

## Minutes of the Brookline Commission for the Disabled (BCD) Meeting

April 19, 2016

Present: Chair, Eileen Berger, Members Saralynn Allaire, Myra Berloff, Ben Franco, Rob Heist, Henry Winkelman and staff, Lloyd Gellineau.

The meeting commenced promptly at 5:00 P.M. in the Denny Room, Public Health Building, as Chair Berger noted meetings last only an hour. Henry Winkelman asked why meetings don't last 1.5 hours, like other committee meetings. The one hour length is due to travel arrangements for some long term members, but the possibility of extending meeting length should be discussed in the future.

Saralynn Allaire took notes for the meeting.

Member attendees introduced themselves; Myra Berloff was new to the BCD.

There was discussion about the lack of due process the BCD experienced with the Architectural Access Board (AAB) variance application filed by the Beaver Country Day School in January, 2016. BCD did not receive the application directly from the applicant, but from Dan Bennett of Brookline's Building Department, who passed it on to Chair Berger. Furthermore, there were only two business days for BCD to submit its comments. In spite of this, three BCD members provided comments about each of the variances, and all comments were submitted one business day before the hearing.

Chair Berger had talked with AAB's director, Thomas Hopkins, about this, and he said BCD could send a letter to him about this lack of due process. He would then vacate the previously held hearing and schedule a new hearing so BCD would have more time to review in detail and submit complete comments. Two motions were proposed: 1. That Saralynn provide a list of variances received in the prior month at each meeting for review by commissioners, and 2. that the BCD review, make comments and vote on comments to be submitted to AAB. Both motions were passed.

The meeting was then turned over to Lloyd Gellineau, Ph.D., Director of the Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations (DICR) Department for a presentation on the activities of his department and how they relate to BCD activities. DICR's mission is to promote and encourage diversity in all parts of Brookline Town government. There are two main categories of activities, 1. Celebratory, and 2. Advocacy and management of complaint processes. Celebratory activities include creating and promoting cultural events which celebrate each of many different cultures. Recent examples are Lunar New Year, Haitian Day, Martin Luther King Day

and Irish Day; there are gender based events as well, for example, Women's History Month. There is information on the Town's website about such events, and DICR is beginning to work with Brookline Interactive Group (BIG), the Town's television channel.

In discussion of advocacy activities, Lloyd noted that the representation of people with disabilities in the Town's workforce is lower than it should be. Myra has worked at the state level on this issue and offered to provide help in this issue. Lloyd noted that DICR is working to provide adaptive devices to students when they graduate from high school and go on to post graduate education/training programs. Individuals needing an American Sign Language interpreter should call his office.

Americans with Disabilities (ADA) related complaints can be filed via the Town's main web site, or with individual departments. An updated online complaint process is coming next week. Town employees can file complaints through the human resources department; Lloyd oversees the process for these complaints. A few ADA complaints have been received in the past year or so. One was about a door was handled by the Building Dept. There is a recent complaint about a HP space on Babcock St. Historically, it was noted that the Department of Justice filed a complaint against Brookline around 2005 for lack of adequate action on Title II requirements; this was handled by an outside firm. It needs follow up.

DICR has several assistance programs for people with disabilities. These include ramps on loan for temporary access, a grant program that provides technology for high school graduates transitioning into post graduate training/educational programs, help in applying for benefit programs, and emergency funds.

There was some discussion about how BCD could work with DICR, e.g., file warrant articles together. BCD can also work with other departments like the Parks and Recreation Dept., which is currently planning an accessible community garden plot.

A citizen observer at the meeting was invited to speak. Cindy Lee of Babcock St. expressed concern about the possibility that her sister's HP space would be moved further down the street as part of the ongoing renovation of the street. This would pose a hardship for her sister. Some citizens rather than Town officials had proposed this. It was suggested that Lloyd, as the Town's ADA Coordinator, could follow through on this.

The minutes from the Mar. 8 meeting were reviewed and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 PM.