

Commission on Disability Meeting
Minutes from October 20, 2015, 5:30PM
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber 3rd Flr.

Attendance:

Members Present: Francesca Abbey, Robert Bilotta, Herbert Cremer, Nancy Garr- Colzie, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo, Douglas Russell, Jr., Stephen Stolberg, Susan Swanson

Members Absent: Paul Keister

Staff: Jayna Turchek, Dawn E. Clark

Guests: Sarah Loizeaux, Disability Resource Coordinator, Workforce Central; Philip Niddrie, Special Projects Manager, Economic Development

Members of the Public:

Michael Kennedy

Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions

Vice Chairperson Nancy Garr-Colzie served as chairperson for this meeting and welcomed commission members and the members of the public present.

Discussion and vote for member remote participation

Director Turchek reminded the Commission that the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office recently updated the open meeting law to include an exception for members of Commissions on Disabilities to participate remotely in a Commission on Disability meeting using phone or other electronic device. A meeting quorum of Commissioners does not need to be physically present but can be met through remote participation.

The chairperson said that the Commission had a choice of affirmative votes related to the Commission's use of remote participation. A vote can be taken to permit remote participation for a specific meeting or to use for all future Commission meetings. Commissioner Abbey moved that the Commission approve the on-going use of remote participation for Commission on Disability meetings. Commissioner Stolberg seconded the motion. The motion passed. The vote being: 5 Yes, Abstention 1.

Approval of September 15, 2015 Minutes

Commissioner Abbey moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Stolberg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Introduction and Presentation by Sarah Loizeaux, Disability Resource Coordinator, Workforce Central

Director Turchek introduced Mr. Loizeaux. She is working under a three year Disability Employment Initiative grant funded by and a collaborative among the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and Employment and Training Administration as well as the Office of Disability Employment Policy. The program started in 2010 and Central Massachusetts has been awarded the Round V grant. The first year of round V began this year.

The Disability Employment Initiative has two goals:

1. Improve coordination and collaboration among employment and training and asset development programs implemented at the state and local levels.
2. Build effective partnerships that leverage public and private resources to better serve persons with disabilities and improve employment outcomes.

Based on these two goals the desired outcome is to have increased enrollment of customers with disabilities in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) intensive and training services and other DOL programs.

She explained that American Job Centers are all over the country known as One Stop Centers; Workforce Central being one of these centers. Each offers services including job readiness services, job developers to help with resumes, people to answer questions about unemployment insurance as well as training opportunities. Centers are in every region and she emphasized their desire to assist people with disabilities in securing employment.

Some of the Initiative's objectives include:

- Improve access to One Stop Center (Workforce Central) services
- Partner with provider organizations
- Increase enrollment in WIOA and DOL training opportunities

Ms. Loizeaux's role at Workforce Central is to help the whole center to work with people with disabilities by making sure accessibility and partnerships are secure beyond the time frame of the grant.

The largest part of this project is known as the Integrated Resource Team (IRT). The Integrated Resource Team:

- Is initiated on behalf of an individual with a disability who is experiencing multiple challenges in reaching an employment goal;
- Addresses that one individual's specific needs in relation to obtaining this goal;

- The Disability Coordinator follows up on any issue with the plan developed by the team if there may be a stumbling block: example the job developer may not have gotten back to the customer in three weeks; and
- The team looks at the whole person not just the job procurement: housing, medical whatever is needed to have a successful employment outcome.
 - There is a short video from the DOL called the Oregon Project that may help the Commission visualize the Integrated Team process. She will provide the link to Director Turcek to be shared with Commission members. [<https://disability.workforce3one.org/view/4200927376315461065/info>]

An Integrated Resource Team can consist of partners such as:

- Consumer seeking employment
- Community College Disability and Career Services
- Workforce Investment System
- Mental Health Provider
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- Independent Living Center
- Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Community Work Incentive Plans (Beneplan)
- Supported Employment Specialist
- Housing Provider
- TANF (DTA)
- Advocates of the consumer (Friends, family, etc.)

An example of one local partner is Quinsigamond Community College which has an array of credit and non-credit programs. There is a focus on health care and manufacturing program.

The Integrated Resource Team is not an interagency committee. These groups are created around an individual job seeker with the overall purpose of employment for the customer.

Round V funding is known as Career Pathways. Workforce Central has a grant of \$126,000 to use towards training qualified persons with disabilities for specific training programs. Career Pathways is a project not a program.

Guidelines include:

- Training needs to be one year or shorter in length
- Have credentials or certificate at program/training end
- Lead to a job/career that is sustainable

Workforce Central is looking for customers who meet the following qualifications:

- Has a disability
- Unemployed or under employed
- Desire and ability to work full time or close to it.
- Desire for six months plus permanent employment
- Ready to work
- Legally allowed to work in the United States
- Minimum age requirement is sixteen (16)
- Selective Service Compliant (Males only)

Ms. Loizeaux said that she was looking forward to working with the Commission. The Chairperson thanked Ms. Loizeaux for her presentation.

Commission's priorities for emergency preparedness strategies for the coming year

Priorities submitted by Commissioners were reviewed. The Commission agreed to take a vote on top five priorities next month.

Announcement: Coes Knife Park Concept and Community Meeting November 9th, 2015

Director Turchek introduced this item by saying the Park concept of a universally accessible park at the Coes Pond site is going forth to determine its feasibility. As plans are developed the Commission will be asked for its thoughts and recommendations. In the meantime there is a meeting on November 9th seeking community input and this is the reason the concept is being presented tonight.

Philip Niddrie, Special Project Manager for the Department of Economic Development was introduced and he presented the Coes Knife Park concept. For the past three months the City of Worcester, has been working with Preservation Worcester and the, then, owners of the old Stearns Tavern on Park Avenue to determine a potential re-use of the building and a possible move of the building to a city-owned park property at the former Coes Knife property.

The City expects to receive a \$400,000 grant for the development of a Universally Accessible/ Multi-Generational park and playground, meaning accessible to people of all ages and abilities, park in the Coes Pond area. The idea a universally accessible park was brought to the city by a group of folks along with Preservation Worcester who wanted to work with the city as the concept was being developed. The owners of Stearns Tavern have donated the building to Preservation Worcester. They, in turn are planning on donating the building to the City of Worcester to use the building year round for programming. The plan is

to provide services to the disability community through Seven Hills Foundation who is working with the city at this point to fine tune an agreement to operate the building and programing as this concept goes forward.

Seven Hills would also help identify grants when the time came and want to open the building to community groups including Columbus Park Association, Worcester Housing Authority, Tatnuck Association, Coes Pond Association etc.

The City of Worcester would be the owner of the building but Seven Hills would care for the landscaping and maintain the building on a daily basis along with working to enhance the accessible playground for all ages. The public meeting on Nov. 9th is an opportunity for the public to learn about the park's concept and to offer suggestion on the design of the playground.

The following were concerns and comments from Commissioners:

- A question was asked about how people could have access for making input into the design of the park. Arrangements have been made for ASL interpreters to be present at the November 9th meeting. He is willing to work with the Commission to develop a survey for people to make their interests known. Minutes of the meeting will be taken.
- The City Manager's charge to Mr. Niddrie was to reduce the cost of this project to taxpayers as much as possible as well as the reliance on the Parks Department for on-going regular maintenance. To this end to date there are three companies: Nitsch Engineering, C.D.R. Maguire and Lamoureux and Pagano who have agreed to do all the site work and find additional partners to construct a foundation at no cost.

- Request was made that cameras be installed for safety and protection of property. Security is important and is being worked on but it is important that we emphasize Seven Hills will have a presence at the building and park year-round; not just in the good weather months as occurs in parks across the city.

Discussion of winter Commission meetings/break

There was consensus we would work through winter. Herb asked the Commission to consider whether to start the meetings at 4pm during the winter months because of the winter darkness. Sue motioned to continue discussion at next meeting. The Commission agreed to revisit this item at its November meeting.

Review of AAB notices and applications

There were no AAB notices or applications this month

Announcements:

- **MEMA (Mass. Emergency Management Agency) Seminar: “Effective Leadership During Crisis”**, December 4, 2015, DCU Center, Worcester
- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**
October 21, 2015, 1-2:30pm, WRTA Building, 287 Grove St.
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)**
November 3rd, 2015, Public Library: Banx Room, Salem Sq.
- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** November 10th, 2015, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** November 17th, 2015
4:30pm.
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting:** November 10th, 2015 at
8:30 am, Parks Department, 50 Skyline Drive

- **Emergency Preparedness Tip:** People with disabilities may want to consider having several gallon containers of water per individual at home for emergencies.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.