

## Commission on Disability Meeting

Minutes from Tuesday, March 18, 2014

Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

(This meeting was rescheduled due to snow on February 18, 2014)

### **Attendance:**

#### **Members Present:**

Herbert Cremer, Stephen Stolberg, Rachel Shannon Brown, Charles Hiamah, Paul Keister, Susan Swanson, Nancy Garr-Colzie, John Nah, Lynne Towler, Francesca Abbey

**Members Absent:** Elizabeth Myska

**Staff:** Pam Callahan, Dawn Clark

**Guests:** Tara O'Connor, Executive Director of Center for Living and Working, Tim Boucher DPW & Parks

**Members of the Public:** Mr. Scott Ricker, Jackie Norton, Jo Hart

- 1. Call to Order:** 4:44 PM. The Chair welcomed guests and commission members; each member introduced themselves.
- 2. WRTA Meeting for Para Transit-** TPAG meeting is on March 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00-2:30 at the WRTA Bus Station on Grove St. Everyone who uses Para Transit is invited to attend.
- 3. Presentation of Services by Tara O'Connor-Executive Director, Center for Living and Working (CLW)**

Ms. O'Connor began her presentation by stating the mission statement of CLW is to empower persons with disabilities to take active roles in their lives and communities in which they live. Ms. O'Connor stated that the CLW is consumer driven and consumer directed to best meet the individual needs of persons with disabilities. The main telephone number to access services is 508-798-0355.

Ms. O'Connor said there were 4 service areas:

**1) Independent Living- These services are available to any individual with a disability**

Four core services:

(These services to any individual with a disability)

- Skills Training- consumer driven and directed
- Peer Counseling
- Advocacy
- Information and Referral

Additional Services

- ATA Consulting Services
- Spinal Cord Early Intervention Program (State-Wide program)
- House Assistance
- Benefit Assistance Counseling

**2) Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

Four core services:

- Skills Training
- Peer Counseling
- Advocacy
- Information and Referral

Specialty Programs

- Children Trust Fund Grant
  - Providing parents support group for hearing parents of deaf children, deaf parents of deaf children or deaf parents of hearing children
- Fire Safety and Prevention Program
  - FEMA and Department of Health
  - Installing adaptive fire alarm and carbon monoxide detector in homes of individual who are deaf or hard of hearing
  - Safety bed shaker or strobe light (Installed 274 pieces of equipment in people's home)

### **3) Personal Care Management**

- Largest department (1,600 consumers)
  - Help with personal bathing when consumer needs it.  
Consumer driven and directed according to personal needs not according to a dictate.

### **4) Transitions Department**

- Newest Department- Mass is one of 8 states participating
- Move from nursing facilities to back into the community
  - Income eligibility requirements
  - Helps with transition from nursing home stay of 90 days or more
  - Money follows the person, it can be used for household items, transportation, services, etc.

#### **a) One Care Demonstration ( Dual initiative) (200 people participating)**

- Need to be dual eligible in Mass Health and Medicare
- Provide support necessary to take care of an individual into the community

#### **b) Option Counseling (ADRC partnership)**

Susan Swanson asked what the age range was to receive services and Ms. O'Connor explained that they take all ages. She said that some youth programs will transition to adult programs at age 18. Even though services are consumer driven and directed, children will need an adult parent or advocate to help determine needs.

Ms. Swanson asked about funding for services. Ms. O'Connor stated that most services are funded by Mass Rehab Commission, Mass Commission for the Blind and the Mass Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the inter agency collaboration helps make the dollars go farther. Personal Care Management services are financially regulated and individuals must qualify.

Individuals only need to disclose that they have a disability, no proof or documentation is needed with the exception of Personal Care services. In order to acquire a personal care attendant there must be a prescription from a physician.

#### **4. Tim Bouche – Planning Director DPW & Parks with upgrades to Lake Park Restrooms**

Mr. Boucher said that the year before Mr. Antonelli, Assistant Commissioner, Parks Department came before the COD to review plans for accessible ramp construction for the Lake Park restrooms and the Board asked him what the intentions were to make the bathroom building itself accessible. At the time Mr. Antonelli had no answer as there were no plans in place for it, but now thanks to Mr. Antonelli, the Parks dept has a design and a plan and is ready for construction. Mr. Boucher reviewed the proposed layout which included new fixtures, new partitions, new accessories, painted walls and floors. He said it was a fairly simple but important project and that both the toilet rooms and the ramp should be finished at the same time.

Mr. Cremer suggested a drop down diaper changing table and Mr. Boucher said they could accommodate that. He also suggested a sink be installed in one of the handicap toilet stalls. Mr. Boucher said they looked at that and it was not feasible at this time as it took away from fixtures.

Ms. Brown asked why the women's room had 2 sinks and the men's room had 1 and Mr. Boucher stated that in order to best utilize the space, it made more sense to install one sink and a urinal in the Men's room.

Mr. Hiamah asked if this plan was for all restrooms in City parks or just Lake Park and Mr. Boucher said only this one at this time as Lake Park had funding for it.

Mr. Boucher said there would either be dryers or paper towels and Mr. Cremer strongly suggested paper towels.

Mr. Ricker asked if the urinal would be lowered so that it was wheel chair accessible, Mr. Boucher said that it would be.

Mr. Ricker commented that he attends many baseball events at that park and the issue has always been availability of the restrooms, a problem of who has a key to the restrooms. He asked if there could be a policy to insure that no matter who was using the facility would have a key and could open the restrooms. Mr. Boucher said that would be under the jurisdiction of the Parks Department along with permitting.

Mr. Ricker had a concern regarding mobile impaired who were down in the lower area of the park and had a long way to navigate up a hill to get to the accessible ramp. Mr. Boucher said they redesigned the seating area to better accommodate the access to the ramp.

Jackie Norton asked if there would be ramps and Mr. Boucher said there would be an accessible ramp to the restroom.

### **5. Public Comment:**

Scott Ricker asked why the AAB notice regarding WRTA was not on the agenda. Staff Liaison did not know why it was not included with the other AAB notices.

Scott Ricker stated he had called one of the listed organizations for snow removal help and wanted to know if the list was still fully functioning and still in service. He had called the number listed for North High and never received a call back and would like to know if the organizations on the list are up to date and still in service.

Mr. Keister stated he called the DPW complaint line regarding snow removal on Pleasant St. and a week later was still not cleared so he called again to see what happened and the tracking system indicated it was a 'closed' complaint. He said that once snow operations are concluded all snow related complaints are closed whether or not they are resolved. The interim staff liaison stated she would look into this as it was not her understanding that was the policy for complaints. She indicated that Ms. Turchek was already looking into Mr. Keister's complaint.

Mr. Cremer stated that in the past there had been a snow committee that was led by Deputy Police Chief Sean Fleming and it was a place that people could go to register their complaints and advice.

Jackie Norton spoke on the Snow Ordinance from 2005, she said that now it's under process and going before City Council to include the curb cuts and the sidewalks. She stated that as long as the curb cuts are snow free, people are in compliance whether or not one can make it to the actual sidewalk. She also said that complaints are registered with the DPW call desk; there are call backs to ensure the complaint was resolved before the complaint is closed.

Ms. Brown asked Ms. Norton if she was in favor of the proposed amendment to the snow ordinance and Ms. Norton said she was very much in favor because the ordinance previously only stated that the curb cut be free of snow, but that is not adequate because it still does not provide access to the sidewalk or cross walk or street signal.

Ms. Brown made a motion to vote and endorse the ordinance as a body and Steven Stolberg seconded the motion.

The Board voted by roll call vote to endorse the Snow Removal Ordinance. The motion was carried to support the ordinance as written.

Rachel Brown –Yes

Steven Stolberg-Yes

Herb Cremer- Abstained pending more information on the ordinance

John Nah- Abstained pending more information on the ordinance

Lynn Towler- Yes

Charles Hiamah-Yes

## **6. Reasonable Accommodations Brochures put out by the Human Rights Office.**

The interim liaison stated the brochure was in draft form for the Board's review.

Ms. Brown asked that the office review the MCAD guidelines to make sure the number of days a complainant had to file on the brochure were the same as the MCAD. Ms. Brown also commented on the spacing in

the brochure and pointed out the discrepancies and suggested spacing be the same for ease of reading.

Ms. Swanson made suggestions regarding errors in bolding, format and grammar. All corrections would be made.

The interim liaison asked if there were any comments on the content of the brochure and no other comments were given.

## **7. Informational Communication**

The Community Access Monitoring training hosted by the Commission on Disability & Center for Living and Working scheduled for April 22<sup>nd</sup> and April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 in the Levi Lincoln Room, City Hall. The public and COD members are strongly encouraged to attend. The registration forms should be sent directly to Ms. Jayna Turчек, and it is free for COD members.

## **8. Review of AAB Notices:**

369 Burncoat- Correspondence indicates case is closed and the following improvements were made per the Boards request: an automatic door opener and handrail was installed, and stamped as built plan toilet compliant per CMR 30.

455 Main St. – First notice to the City that a complaint has been filed with the AAB regarding lack of handrail on back steps on the back common. No further information was available. Ms. Callahan stated this was first notice a complaint was received and the board would be apprised of all future correspondence.

Mr. Cremer stated that he would like data on intake complaints in the Disability Office as he wanted to know the type of complaints. He said he didn't see it happening in the foreseeable future and what he had in mind was the bar graphs that the Police used to show crime rates. The reason was to show priorities and trends to aid in the Commission's work. Ms. Callahan said that Ms. Turчек was working on such a data base and as the Board was informed on prior occasions, to date there had been no formal data base. Ms. Turчек was working with DPW and

Technical Services so that disability complaints could be tracked as part of the Customer Service Response System.

Mr. Keister announced that recently the WRTA installed an automated announcement of the buses that state what bay they are in and when they are leaving, for example, “bus 2 is in bay 8 and will be leaving in 2 minutes”. The Board expressed appreciation for this.

Mr. Cremer wanted signage available for those who were hearing impaired and must be large enough to read for all levels of sight. Ms. Callahan said the plan was for large signs hanging from each bay identifying the bay.

Mr. Cremer mentioned that City gardens could be a part of emergency planning. If something happens to the food supply, local gardens become necessary and should be encouraged. Mr. Cremer said that California had very bad crops last year and local gardens were something discussed. He said that Ms. Turchek’s husband was involved in community gardens and he had brought up local gardens 3 years ago. Ms. Callahan said she thought Ms. Turchek perhaps could have her husband come on the agenda and speak about forming sustainable gardens. Mr. Cremer said having local gardens for disabled, elderly and immigrant populations could be very satisfying and a part of emergency planning- as regards having locally grown fruits and vegetables.

## **9. Future Agenda Items for Consideration:**

- Policy on snow
- Sustainable gardens specifically accessible for disabled and elderly
- Walk Through of DCU Center- Report From Mike Kennedy

Thanks to Ms. Callahan for her efforts on behalf of Ms. Turchek during her leave.

## **6:30 Meeting Adjourned**

Respectfully submitted by Pamela Callahan