

Commission on Disability Meeting
Minutes from December 15th, 2015, 4:30PM
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber 3rd Flr.

Attendance:

Members Present: Robert Bilotta, Herbert Cremer, Nancy Garr- Colzie, Paul Keister, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo, Douglas Russell, Jr., Stephen Stolberg, Susan Swanson (Remote – Late)

Members Absent: Francesca Abbey, Robert Bureau

Staff: Jayna Turchek, Dawn E. Clark

Guests: Joseph Borbone, DPW Chief Engineer

Members of the Public:

Michael Kennedy, Scott Ricker

Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions

Chairperson Paul Keister welcomed commission members and the members of the public present and wished all a happy holiday.

Approval of October 20th, 2015 Minutes

Commissioner Colzie - Garr moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Stolberg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Presentation of Main Street Sidewalks and Streetscape Project (Joseph Borbone)

Mr. Joseph Borbone, DPW Chief Engineer, reviewed the basics of the Main Street Sidewalks and Streetscape Project. Five years ago Congressman McGovern secured four million for the improvement of Main Streetscape Project. The state will be adding two and a half million dollars toward this project as well. The project is at the 25% design plan.

This is at the point a public hearing is held for any federal/state project, which this one is and was held on December 9th at the main library.

The plan is to redo Main Street with three lanes of traffic instead of four lanes from court house to court house. There will be “bump outs” for easier crossing. Along much of the east side of the street will have bi-level sidewalk most of its length to meet ADA guidelines similar to the new sidewalk on Front Street. (Building entrances will be flush with the sidewalks, etc. Bike lanes will be added. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2017 and will take up to eighteen months for completion.

The following points were raised through questions from the commission members:

- The time for light/chipper crossings will be longer consistent with new guidelines
- When a wheelchair ramp from a parked van is extended there is not enough room on the new Front Street bi-level sidewalk to get onto the sidewalk. The van needs to be parked out into the street to be able to move parallel to the sidewalk. Concern that HP spaces are not at ball & chain openings or at bump-outs.
- Bump outs are often where piles of snow are left often resulting in no HP spaces during the winter.
- Consider talking to WRTA about shoveling bus stops and being cognizant about where snow is put.
- There will be appropriate turning lanes. Concern about narrowing of street in those sections especially when buses might meet.
- Significant concern for people with vision impairment and those using canes/walkers when sidewalks are not passable during construction. Agreed there is a need to consider ways of making travel of foot accessible while sidewalk construction is taking place.

Discussion and call for participation in a future Standing Committee meeting regarding items forwarded from the 11/17/15 City Council meeting

Item 8A Request City Manager request Commissioner of Public Works and Parks implement perpendicular curb cuts at all new and resurfaced walkways/roadways going forward. Further, request that audible signals (chirpers) be installed at crosswalks and to include progressive sounds or beeps as it gets into the countdown portion of the signal. Further, request that tactile raised arrows be added to all crosswalk signals and to be incorporated as part of all new crosswalk signalization. (Economou)

Item 8B Request City Manager to request Commissioner of Public Works and Parks add fencing to any and all sidewalk reconstruction and road work projects, as well as appropriate signage for crossing/walking, to insure pedestrian safety. (Economou)

The two items above were presented to City Council on Tuesday, November 17th, 2015 by Councilor Economou for consideration. These items were a result of his participation in October's White Cane Day walk on the sidewalks around City Hall. The Council agreed to forward these items to the appropriate Council Committee once the mayor has named the 2016 calendar year committees and appointees.

These items were brought to the Commission to seek its support and presence at the committee meeting to speak on the need and benefit of these items being implemented. Commissioner Myska made a motion to support these items. Robert Bilotta seconded the motion. All approved.

Director Turchek will inform the Commission when a committee will consider these items so the members can attend.

Vote on 2015 Emergency Preparedness Priorities

Prior to the meeting, Commissioners provided Director Turcek with their individual top ten emergency planning and preparedness priorities for 2015 as follows:

Commissioners' Individual Ranking								
	Abbey	Bilotta	Cremer	Garr-Colzie	Myska	Prochilo	Russell	Stolberg
1	4H	1C	3E	1A	1C	3D	1E	2F
2	4D	1G	3C	1B	3A	3C	2D	1D
3	4C	4F	3H	1C	3E	3H	2K	1J
4	4F	3A	1E	1G	4G	2K	2N	3A
5	4E	4C	1H	2D	4J	3A	3C	1G
6	4A	2E	2K	3A	4O	3B	3D	3E
7	4B	2K	3A	3E		1E	3E	3H
8	4I	2F	3B	3H		3F	4G	1A
9	3C	3E	4H			4E	4P	1C
10	3A	1I	IJ			4F	2F	1I

According to the above ranking the priorities 1 – 5 were:

Priority 1 – 3A received 7 votes

Priority 2 – 3E received 6 votes

Priority 3 – 1C received 5 votes

Priority 4 – 5 – 2K, 3C and 3H received 4 votes each with 3C having rating value of 18 and 2K and 3H a ranking value of 21 each. Therefore Priority 4 is 3C with 2K and 3H tied for Priority 5.

Commissioner Bilotta moved to approve the 2015 Emergency Planning - Preparedness priorities as presented. Commissioner Myska seconded the motion. A friendly amendment was made to make item 2K Priority 5, thus breaking the tie, by Commissioner Garr-Colzie and Commissioner Prochilo. The amendment passed unanimously as did the vote on the original motion.

The result of the vote was as follows:

**Commission on Disability 2015 Priorities for Emergency Planning –
Preparedness**

	Commissioners Priorities	Self-Study Recommendations	Individual Commissioner's Priority Rating	Commission's 2015 Priorities (based on the overall times Commissioners rated the item along with where it was ranked in their level of importance)
<u>Section 1:</u> Emergency Preparedness, Evacuation Plans, and Emergency Shelters				
1C	Getting wheelchair residents down stairs during a winter power outage and/or emergency evacuation	Develop evacuation plans for each City public facility	Five Commissioners rated 1C as of his/her top priority	3rd Priority
<u>Section 2:</u> Telephone Emergency Services (28 CFR 35.162)				
2K	Emergency hotline operators trained in TTY and Relay calls	Make TTY training mandatory, as well as training on TVR at least, for all personnel who may have contact with individuals from the public who have	Four Commissioners rated 2K as of his/her top priority	5th Priority

		hearing or speech disabilities.		
Section 3: Emergency Management (28 CFR 35.149)				
3A	Send out mailers to disabled individuals registered with the emergency management department. Mailers would contain emergency preparedness documents and would be sent out in coordination with emergency preparedness month.	Identify the disability-related needs of the people who are likely to be housed in a shelter.	Seven Commissioners rated 3A as of his/her top priority	1st Priority
3C	Establishing a corps of either city employees or volunteers to visit and check up on elderly and disabled people who live alone - during an official city emergency. The elderly and disabled could register ahead of time.	Provide advance arrangements to meet those disability-related needs in the event of an emergency	Four Commissioners rated 3C as of his/her top priority	4th Priority
3E	Commission on Disability renewal of inspection of emergency shelters. Semi-annual visit and update of pertinent information by City Department of Emergency Preparation to Commission on Disability.	Include individuals with disabilities and disability advocacy organizations in the advance planning process for sheltering arrangements	Six Commissioners rated 3A as of his/her top priority	2nd Priority

**Request to Host Regional Disability Commission meeting:
Worcester City Hall, Wednesday March 9th, 11am-2pm**

Over the years individual Commissioners have attended these meetings. Commissioner Garr moved to host the March 19th meeting, seconded by Commissioner Stolberg. There was a request that the Commission know the agenda beforehand so as to have an opportunity to have input.

Update on upcoming MA Office on Disabilities Community Advocacy and Monitoring trainings

Director Turcek announced the tentative schedule of Community Advocacy and Monitoring (CAM) trainings as follows:

Framingham - June 2016 (will consider Worcester if Framingham backs out)

Chicopee – October 2016

Randolph – May 2017

Will consider Worcester - Fall 2017

Review of AAB notices and applications: NONE received

Suggestions for upcoming agenda items

- Learn about the West Tatnick Elementary School Playground and accessible equipment
- Invite City Councilors to the Commission meetings
- Data on needs of the disabled Community
- School safety and security in light of recent abuse of disabled students in Holyoke
- Worcester's School security audit as part of emergency Preparation as this relates to disabled students

Announcements:

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**
January 20th, 2016, 1-2:30pm, WRTA Building, 287 Grove St.
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)**
January 5th, 2016, 5:00 – 6:30PM (Place: TBD)
- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** January 12th, 2016, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** January 19th, 2016
4:30pm.
- **Emergency Preparedness Meeting:** May (TBD) 2016 at Parks Department, 50 Skyline Drive

Emergency Preparedness Tip: People with disabilities may want to consider having several gallon containers of water per person at home for emergencies.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.