

Commission on Disability Meeting
Minutes for April 18th, 2017, 4:30PM
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber,
Room 309, 3rd Flr.

(Videotape of this meeting can be found on the City of Worcester's
Website)

Attendance:

Members Present: Francesca Abbey, Robert Bureau, Nancy Garr-Colzie,
Joseph Prochilo, Lindsey Silva, Elizabeth Myska

Members Absent: Robert Bilotta, Paul Keister, Douglas Russell, Jr.,
Herbert Cremer

Staff: Dr. Malika Carter, Simon Elliott

1. Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions

Chairperson Garr-Colzie called meeting to order at 4:39 and
Commissioners introduced themselves. The Chairperson motioned to raise
Associate Commissioners Bureau and Silva to full Commissioners for the
purpose of this meeting.

2. Approval of March 21st, 2017 Minutes

Chairperson Garr-Colzie motioned to amend the minutes on page 7 so
that they reflect that the next meeting's date on the March minutes be
changed from May 9th to April 19th. Vice-chairperson Abbey seconded
and motioned to approve the March 21st, 2017 minutes as amended.
Commissioner Bureau seconded the motion. Unanimously approved as
amended.

**3. Conversation with Dr. Malika Carter, Chief Diversity Officer for
the City of Worcester**

Dr. Malika Carter has been the Chief Diversity Office for the City of
Worcester since February 8th, 2016. Dr. Carter outlined to the Commission

how she has undertaken reviewing employment screening processes and the hiring managers' hiring processes in hopes to make them more inclusive and accessible.

On September 16th, 2016 the Worcester City Manager signed an anti-discrimination statement and subsequent policy, and Dr. Carter is working to ensure that this statement is visible and carried out throughout all City Departments.

The City has had a year-long partnership, beginning in March, with NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and has started working towards the CEOs Against Stigma Campaign. Dr. Carter hopes to address presenteeism and absenteeism of employees of the City. Dr. Carter with Dr. Matilde Castiel, Commissioner of Health and Human Services, made commercials to advertise that employees of the City can come forward and disclose when they are not well or taking care of another individual or family member to assure them that they will not lose their job and that they will be supported in a wrap-around manner. Along with NAMI, the City has held events all around the city titled "In Our Own Voice".

Information learned from Commissioners' questions:

-The City, as of now, has no work-from-home opportunities, but recognizes that as the workforce changes that this could become an option. The City is exploring some staggered start times and more flexible schedules, but is restricted by the fact that the City is interacting directly with community members and that many offices hold walk-in hours.

-Presenteeism is understood as an individual being physically present but not being fully emotionally or mentally engaged in the work. Mental health is the second highest expenditure in health care costs for the City. Dr. Carter encouraged City employees to talk to their supervisors and/or to Human Services and feel comfortable to discuss mental health and to discuss the options for resolving or helping relieve the problem.

Absenteeism is simply understood as using sick days to just not show up to work for reasons of mental health or otherwise.

-The City will begin to work on an internal complaint procedure for employees as there is not already one in place.

-The City already does have part of the employee orientation that deals with disability etiquette, which is included in the City's hour-long Civility Training, which includes a discussion of subordinate and dominant groups across various identities within the City and society more in general.

-The City Manager is having Dr. Carter and Jacob Sanders go to every district to do website audits about the City's new website, and noted that the Mobility Walk organized by Commissioner Prochilo is something that she is interested in supporting.

-Commissioner Myska informed the Commission about the grant that she was awarded from the National Libraries of Science from the National Institute of Health, focusing on issues for the visually impaired community. April is the month that the grant focuses on non-automobile transportation. She, along with other visually impaired individuals and their sighted companions went to Union Station to take the Commuter Rail to Boston to familiarize these individuals with the Commuter Rail system as well as to observe the flaws and faults of the WRTA and give constructive criticisms. This Saturday, April 22nd, 2017, the group will take the 10:50AM train to Boston.

-Commissioner Silva will be speaking at the March for Science in Boston from 1PM-4PM in the Boston Common.

4. Virtual conversation with Mack Marsh from Parking Mobility <http://www.parkingmobility.com/>

Parking Mobility is a non-profit organization working to promote accessibility and resolve issues that people with disabilities face. Parking was one issue that Mack Marsh and his team found to be an issue raised across the board by business, employees and employers, and community members.

Parking Mobility started talking to prosecutors, judges and federal law makers to find out what they knew about accessible parking. People with disabilities, when they saw people parked illegally, would take photos on social media, resulting in public shaming and high rates of confrontation. The Parking Mobility app helps to streamline the process of denouncing a complaint as well as assuring the safety of those documenting the offense.

Parking Mobility has found extremely high rates of dismissal of parking violations in court. They also found that high fines are a good deterrent, but that without enforcement by the courts due to the judge's hesitation to give extremely high fines, thus weakening the law as an "unenforced law becomes an unenforceable law." Judges seek the ability to educate and not just enforce, especially since judges have been known to hesitate before giving out high fines.

Mobility Parking's second phase is to collect data about parking violations recorded in order to discover what steps each community can take to address these violations. Parking Mobility provides a full service to cities, and finds individuals who identify parking violations through the app and train them, perform background checks and get them sworn in as Citizen Volunteers whose only duty and responsibility is to respond to these violations. These individuals are granted Trained Volunteer Status, and have secure access to the app to report violations. Once a violation is demonstrated and approved by Law Enforcement, the offender is sent a letter which gives them three options: pay the fine, get a court date, or take an online educational course. This program costs Law Enforcement 7 minutes of work per day, 0 minutes of administrative overhead in the courts, and has actually decreased the court's docket.

Parking Mobility found that 25% of the violators are individuals who have disabilities and had only mistakenly forgotten their placard or parked in striped access areas, and introduced a tiered system that allows these individuals to only pay \$50 to dismiss the ticket and \$25 fine to Parking Mobility instead of \$100 and \$50. The data tracks the demographics of the offenders.

Information learned from the Commissioners' questions:

-The program runs into resistance everywhere, but, according to Marsh, it comes down to educating the decision-makers. What Marsh has found is resistance within the disability community to use the app and report violations, as well as from Law Enforcement worried about the confrontational nature of some of these interactions. The app reviews the individual accounts and ensures that they are following protocol.

-In order to become a volunteer, go to www.parkingmobility.com. From this website you can also download the app, join a group and/or check out the January report.

-In order for Worcester to take the next step, they need more individuals to use the app and to report data. Marsh stated that you need to use the app to take the photograph and it does not allow photo uploads.

-The program would cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000 but Parking Mobility only ever installs the programs in a community where they guarantee that it will pay for itself within 90 days, while most do within 60 days. Parking Mobility does not sell their program as a revenue-earner, however, it does at first generate revenue, although the goal of this program is to solve the problem, as hence revenue tends to decline over time.

-The best way to contact Mack Marsh is to email Mack@parkingmobility.com or call the 24-hour line at 512-982-9628.

5. Review of AAB notices and applications: City properties in bold

Notice of Hearing:

- **455 Main Street, Docket # V16 332**

The AAB will allow some of the work done wrong originally to remain, although a 10 foot stretch will have improvements made to it if a variance is given. A timeline will be established and improvements will be required for the contractors to complete.

6. Suggestions for upcoming agenda items

-Commissioner Prochilo would like to add an update for the Mobility Walk, which is on May 23rd from 9:30AM-12:30PM.

Announcements:

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**
April 19th, 2017, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster Street
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)**
May 2nd, 2017, 4:00 – 5:30PM, YWCA, Members Lounge
- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** May 11th, 2017, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** May 16st, 2017 4:30pm.
Emergency Preparedness Meeting: November TBD 2017 at 8:30 am, at 2 Coppage Drive.

Emergency Preparedness Tips:

Pack an emergency “Go Pack” with essential life-saving items and store several gallons of water/person at home. Click here for a list of items and other helpful tips: <https://www.ready.gov/>

Adjournment: _The meeting was adjourned at 6:13PM.