



City of Worcester
Department of Health and Human Services
Disabilities Division

James G. Gardiner, Acting Commissioner
Health and Human Services

Lawrence M. Raymond
Director, Disabilities

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Type of Meeting: Regular Monthly Meeting.

Date and Time Convened: September 10, 2008.

Place Where Convened: Worcester City Hall, Room 310.

Members Present: Rachel Brown, Dawn Clark, Grace Clark, John Cronin, Daphne Philips.

Members Absent: Joseph Sinasky.

Associates Present: Jill Swerzenski.

Staff Present: Michael Galvin, Larry Raymond.

Guests Present: Julie Arroyo – Intern with Office on Disability, Tim Boucher – Parks Department.

Public Present: Mary Healey, Mike Kennedy, Debbie Malone.

1. Call to Order and Introductions. Meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m.
2. Acceptance of Minutes. The minutes for July were accepted.
3. Communications and Reports.
 - a. Chairperson.
 - i. Dawn stated that CLW held a function at the new Vocational School but there were no automatic door openers.
 - ii. She also asked about the new Union Station parking Garage. Mike Kennedy and Mike Galvin inspected the area. 10 of the 500 spaces were handicap accessible, with 2 of them reserved for van use. The doors pressures were a little off the charts, and 3 had no automatic door openers. But overall the major issues were excellent. There is a rest room, but they don't know if they are public. Mike K. stated that he will write up a report. Larry stated that power assist doors are not required by law. Mike K. also explained that there are cameras everywhere in case of a fall or need assistance. He also stated that the Parks and DPW Departments responded well to requests.
 - iii. Snow Policy Letter. Dawn and Rachel introduced a draft letter to the City Manager regarding enforcement of the snow removal ordinance. The letter was distributed and comments were requested after which the letter will be submitted to administration.

- b. Director's Report.
 - i. City Parking Garage Policy. There was an agreement to allow 2 hours of free parking to Worcester Residents only when all garages are on the automated payment system. If people remain parked for over two hours, they will be charged the full price. To receive this benefit people will have to register in advance. Mike commended Mr. Rushton, who spoke as a citizen making a final plea on behalf of the disabled community. Rachel stated that the commission needs to remind other boards and commissions to notify us when disability issues are discussed. Dawn feels that the disabled population has become intimidated, and lost their voices. Larry states that he only receives a small number of calls each month.
- 4. Transition Plan, Accessibility and Access Board Issues.
 - a. Updates on City and School Dept. Larry hasn't received any information from the school dept. Mike Kennedy provides a monthly report to the commission and members. Larry and Mike G. provide the Code department assistance whenever they request advice.
 - b. Housing Ordinance, Next Step. The request for a policy regarding housing with visitability has been sent to the City Manager, and Health and Human Services.
 - c. Sidewalks, Curbcuts and Chirpers. Members have been asked to report problem areas. A report regarding the placement of chirpers has been requested.
 - d. HP Parking Fines. There is about 70 handicap parking fines issued each month. This money goes into the city general fund.
- 5. Transportation and TPAG.
 - a. Buses and Paratransit. It was a busy summer. Problems with the malfunction of the lifts caused a number of complaints. Administration may not have posted the policy regarding people being left aside of the road, but now there is a policy in place. Rachel reported that she has attempted to solicit complaints, in order to consider legal action. There was an unfortunate situation at PBSI, but services will still be provided during the investigation. One member noted that code 4 taxicab services were not available on Sunday nights around 7 p.m. The recommended increase that was proposed was deemed too large by the advisory board. At this time, the board voted to increase fares by twenty-five cents on January 1, with other increases over the next few years if necessary to keep up with costs.
 - b. Taxicab Statistics. Will be available next meeting.

6. Emergency Preparedness.
 - a. Memorandum of Understanding with WRTA. Still pending.
 - b. Local Registry. Held.
7. Old Business.
 - a. Commission Elections. Jill was nominated for secretary during the July meeting and accepted the position at this time.
 - b. UMASS Valet Parking. A report regarding the valet parking at U. Mass will be ready for October 2008.
 - c. PIP Shelter Training. The issue regarding PIP Shelter training was tabled, Dawn would like the commission to come to a decision.
 - d. Fragrance Policy. Mike G. discussed the idea of a citywide “fragrance free policy” with the Dept. of Health, but this policy will begin just at Disability Commission meetings at this time.
8. New Business.
 - a. Union Station Waiver. A motion to approve a Union Station Waiver for Special Olympics was made by Daphne, second by Grace.
 - b. November Ballot Question 1. Discussion about a significant state budget cut, and social services couldn’t be provided if Question 1 passes.
 - c. Request City Manager Inform Commission of Issues Relating to Disability. The City Manager will be asked to notify the commission regarding any issues pertaining to accessibility and disability issues.
 - d. Commission Minutes on City Website. Will be occurring from now on.
 - e. Housing Foreclosures and Persons with Disabilities. Concerns with the foreclosure and housing crisis: 5 percent of these people are disabled; the City Manager is focused on those wishing to refinance.
9. Announcements and Adjournment. Motion to adjourn was made by John Cronin, second by Daphne Phillips.

The Commission would also like to express our sympathy for Larry’s recent loss of Nichols who was fondly remembered by all.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ms. Jacqueline Norton
Secretary