

**City of Worcester
Commission on Disabilities**

Type of Meeting: Regular
Date and Time Convened: October 14, 2009, 4:00 pm
Place Where Convened: Esther Howland City Council Chamber
Members Present: John Cronin, Jacqueline Norton, Dawn Clark, Grace Clark, Rachel Brown
Members Absent: Joseph Sinasky, David Perry
Staff Present: Fran Manocchio
Public Present: Mike Kennedy, Herb Creamer, Mary Healey, Doris Healey, Debbie Malone, Dave Johnson
Guests: Paul Moosey, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Works and Parks

1. **Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions:** Dawn Clark called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m. Attendees introduced themselves.
2. **Acceptance of August and September Minutes:** Grace Clark moved to accept the September minutes; John Cronin seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent. Rachel Brown moved to accept the August minutes; Mr. Cronin seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.
3. **Information and Education: Deputy Commissioner Paul Moosey, Department of Public Works and Parks:**
 - a. Paul Moosey first addressed the street resurfacing program and explained that, when a street is resurfaced, DPW installs or repairs ramps and curb cuts as a routine matter. In addition to the City's regular repair work, the City also provides \$200,000 in additional funds for ramp work and ADA work in spots of needs; Mr. Moosey specifically noted that these funds are available for FY10 and that DPW would consider using the money for chirpers, if appropriate, even though historically the funds have been used for ramp work. Mary Healey suggested that the City look to the Memorial Foundation for possible chirper donations; Debbie Malone agreed and stated that the Foundation might be willing to look into a donation if the City could not provide chirpers near UMass Memorial.
 - b. The Commission was reminded to forward repair requests to Fran Manocchio for consideration. Historically, the focus has been on areas of high traffic such as schools, downtown, and other high population areas. DPW has received a list of review spots from the Commission and plans on addressing those spots before winter.
 - c. With respect to City Hall, DPW is trying to reconstruct the Main Street side and the project is currently out to bid but will not be completed until the spring. The Front Street portion would be out to bid by MassHighway in April-June of 2010 with the work to be completed in the summer and fall. Construction will only address the

- portions along the Common; across the street will be addressed when City Square is redone.
- d. Going forward, the City intends to use imprinted surface pavers instead of actual brick ramps and crosswalks. The price is comparable and the imprints hold up better than bricks. Mr. Moosey acknowledged that there are bricks missing around City Hall and the downtown sidewalks but there is no schedule available at this time for when those repairs will be handled.
 - e. With respect to Belmont Street, the State will be doing part of it in FY11 and the other portions will be upgraded at a later time. DPW is putting in a couple of lights by the hospital in the meantime. There was some conversation about the need for full traffic lights instead of pedestrian flashing lights; Mr. Moosey will report back to the Commission about the specific plans for around the hospital.
 - f. Mike Kennedy asked about the construction on Foster Street between Commercial Street and the DCU Center and pointed out the HP parking had been removed during construction. Mr. Moosey believes that the spots will be reinstated but will verify that fact.
 - g. Mr. Kennedy asked about the pedestrian crossing on High Street in back of the Denholm building. Some discussion took place regarding the hazards of a mid-block pedestrian crossing. Mr. Moosey said that DPW could consider moving the cross walk out of the mid-block location.
 - h. Jacqueline Norton inquired about large intersections with islands and pointed out that longer crossing signals could remove the need for pedestrian islands. Mr. Moosey explained that pedestrian islands are a “safe haven.” However, the Commission can refer concerns over lengths of crossing signals to Mr. Moosey, Ms. Manacchio, or Joe Barbone for further consideration.
 - i. Herb Creamer inquired about the removal of HP parking by City Hall. Mr. Moosey explained that those spots had been temporarily installed during local construction.
 - j. Dawn Clark inquired about the parking rules in front of Union Station. Mr. Moosey explained that the rules are unclear for now.
 - k. Mr. Kennedy inquired about the push buttons at Washington Square. Mr. Moosey explained that the buttons light strobe lights that are set into the crosswalks to alert drivers about pedestrians.

4. **Communications and Reports:**

- a. **Chairperson’s Report:** none given
- b. **Director’s Report:**
 - i. Ms. Manacchio stated that the City Solicitor has provided feedback on the proposed grievance procedure which adds to the document and personalizes it for Worcester. A vote on this procedure was held until the November meeting.
 - ii. Ms. Manacchio also recounted a letter from a Worcester resident regarding construction around Temple Emanuel around Rosh Hashanah, which removed accessible access to the Temple. Ms. Manocchio had touched base with the resident and apologized. She then spoke with the Deputy Commission, who hadn’t seen the letter but knew that someone from the City had spoken with the Temple’s Rabbi, who said that things were fine. Dawn Clark also spoke

with the complainant, who is willing to stay in touch with the Commission as an ally on access issues. Deputy Commissioner Moyland also responded that this wasn't a pressing issue and that DPW does not have the responsibility to check in with faith communities when scheduling construction. The Human Rights Commissioners, who have also seen the letter in question, requested Ms. Manacchio to write to the City Manager, Deputy Commission Moyland, and the Mayor to suggest positive steps for avoiding such problems in the future. A motion by Ms. Brown and seconded by Mr. Cronin was passed to have the Commission co-sign the letter. Ms. Manocchio also noted that there was another letter in the Telegram and Gazette addressing this issue and, while there was one positive comment following the article, another was negative.

5. **Emergency Preparedness:** A group met on September 17, 2009 to review the current draft of the emergency preparedness plan. The City's technical services are looking at the plan now and a final meeting will be scheduled at a later date. Ms. Norton pointed out that Coes Pond will be hosting its own emergency planning meeting in October.
6. **Transition Plan, Accessibility and Access Board Issues:** Dawn Clark reiterated her interest in someone reviewing the transition plans for the Burncoat and Doherty schools. Ms. Norton noted that construction at Vernon Hill Park is almost completed and suggested that Mr. Kennedy and/or the City review the park for accessibility issues.
7. **Transportation and TPAG:** The WRTA continues to look at weight issues for bus passengers. Dawn Clark noted that appeals on these determinations are ongoing and recommends that riders use van service when possible. Ms. Norton expressed concern about lack of representation of public transportation consumers at meetings where decisions are made about the future of local public transportation
8. **Old Business:**
 - a. **ADA Grievance Procedure:** A vote on this procedure was held until the November meeting.
 - b. **Press Conference Update:** Although no press conference was held, the October 6 City Council meeting included a proclamation from the Mayor announcing that October is Disability Employment Awareness Month. An announcement was also made about the City's partnership with the Center for Living and Working.
 - c. **CLW Event – October 22, 2009:** from 1-3 pm on October 22, CLW consumers and other interested parties will have the opportunity to network and learn about CLW's programs and services.
 - d. **Snow Removal:** the information published last year is still accurate. Ms. Brown made a motion to add the Commission's name to the flyer; Mr. Cronin seconded the motion, which was subsequently approved.
9. **New Business:** None.
10. **Announcements and Adjournments:**
 - a. The Commission was invited to attend the October 14, 2009 Common Pathways event at the YWCA at 5:30.
 - b. Grace Clark made a motion to adjourn at approximately 5:25 pm which was seconded by Mr. Cronin. The motion passed.