

**City of Worcester  
Commission on Disability**

**Type of Meeting:** Regular  
**Date and Time Convened:** April 8, 2009  
**Place Where Convened:** City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber, Worcester, MA  
**Members Present:** Grace Clark, Jacqueline Norton, John Cronin, Rachel Brown, Dawn Clark, Joseph Sinasky  
**Associates Present:** Jill Swerzenski  
**Staff Present:** Larry Raymond, Michael Galvin, Fran Manocchio  
**Public Present:** Mike Kennedy, Mary Healy, Owen Skoler (Worcester Magazine), Vince Lombardi (Audio Journal), Herb Cremer, Nick Kotsopolous (Worcester Telegram & Gazette), Caroline Gordon (Mass Commission on the Blind), Steve Dagostino (Common Pathways), Sarah Lennis (Mayor's Office)

1. **Call to Order and Introductions.** Meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m.
2. **Acceptance of Minutes.** Motion to accept minutes for March meeting by Rachel Brown, seconded by Jacqueline Norton.
3. **Communications and Reports.**
  - a. **Chairperson's Report.** Dawn stated that Fran Manocchio, Director of Human Rights, is present to give The Commission an update on the impact the City Manager's budget proposals had on The Office on Disabilities. Ms. Manocchio then stated that although she has limited information at this point in time, she confirmed that the Department of Health and Human Services has been eliminated. The Office on Disabilities will now be under the city manager's executive office. It was further noted that James Gardiner's position as Acting Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the positions of Larry Raymond, Director of The Office on Disabilities, and Michael Galvin, were disbanded. Their last day will be on April 10, 2009. Ms. Manocchio stated that she was directed by the City Manager to assume the duties of The Office on Disabilities, and serve as Staff Liaison for the Commission, although the day-to-day operations are still being worked out. The Commission briefly asked Ms. Manocchio questions regarding ADA compliance, troubleshooting problems/concerns brought forth by Worcester citizens, and appropriate training.
    - i. A pamphlet was then dispersed to The Commission, which outlines the organizational changes between FY '09 and FY '10. It was mentioned that The Office on Disabilities was marked as being The Commission on Disabilities, which is inaccurate.

- ii. It was noted that the Commission on Disabilities would continue to meet once a month and Ms. Manocchio will serve as Staff Liaison. She stated that she would be reviewing all the meeting minutes in order to prepare.
    - iii. The City Council will be discussing the budget on May 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. Everyone was encouraged to attend to express our concerns and opposition to the disbandment of the Office on Disabilities.
  - b. **Director's Report.** Larry then stated that he was appalled and disappointed in the decision to eliminate The Office on Disabilities. He stated that in a city the size of Worcester, it is "unconscionable" not to have a visible presence for the disability community, which was noted to be 25.7%. Although understanding the fiscal constraints of the city, Larry was also concerned that the services the Office had been providing will be greatly diminished. Larry stated that both he and Mike Galvin would continue to come to the meetings but as concerned citizens of Worcester.
- 4. **Transition Plan, Accessibility, and Access Board Issues.**
  - a. **Updates on City and School Dept.** The Office on Disabilities has been in contact with Stacy Dubois, who is the ADA coordinator for the School Department, regarding schools' Transition Plans. She is scheduled to attend May's meeting and will update the Commission on the Transition Plan.
  - b. **Sidewalks, Curb Cuts, and Chirpers.**
    - i. **List of Chirper Locations.** There was still no word on a complete list of chirper locations. The Commission wanted to continue to remind citizens of Worcester that it has a fund that could be used to repair the sidewalks and curb cuts and that we have been providing recommendations to the respective parties from concerned citizens.
  - c. **HP Parking Fines.** A report was available and was dispensed to the Commission. In the month of February, there were 92 HP Parking Fines and 6 curb cut fines. In the month of March, there were 104 HP Parking Fines and 9 curb cut fines. It was discussed that on average there are approximately 1,000 citations issued a year, which amounts to approximately \$150,000 in funds.
- 5. **Transportation and TPAG**
  - a. **Buses and Para-transit.** Both Larry and Dawn missed the last TPAG meeting. However, WRTA administrator, Steven O'Neill, spoke with Larry regarding the statewide issue regarding the RTA. It was noted that all the RTAs would be coming together at the State House to speak with a legislative caucus regarding funding.
  - b. **Taxicab Statistics.** A report is now available from January through March.
- 6. **Emergency Preparedness**
  - a. **Local Registry.** The Local Registry will now be handled by David Clemons, Director of Communications, effective July 1, 2009. Mr. Clemons will be invited to meet with the Commission in the coming months to discuss this in further detail. Mr. Clemons currently oversees 9-1-1 for the City of Worcester.

**7. Old Business**

- a. Mike Galvin contacted UMASS regarding the valet issue and he was told that a response was “imminent,” however; there has been no response yet.

**8. New Business.**

- a. It was voted by the Commission to send a letter to a variety of media outlets, including Worcester Magazine, Telegram & Gazette, and the Boston Globe to share our position and thoughts regarding the disbandment of the Office of Disability. A letter was drafted and reviewed by the Commission. It was also agreed that a copy of the letter should be sent to the City Manager’s office.

**9. Announcements and Adjournment.**

- a. The Commission was hoping to set up a table at the Disability Resource Fair which will be at the Worcester Technical High School on April 22, 2009 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fran stated that she would be able to be present at the table for a part of the time.
- b. The Commission thanked Larry Raymond and Mike Galvin for their service and their fifty years of combined experience and knowledge that they have given the City of Worcester.
- c. Motion to adjourn at 5:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ms. Jill A. Swerzenski  
Secretary

2009-4-8 Minutes