

Commission on Disability Meeting
Minutes for July 16th, 2019, 4:30PM
Levi Lincoln Chamber
Worcester City Hall, 455 Main Street

Attendance:

Members Present: Robert Bilotta, Robert Bureau, Nancy Garr-Colzie, Fitzroy Hall, John Gleason, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo, Stephen Stolberg

Members Absent: Dee Karuna, Paul Keister, Lindsey Silva

Staff: Jayna Turcek; Dawn E. Clark

Guest: Elvira Guardiola, Worcester Parking Administrator; Nona Haroyan, Worcester Public Library Talking Book Program

Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions

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

Approval of June 18th, 2019 minutes

Commissioner Garr-Colzie moved to approve the June 18th minutes as written. Commissioner Bureau seconded. All approved.

FYs18 & 19 HP Parking Report (Parking Administrator Elvira Guardiola)

Ms. Guardiola thanked the Commission members for serving on the Commission. She explained the function of the Parking Administration is to hold hearings related to parking violations in the City of Worcester. There are three people who work in this division. She offered the following statistics on Handicapped parking and curb-cut (ramp) violations for FY'18 and FY'19.

For FY'18 there were 332 violations, 308 parking and 24 ramps, 25% were voided or dismissed. Reasons for the voids/dismissals include staff error and examples such as drivers forgetting to put placard on rearview mirror, forgetting or losing placard, or being in another car and forgetting.

For FY'19 449 violations were issued: 34 for ramps and 417 for parking violations. 21% were voided/ dismissed.

Answers to Commission questions:

- Ramp violations are given when a vehicle is blocking a ramp.
- Many violations occur downtown and in grocery parking lots.
- The city has over 500 miles of streets. It's hard to cover every area of the city.
- Massachusetts Law does not allow the city to mail parking tickets. They have to be issued at the time of the violation.

Planning for August 29th School Committee Candidates forum*

The Commission approved the ground rules for candidates. The questions submitted by the Commission members prior to the meeting were reviewed and supplemented resulting in a total of thirteen (13) questions. Only nine (9) questions are needed for the Candidate Forum. There will be an executive review of these for rewording, and combining to establish the nine (9) questions needed.

Review FY19 Annual Report & Discuss FY20 Goals

This item was tabled.

Union Station Grand Hall request: Why Me & Sherry's House*

The Commission granted the use of Union Station Grand Hall to Why Me & Sherry's House on September 20th, 2019 from 6:00pm to 11:00pm for a fund raising event.

MA Office on Disability Announcement of FY20 Municipal ADA Grant

The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) is preparing to announce the Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program application and selection process for FY20, which is expected to open on August 1st. Eligible applicants include any Massachusetts city or town, (hereinafter referred to as "Applicants.")

These grants will support capital improvements specifically dedicated to improving programmatic access and/or removing barriers encountered by persons with disabilities in Applicant facilities throughout the Commonwealth. Grants can be applied for to receive up to \$250,000 in funding to assist applicants in improving access in their communities.

Notice of Election of Officers August 20th, 2019

Elections are planned for August.

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

Variance Application

- 100 Institute Road, Docket # TBD
- **47 Camp Street (South Worcester Neighborhood Center)**

Decision of the Board

155 Ararat Street, Docket # V19 035

New Assistive Technology Program

Ms. Nona Haroyan, volunteer, offered the following information about a new program to assist the blind population. The program provides one to one training, by appointment at the Worcester Public Library in the Talking Book Library Room.

The program is customized to the student's needs, from basic to advanced, troubleshooting a device problem, helping a student learn how to navigate an App and learning how to use a screen reader for their computer. They will work to find an easy solution that will make the technology work in their daily lives. The ELVES Program, Electronic Learning Vision Easy Solutions, has 2 I device trainers and 1 screen reading software (JAWS) instructor. They currently have 8 students, with another 2 students who have already completed their set goals.

They provide direct assistance with Apple Disability to troubleshoot any technical problems/issues students may be having with their devices. Due to limitations with Para- transit, which does not travel to the Solomon Pond Mall, ELVES offers that helping hand to find the solution on their behalf. Whether a student wants a single lesson to help with a problem or longer term basic/advanced training, instructors are available at no cost. Contact: Nona Haroyan at 776-420-5678 or Donna Ellis at 774-578-8515.

Announcements:

- **Film screening of Lives Worth Living July 22nd**, 12noon The Worcester Pop Up, 20 Franklin Street

- **ADA Anniversary Social July 24th**, 5-7pm Worcester City Hall.
Contact disabilities@worcesterma.gov
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting: August 9th**, 2019, 9:00am location TBD.
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting: August 20th**, 2019 4:30pm
- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting August 21st**, 2019, 1-2:30pm, WRTA HUB, 60 Foster St.
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled) Sept. 4th**, 2019, 4:00 – 5:30pm, YWCA, Members Lounge

Adjournment:

Adjourned – 5:15pm

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