

**Commission on Disability Meeting**  
Minutes for May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019, 4:30PM  
Levi Lincoln Chamber (3<sup>rd</sup> fl.)  
Worcester City Hall

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:** Robert Bilotta, Robert Bureau, Nancy Garr- Colzie, Fitzroy Hall (via phone), Dee Karuna, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo, Lindsey Silva, Stephen Stolberg

**Members Absent:** John Gleason, Paul Keister

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

**Guests:** Joseph Crawley and Tracie Lenhardt from MASS/DOT; Matt Urban, Worcester Asset and Energy Management; Sargent Kerry Hazlehurst, Worcester Police Licensing Division; Casey Burns & Mckenzie Moise, Intern, Coalition for Healthy Greater Worcester

**Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions**

Chairperson Bilotta called the meeting to order. Commissioners introduced themselves.

**Approval of March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Minutes**

Commissioner Prochilo moved to approve the March 15<sup>th</sup> minutes as submitted. Commissioner Bureau seconded. All approved.

**Update on Kelly Square Improvement Project (MassDOT)**

Joseph Crawley and Tracie Lenhardt from MASS/DOT made a Power Point\* presentation. The project began by dealing with safety at Kelly Square and expanded to looking at the I-290 ramps to Madison Street and Vernon Street, Madison Street west of Kelly Square down to Gold Street where the overpass is and all of the approaches to Kelly Square.

The project focuses on the Kelley Square intersection of Vernon Street, Water Street, Harding Street, Green Street, Millbury Street, and Madison Street. The project also includes a section of Madison Street from Kelley Square to the railroad overpass. The project area is one of the highest crash locations in Massachusetts.

The area does not currently accommodate bicyclists safely and sidewalks are not accessible to people with disabilities. The redesign will also include intersection modifications at the I-290 eastbound and westbound ramps with Vernon Street. The project does not include rebuilding the Vernon Street bridge over I-290, but roadway striping will be added to show two lanes of travel in each direction.

The current design includes:

- Marking two lanes of travel within the roundabout and on the Madison Street and Vernon Street approaches to the roundabout,
- Changing Millbury Street to one-way southbound and Harding Street south of the roundabout to northbound travel,
- Keeping Harding Street north of the roundabout one-way southbound between Harrison Street and Kelley Square, and
- Prohibiting left turns at the I-290 westbound off-ramp and providing a signal at the intersection.

Pedestrians and bicyclists will be accommodated with a wide shared-use path on the perimeter of the proposed Kelley Square roundabout. Crosswalks at Madison Street, Vernon Street and across the middle of the roundabout itself will be enhanced with the addition of rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs). Landscaping, streetscaping and other amenities will be added during final design. These will include lighting and plantings in Kelley Square.

Note: More specific detail is in the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting video available on the MassDOT project webpage.

Time table - July 20, 2019 – advertise for construction  
October 2019 - construction begins

The Project needs and goals are: 1. Improve safety for all users, 2. Improve mobility for all users, 3. Enhance neighborhood connectivity, Create a walkable & bikeable Kelley Square and Support existing businesses and economic growth.

Commissioner's comments:

- The crosswalk timing should be standard time and extended.

- Emphasized the need for appropriate audible signals - the standard signals would blend in to the traffic noise and other natural sounds in the area. Flashing beacons do not work for people who are blind.
- Confirmed - the bridge is functionally obsolete, but no structural issues and can withstand the anticipated heavy traffic

### **Review of City Hall counter redesign\***

Matt Urban from the Worcester Asset and Energy Office circulated photo illustrations of three granite counters in City Hall that are scheduled to be lowered to meet ADA regulation i.e.: Treasurer, Clerk at Elections (second floor) and Economic Development with will include a desk (4<sup>th</sup> Floor). Both employees and general public would benefit from this design. Funding was received from the FY'19 MOD Municipal grant that Worcester received the city capital budget will complete the funding \needed for this project.

Another City Hall project being worked on is the women's staff restroom on the first floor. AAB has approved the minor variance to accessibility rules. A paddle is slated to be installed at a later time.

The Clerk's office and the Elections Office is joined so all clerk functions can be done at the accessible Election's counter.

### **Red Cab request for insurance**

Ms. Donovan, Red Taxi Cab owner, was not able to be present. Sargent Kelly Hazlehurst, Worcester Police Department License Division spoke to Ms. Donovan. Red Cab has the two accessible taxis in the city. Cab 109 has been off the road for a year with an insurance issue of a high cost to repair and cab 110 has been pulled off the road due to high mileage. Sargent Hazelhurst believes Ms. Donovan wants to get cab 109 on the road. On April 2<sup>nd</sup> she paid for her annual renewals. The cost of a replacement vehicle is high with the retrofitting etc. Commissioner Prochilo indicated that a retrofitted van is about \$55,000 and a used van retrofitted is between \$25,000 and \$35,000. This has been a year with the insurance issue that should be cleared up by now.

He is aware the Standards for Wheelchair Accessible Taxis clause that provides for a forfeiture hearing after a vehicle is off the road for 6 months. The problem is who

is going to do the service.

Commissioners responded that there could be another company that would be interested if known that a medallion was available

Commissioner Bilotta made a motion to request the City of Worcester initiate a forfeiture hearing for accessible taxi medallion 109. Commissioner Bureau seconded. All approved.

### **Update on Accessible Transportation Initiative**

- On April 4<sup>th</sup> Commissioners Bilotta, Garr-Colzie, Ms. Turchek and others met with the City Manager about wheelchair accessible on demand transportation. A working group was formed to make recommendations.
- On the same day the Riders Advisory Committee was held. The RTA Task Force report was discussed. The report included recommendation of \$95.5 million for the on-going operating budget for the RTS's in Massachusetts. A discussion of snow removal at bus stops about who is responsible for bus stop snow removal: City or RTA. There is a search for a disabled person to be a non-voting member of the WRTA Advisory Board.
- April 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> The MassDOT Innovation Conference was held at the DCU Center. Commissioner Garr-Colzie attended: speakers included MassDOT Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack and Carlos Braceras, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Transportation. There were two workshops in the morning and two in the afternoon both days: a networking lunch with people with disabilities and impressive number of at least 75 vendors offering every aspect of transportation related service.
- On April 17<sup>th</sup> the Transportation Planning Advisory Group meeting was held with the usual concerns of Para-Transit riders.
- That same day, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission had a meeting on its Mobility 20/40. (Long –Range Transportation Plan). Information can be found at [cmrpc.org/nobility 20/40](http://cmrpc.org/nobility_20/40).
- On April 18<sup>th</sup> the WRTA Advisory Board discussed Route Changes in preparation for dissemination in May and public hearings announcement. The same day the Transportation Advocacy Coalition (TAC) met at Easter Seals. Agenda items included:
  - helping WRTA riders find a form to express concerns and complaints, current grant update

- report on a second grant
- update on trip to Washington DC to get the grant detail which runs through November 2019
- Suggestion to have a table at the City's "Out to Lunch" Program on the Summer Thursdays.

### **CHIP Playground and Recreation Facilities Presentation**

Ms. Casey Burns from Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester presented result of research done on Worcester's school playgrounds using a power point.\* Staff found there was not an updated report on school playgrounds. As part of Worcester's Comprehensive Health Improvement Program's physical activity goal, school playgrounds were surveyed for condition and level of accessibility using a mini grant from the Mass. Department of Public Health (MDPH) available to communities that already have a MDPH Mass in Motion Program.

Mckenzie Moise reported the playgrounds were reviewed using the Community Health Improvement Assessment (CHIA). This was done in three parts 1. Macro assessment: working with other agencies such as WRTA 2. The on-site assessment of the playgrounds 3. The 5 areas surveyed for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities were the top 5 census tracts for Latino community residence.

Ms. Moise performed the actual on-site review of the Playgrounds and additional recreational facilities at the five locations. The assessment had 81 questions. There were many challenges identified the biggest one is the playground surface. There were some that did not have mulch. There is equipment that is not accessible, cracks in pavement, mold and wood or other perimeter without space for a mobility device to get onto the playground

She found the most accessible playground at Nelson Place School, Worcester's newest school. A chart assessment scores shows Worcester's playgrounds have an average of 25% out of 100%.

The Belmont Street census tract was highlighted indemnifying other recreation facilities. Some welcomed the assessment opportunity some did not.

The completed report will be available in June.

**Planning conversation for 29<sup>th</sup> ADA Anniversary events (July 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>)**

Chairperson tabled this item in interest of time.

**Proposal to host Worcester Public School committee candidates forum (August 29)**

Chairperson Bilotta moved to host Worcester Public School committee candidate's forum on August 29. Commissioner Bureau seconded. All approved.

**Book and film discussion events (Sponsored by Human Rights Commission, Advisory Committee on the Status of Women and Commission on Disability)**

Several Commissioners encouraged this project by identifying various films and books and volunteering to lead a discussion.

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

Variance Application

- 26 Water Street, Docket # TBD
- **Grafton Street, Docket # TBD**

Correspondence

- 16 Salisbury Street, Docket #TBD

Notice of Hearing

- 155 Ararat Street, Docket # V19 036

Decision of the Board

- 84 Williams Street, Docket # V19 062
- 332 Main Street, Docket # V19 060
- Wellington St., Murray Ave., Main Street, Docket #V 18 261

**Suggestions for upcoming agenda items**

None were named

**Announcements:**

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**  
June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster Street
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)** June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 4:00 – 5:30pm, YWCA, Members Lounge

- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 4:30pm, City Hall – Levi Lincoln Chamber
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting:** November TBD, 2019 at 9:00am at 2 Coppage Drive.

**Adjournment:**

\*Material can be viewed at the Office of Human Rights & Disabilities during normal business hours.