

**Commission on Disability Meeting**  
Minutes for May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 4:30PM  
Levi Lincoln Chamber (3<sup>rd</sup> fl.)  
Worcester City Hall (2)

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:** Nancy Garr-Colzie, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo, Lindsey Silva, Stephen Stolberg

**Members Absent:** Robert Bureau, Robert Bilotta, John Gleason, Fitzroy Hall, D. Karuna, Paul Keister

**Staff:** Jayna Turchek, Dawn E. Clark

**Guests:** Robert Para and Eric Moore - Lamoureux Pagano Associates; Peter Dunn- City's Economic Development Department; Jacqueline Ewuoso – City's Public Health Department

**Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions**

The Chairperson called the meeting to order. Commissioners introduced themselves. Commissioner Stolberg was raised to Commissioner for the meeting.

**Approval of April 24<sup>th</sup> 2018 Minutes**

Commissioner Garr-Colzie moved approval and Commissioner Silva seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously approved the April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018 minutes as written.

**Review of Union Station Leak Remediation Project (Robert Para from Lamoureux Pagano Associates)**

Robert Para from Lamoureux Pagano Associates presented the Union Station Project on behalf of the City of Worcester. This is a waterproofing project which would mean necessitating pulling down the entire platform which would require a number of variances. There is a memorandum in place with the AAB and various groups and communities which would be impacted. The owner of the platform is MBTA which is in the planning process of building a center isle allowing access to

trains on both sides, thus eliminating the need for the platform which allows only three car plus lengths to be mobility device accessible. This plan would make all trains accessible. The time line for this MBTA project is to be done in the about four years, thus making the City's waterproofing project not necessary as planned.

At this point the city's project is to waterproof the platform and to repair drains in the plaza. The West plaza where the restaurant is with be removed, waterproofed and resurfaced. Other work includes redoing ceilings, piping etc. Over the years there have been a number of projects upgrading Union Station. AAB requires a three year lookback when calculating 30% of the buildings assessed value in determining if the whole building needs to be made accessible. If only the building value was used the project would be over the 30% value. Because the plazas are part of the land the land value was used to calculate the percentage of access value. Using this calculation the project came in under 30% assessed value of both the land and building.

The paper work given to the Commission was for information purposes. A variance request is not necessary for this project. Union Station was entirely renovated in the late 1990's using the AAB Code of the time. Work on the Harding Street corridor is being down and includes replacing the lift with a ramp. This is currently out to bid.

If this project should exceed the 30% of the assessed value, the city has a plan that will provided information with the exception of the work of this project Union Station is accessible.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Para for his presentation.

### **Presentation on Worcester Business Improvement District (Peter Dunn)**

Mr. Dunn is a member of the City's Economic Development staff. He is a member of a Steering Committee seeking to establish a business improvement district downtown. One of the stakeholders is the Center for Living & Working.

He gave a brief overview. In 2012 a master plan for the downtown theatre area was developed. This was a public/private partnership between the City of Worcester, Hanover Theatre and the Worcester Development Cooperation which is a third party partner the owner of the former Telegram & Gazette building. Our of this partnership has come the idea of a Business Improvement District under Mass Law

40.0 which allows property owners to pool their resources as a new source of funding. Other states have similar mechanisms. Some of ways funding like this is used includes extra street and sidewalk cleaning, power washing, removing gum, stickers, etc. off street furniture, flowers but no construction. The Committee feels this will help the work being done in the area by the City last longer.

This district has been extended to include the City Square area as well. In this area there are 140 realty property owners. In order to establish this Business Improvement District s majority of owners meaning 51% of the assessed value and 60% of the owners must sign a petition. This offers a check and balance of property owners. This is a public private initiative and not a city one. There is a united vision of how this district could be that goes beyond city resources alone. This has been in the planning stages for about a year and Ann Burke, consultant working with the Committee is from Western Mass. and was heavenly involved with the legislation. She has helped municipalities like Amherst and North Hampton establish Business Improvement Districts. The Committee is also working with the state to be recognized as a transformative development district and through this process, funding has been obtained to hire the consultant and produce the marketing brochure being left with the Commission. The Hanover Theatre and the Worcester Development Corporation have been taking the lead.

A Board of Directors will be established and opportunities for the various owners to be gathered and could be place for the Commission to share their expertise on accessibility.

There could be more Improvement Districts establish in Worcester. The property owners in a particular area would have to take the lead in the research and development of such a district.

Snow removal is a priority for this District Cooperation and the most costly of the services. The idea is to hire an Executive that would oversee a vendor that does all the work. Within 24 hours of snow ceasing a truck would come in and remove the snow from bi-level sidewalks and curb cuts. This would help the businesses as well.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Dunn for the presentation.

**Presentation of Accessible Recreation Project (Jacqueline Ewuoso)**

Ms. Ewuoso works for the Worcester Public Health Department and focuses on healthy physical activity related to the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). She works with many colleges to do projects related to this and other activities benefiting the towns in the Central Massachusetts Regional Health Alliance. This past several months students from Worcester Polytech Institute (WPI) have been surveying Worcester Recreation facilities both indoors and outdoors with Commissioner Myska for accessibility.

Steven Foley, one of the four WPI students, (Stephan Barthold, Evan Duffy, Remington Gaetjens had returned home), that worked on this project presented the following report: They are members of WPI's Interactive Qualifying Project program. They spent fourteen weeks on the project given to them by the Worcester Division of Public Health. The first seven weeks were spent doing background research, developing a proposal and doing a presentation and the last seven weeks were spent in acting on their methodology. They looked at the obesity and overweight rate in Worcester as related to Massachusetts. Worcester was higher which could be related to barriers such as awareness, lack of engagement, poor or lack of transportation, safety issues, public perception and universal accessibility.

They wanted to address two objectives of the Community Health Improvement Plan: 8.1 To increase community engagement by creating effective promotional tools and 8.1.1. To increase walking, biking and public transportation routes.

In the research segment of the project they identified all the physical recreation spaces in Worcester and the six surrounding towns. In phase 1 they created a rec. spaces data base with a map. In phase 2 they worked with community stakeholders and reviewed many states' guidelines with the goal of developing specific criteria to address accessibility and health equity. In phase 3 they created a field data sheet to feature determined recreation space. The major deliverable for this project is a rec space on the city website with a downloadable guidebook. A video was also created that can be used throughout the city and alliance towns.

The project stakeholders included the Commission on Disability, YWCA, Walkbike Worcester and the Worcester Parks Division. All were helpful in providing information for this project.

One of the deliverables was a “Star Visual Icon” developed by the team as a result of interviews from the stakeholders. The star points for accessibility represent safety, transportation, recreation, access, and social value. On an accessibility rating sheet a score of 1 -5 is given to each point. These scores are combined to give an overall health equity score. This is not intended to be a rating system but a comparative measure of venues. The score is backed up by the data collected in the project.

He thanked Liz Myska who toured Elm Park with the team and gave insights on accessibility needs. Liz gave kudos to the team.

The video was played for the Commission. In the future there will need to be verbal capacity added for visually impaired people.

He hoped that these deliverables will aid people to engage in greater use of these recreational spaces. These will need to be periodically updated. The Chairperson thanked Mr. Foley for the presentation.

**Goal setting discussion to understand challenges faced by students in WPS Transition Program (COD FY18 Goal 5) (Fitzroy Hall)**

This item was tabled. Kay Seale, WPS Special Education Manager and Jerri Roach from WPS Transition Program were in the audience in anticipation of discussion by the Commission on this item. (John Stewart brought this item to the attention of the staff).

Ms. Seale said that tomorrow the program will be celebrating success. She suggested looking at the program through the lens of accessibility rather than challenges may be more helpful. A video has been produced and showed at the celebration. The Chairperson thanked the women and invited them to make a presentation on the Transition Program at the June Commission meeting.

John Stewart was invited to the podium and explained that he was working with the program and the poll worker training a Worcester State College (University) encouraging people with disabilities to be poll workers. He hopes this will be expanded to offer information on work and civic engagement giving children with disabilities the same information as other children.

**Update on Transportation Advocacy Coalition (Robert Bilotta and Mike Kennedy)**

Mr. Kenney brought greeting from Joseph Bellil who could not be present for this update report. Mr. Kennedy report that at a recent WRTA Advisory Committee a FY.19 budget was passed with no service cuts, however there could be an amendment made to the budget later in the year should such a need arises.

Subsequently the RTAs across the State were informed that the Senate passed a bill to fund the RTAs at 88 million dollars which they had requested. The House had a modest increase in there budget whereas the Governor’s budget was at FY’ 18 level.

On demand transportation there were 850,000 Uber and Lyft rides. Not one of those rides had any kind of accessibility features. The goal of a group of advocates for people with disabilities in the surrounding towns is to get affordable, accessible on demand transportation here. This is wanted in addition to the WRTA paratransit service. As report in previous reports the MBTA paratransit service “he Ride” and Uber have had a very successful piolet project known as Uber WAV (Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle). Senator Michael More, Jonathan Church, WRTA Administrator, and Uber had a meeting and have signed a non-discloser agreement, the talks are continuing.

As the possibilities emerge from these meetings, Mr. Kennedy requested the Commission to support increased transportation for people with disabilities in the city.

There is a small grant that has allowed a collaboration between Easter Seals of Massachusetts, Center for Living & Working, Inc. and Elder Services of Greater Worcester to develop alternative accessible rides for people with disabilities.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Kennedy,

**Update on planning for COD 40<sup>th</sup> event (D. Karuna)**

This item was tabled.

**Review of AAB notices and applications: City properties bolded**

**Variance Applications**

- **549 Lincoln Street (Lincoln Street School)**
- **30 Thorndyke Road (Thorndyke Street School)**

Russ Adams, Assistant Commissioner of the Worcester Department of Public Works filled in for Mr. Moore.

He presented the requests for the Belmont Street and Thorndyke Street schools simultaneously because the items that are out of compliance are similar to both schools. The requests being made is because each project exceeds 30% of the assessed value of the building. The projects replace windows and doors. In the case of the Belmont school replacement of part of the roof. These projects are limited to the exterior of the buildings. The City is partnering with the Mass. School Building Authority (MSBA). They pay 80% of the costs of school construction. When developing a school project every effort is made to meet the MSBA eligible category to minimize to cost to the city.

After working with the assigned MSBA architect and it was determined both schools would be much higher than the 30% assessed value, Hack's architect was hired to do a barriers review of both schools. The City was going to the AAB to request variance from the 30% rule. The Historical Commission has reviewed these plans and has given their approval. The Elm Park School is in this construction project and does not exceed the 30% rule therefore does not require a variance like the others with an accessible entrance, an accessible bathroom and a water fountain.

Lifts are being added so one can get to the cafeteria, nurses station etc. He has had an informal meeting with Thomas Hopkins of the AAB and was given helpful suggestions for the process. Director Turchek indicated there would be nine variances requested and suggested a list of costs be given to the Commission and AAB to help with the decision process. Mr. Adams indicated they don't have funding to cover additional cost items related to the 30% rule and with the school budget being level funded, this is a concern. Another request was made as to what the impact on children, staff and other workers with disabilities. A letter provided from the school department indicated there was no impact. Each student with a disability has an IEP. Those are looked at and if needed can attend an accessible school outside his/her district to meet the identified needs.

The Commission asked for these two pieces of information before they could make a recommendation about the variances request. The Chairperson thanked Mr. Adams for the presentation.

- **170 Apricot Street (South High School & Sullivan Middle School)**  
**(Presentation by Eric Moore from Lamoureux Pagano Associates)**

Mr. Moore from Lamoureux Pagano Associates represented the City of Worcester with regard to the South High School & Sullivan Middle School variance request. He came seeking the Commission’s support for the variance: Relief for a path of travel.

Plans include building a new high school in back of South High School which will be raised once the new school is opened. The Sullivan Middle School sits on the same 43 acres lot. There are three entrances to the property along Apricot Street. The existing baseball field and tennis court will be brought up to code to meet ADA accessibility requirements. The design development site survey indicates the total change in elevation between the lowest level of the new school building and the level of the existing baseball field is 36 vertical feet. In order to provide an accessible path from the proposed high school rear entrance to the lower tennis courts and baseball field, two options were reviewed:

From the written variance request: “Option 1 would require approximately 1,135 linear feet existing of concrete sidewalk. Depending on the final layout of the walkway and adjacent grades, a portion of the accessible path will require foundation/retaining walls and guardrails/handrails. New permanent sight lighting would also be required to illuminate the walkway. This proposed site is in close proximity to the existing wetlands, and would encroach into the ‘30’ “No Structure” setback from the adjacent wetlands in two places.

Option 2 reviewed the possibility of routing the accessible path to the south of the existing middle school, and reducing the length of the pathway with the use of ramps at a maximum of 8% slope. After further analysis, it was determined that this option would be technically infeasible as the only possible location for the ramp is above the existing underground primary electrical service to the middle school and would be in close proximity to the existing generator and transformer.”

The sidewalks along Apricot Street exceed the 5% law. He is willing to get to information.

The Commission approved supporting the variance request. Mr. Moore thanked the Commission for the support

### Decision of the Board

- 570 Lincoln Street, Docket # V18 079
- 670 West Boylston Street, Docket # V18 107

### Suggestions for upcoming agenda items

None

### Announcements:

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**  
May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster Street
- **Community Health Forum for the 2018 Community Health Assessment (CHA)** Wednesday May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 5:30-7:30pm, Worcester Senior Center  
A CHA is conducted every three years to help our community understand key problems that affect our health  
More info [cha@healthycentralma.com](mailto:cha@healthycentralma.com) or 508-799-8531
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)** June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 4:00 – 5:30PM, YWCA, Members Lounge
- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting:** November TBD, 2018 at 9:00 am at 2 Coppage Drive.
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 4:30pm.

### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.