issues to TPAG.

Mr. Keister provided the Commission with his four and a half hour experience getting from Elm Street to Walmart on Rt. 146. This is less than a six mile round trip.

**Review of proposed definitions for racism, discrimination and health equity as approved and forwarded by the Partnership for Racial and Health Equity**

In the packet there are proposed definitions for racism, discrimination and health equity. Director Turчек explained that the Director of Public Health, Karyn Clark, forwarded these to her. In the past year the Commission received a presentation on the CHIP identifying the various groups along with their goals and strategies.

In today's packet is a colorful sheet with this information. One of the CHIP domains, Racism and Discrimination, is managed by a working group called the Partnership for Racial and Health Equity. This group developed a set of definitions and are now sharing them with the city and partners. Director Turчек requested the Commission review these proposed definitions to determine if there are other terms that need to be included to ensure people with disabilities are included and addressed when this group develops strategies for the CHIP work in the domain of Racism and Discrimination. The document contains many terms, many of which the City used when doing the citywide dialogues a couple of years ago. This request has gone to the Commission on Human Rights for their input. They may take a couple of months to consider.

The Chairperson notes that the document is silent on disability and encouraged the Commission to offer term(s) that would speak to disability issues. Two terms suggested for inclusion in the definitions are ableism and abled bodied-privilege. A motion was approved unanimously to forward the terms ableism and abled bodied-privilege. Mr. Bureau offered to source definitions.

The Commission will take a month to consider other possible terms that might be added and to be clear on the definitions of the two terms put forward at this meeting.

### **FY'17 Annual Report**

The Commission agreed on the following FY'18 Goals and Initiatives:

1. Accessibility audit of restaurants
2. Conduct a curbcut inventory
3. Handicap parking inventory and enforcement
4. Accessible housing
5. Better understand the challenges faced by students in the Worcester Special Education Transition Program
6. Continue to monitor and promote accessible ride sharing companies (ie Uber, Lyft and others)
7. Plan dialogues on disability and disability oppression

### **Review of AAB notices and applications: City properties in bold**

#### Variance

- **170 Belmont Street, Docket # TBD**
- **455 Main Street, Docket # TBD**

#### Decision

- 52 High Street, Docket # V08 128
- **2 Washington Square, Docket # C14 073**

### **Suggestions for upcoming agenda items**

- Visit from Dept. of Transportation (DOT) to share their work with streets and sidewalks
- Ask Keolis of MBTA to speak the Commission about services they provide to people with disabilities
- Ask a representative from mental health recovery and transitional employment
- Invite City Council and School Committee candidates

### **Announcements:**

- **August 22, 2017, 4pm- Forum and Q&A with Michael Botticelli** (former Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy on the future of addiction recovery), Levi Lincoln Chamber of City Hall

- **August 31, 2017, 5:30pm- International Overdose Awareness Day Candlelight Vigil, Worcester City Hall Plaza**
- **September 5th, 2017, 4:00 – 5:30PM- REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled) YWCA, Members Lounge**
- **September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 5-6pm- Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program: <http://www.audiojournal.net/>**
- **September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 4:30pm- Commission on Disability meeting**
- **September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 1-2:30pm- WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster Street**
- **September 23, 2017, 10am-3pm- Annual Recovery Day, The Ninth Annual Recovery will filled with great activities such as a community cookout, guest speakers, games, and resource tables. City Hall Common**
- **September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 10am-3pm- MBTA Senior/Blind Charlie Card & WRTA Reduced Bus Fare Pass Transportation Event, Senior Center,128 Providence Street. Register: 508-799-8486**

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.