

Commission on Disability Meeting
Minutes for November 20th, 2018, 4:30PM
Levi Lincoln Chamber (3rd fl.)
Worcester City Hall

Attendance:

Members Present: Robert Bureau, Robert Bilotta, D. Karuna, Stephen Stolberg

Members participating remotely: Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo

Members Absent: John Gleason, Fitzroy Hall, Paul Keister, Nancy Garr-Colzie, Lindsay Silva

Staff: Jayna Turчек, Dawn E. Clark

Guests: Josh Martunas, Staff Assistant & Records Access Officer, City Manager's Office; John O'Dell, Director of Asset Management; Antoinette Donovan, Owner Red Cab Taxi

Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions

Chairperson Bilotta called the meeting to order. Commissioners introduced themselves. Associate Commissioners Darya Karuna and Stephen Stolberg were raised to full members for the evening.

Approval of September 18th, 2018 Minutes

Commissioner Bilotta moved approval and Commissioner Bureau seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously approved the September 18th, 2018 minutes.

Transportation Update (Nancy Garr Colzie)

This item was tabled.

FY'18 MOD Municipal ADA Grant Application Submitted

For the third year the City applied for this grant. On October 1st an application was submitted for a project to lower the customer service counter tops on the second and 4th floors of City Hall. This work was identified and listed for completion in the ADA Transition Plan.

Winter sidewalk snow removal announcement

Josh Martunas from the City Manager's office provided the Commission with a combined list* of potential volunteer contractors for leaf raking, snow and ice removal and spring cleanup prepared and updated by the Senior Center staff. A flyer: "Walking in Winter"* is in the Commission's packet which gives information on the City snow removal ordinance. He encouraged Commission members who see sidewalks not shoveled to call the customer service # 508-929-1300 and keep calling every day until cleared. The city police monitors for compliance and gives warnings. If still not cleared the city will contact a contractor to clear and will bill the property owner.

West Boylston Street recommendations

Commissioner Prochilo provided update on the stroll that was held last month that started at the Halloween Outlet and concluded at Wild Willy's. Six participants and three leads took part in the cold weather stroll. The issues include a couple of street lights that need chirpers for the visually impaired and the usual truncated domes. Those participating said this event was an eye opening experience for them. Next month the Commission will review the participant feedback. A list* of recommendations for improvements was compiled and the Commission unanimously approved to forward to DPW.

City Hall countertop review (John O'Dell)

Upgrading three counters to bring into ADA compliance:

- One on the fourth floor in the Planning and Regulatory Division – a vertical panel is to be installed.
- Two counters on narrow ends of the second floor – Clerk's (Elections) office and Treasurer's office.

The plan is to lower the counters on both ends and upgrade the appearance of the Treasurer's end to mirror the Clerk's end. The glass would be upgraded to enhance security. Signage would be provided at the lowered counter top saying all City Clerk business can be conducted at this space. The whole project is aimed at compliance as well as creating a more welcoming place for the public.

Update: Worcester Public Library -Accessible crosswalk from parking lot under construction (John O'Dell)

Currently the steps from the McGrath Parking lot in back of the Salem Street Library are under excavation to install a ramp that will go directly from the parking lot to the main entrance of the library instead of going out of the parking lot and around to the library entrance. Weather dependent the ramp is expected to be in place by December 1st.

Worcester Housing Court ADA process & discussion (See current Supreme Judicial Court case arguments December 6th, *RUTH ADJARTEY & others vs. WORCESTER HOUSING COURT*)

This item relates to the public comments made by the Anti-Foreclosure Coalition during the September Commission meeting with regard to their experience in the Worcester Housing Court and complaints about the ADA process within the court for reasonable accommodations. Staff have looked into this situation and have been told there is a Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court case that will be heard in December 6th regarding this issue. Some of the people who presented their stories in September are plaintiffs in the case. Director Turchek's understanding is the case centers on what guidance courts should follow to provide ADA accommodations.

There are ADA Coordinators listed for the Worcester Trial Court and Housing Court and she has notified them of the complaints and emailed a link to the video of the September Commission meeting. She has not received a response from them. This may be related to the case pending on this particular concern. She asked Commissioner Myska who as a lawyer who does business at the Trial Court what information she could share. She was not able to speak due to laryngitis; however she will brief the Commission at a later date.

The public is invited to attend the proceeding, view the arguments that are live streamed, or view from website. This is a case the Commission should want to follow.

Debrief COD 40th Anniversary

Associate Commissioner Darya Karuna thanked the Commission members for their individual and combined help in making the October 16th 40th Anniversary Celebration a tremendous success. Over 100 people attended. We had 8 educational opportunities and music. She greatly appreciated the City Manager

saying “You really know how to throw a party.” It showed the city that the Commission is here to stay and will continue to offer ideas. The Commission thanked Darya. Chairperson Bilotta presented her with a bouquet of flowers for the leadership she provided for this event.

Announcement: The City of Worcester's Cable Services received first place honors at the Alliance for Community Media Northeast Region's Video Festival 2018 Competition for their Worcester Mobility Walk video produced in collaboration with the Commission on Disability.

The Chairperson congratulated the staff of Cable Services for their support and collaboration.

Debrief White Cane Day event

Tabled

Debrief National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

The FY’18 Lunch and Learn was held on October 22nd with about 25 people attending. This year’s theme was “Empowering All”. The video “Able and Willing” was about mentoring people with disabilities and was shown followed by a panel with Robert Bureau, Resiliently Solutions, Inc.; MA Representative Jim O’Day; and Joe Bellil of Easter Seals.

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

Variance Application

- **Winthrop Street, Docket # TBD** (geography have steep grades) Motion was made and seconded to support the waiver request. All approved.
- 11 Sever Street (“Fruit Sever”) Docket #V18-109 Amendment

Notice of Hearing

- **549 Lincoln Street, Docket # V18 126**
- **30 Thorndyke Street, Docket # V18 127**

Decision of the Board

- **549 Lincoln Street, Docket # V18 126**
- **30 Thorndyke Street, Docket # V18 127**
- **170 Apricot Street, Docket # V18 186**
- Wellington St, Murray Ave, Main St., Docket # V18 261
- 286 Pleasant Street, Docket # V18 278
- 100 Front Street, Docket # V18 294

- 670 West Boylston Street # V18 311(2)

Red Taxi: Accessible Cab Update (Conversation with Toni Donovan) (tabled from August)

The insurance company denied to insure the vehicle due to a detail she was not aware. She was supposed to provide specific information on the driver of the van and it couldn't be listed as just of the cars on the fleet that anyone could drive. Lloyds of London is willing to reconsider the claim and she is following up with that paperwork. She said due to the expense of replacing a handicapped van receiving insurance was necessary.

Commissioners raised concerns about scheduling. She responded that she needs to schedule so she can get people home. She also shared that she will not buy a side van; difficult to park may be parking two and three deep. She belongs to an international taxi group who suggests there is grant money out there. Right now she believes she is providing the service needed. The Chairperson suggested being part of the transportation initiatives currently happening. Several van dealerships were also suggested by Commission members and will be forwarded to her. The Transportation summit is on December 14th.

Announcements:

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**
January 16th, 2019, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster Street
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)** December 4th, 2018, 4:00 – 5:30pm, YWCA, Members Lounge
- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** December 13th, 2018, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting:** TBD at 2 Coppage Drive.
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** December 18th, 2018 4:30pm

Adjournment: 5:40pm