

Brookline Commission on Disability Monthly Meeting

Thursday, January 16, 2020

6:00 to 7:45 PM

Town Hall, Room 308

Meeting commenced at 6:00 PM; led by Chair, Saralynn Allaire

Identification of Note Taker – Sarah E. Kaplan, ADA Coordinator, Ex. Officio

Members present: Saralynn Allaire, Chair; Rob Heist; Henry Winkelman; Joan Mahon; Elaine Ober; Ben Franco, Select Board Member

Members unable to attend: Jim Miczek, Ann Kamensky

- A member of the Commission on Disability was unable to attend due to broken lift on The Ride vehicle. Ben suggest the TB or the SB send a letter to the MBTA about it

Introductions/Public comments: Deb Sue Klein, Tina Kurys

Review Minutes of from December 2019 meeting: Saralynn had two small edits. Motion: Approved as amended. Elaine motioned to approve. Joan seconded. Ben and Rob abstained due to not being at the meeting in December. Minutes approved by all other members in attendance.

Review the Minutes of the December 2019 Subcommittee on Town Meeting Accessibility: Minutes approved as written by all subcommittee members in attendance.

Review of Minutes on Sighted Guide Video Subcommittee: Motion to approve by Henry, seconded by Tina. Minutes were approved as written by all subcommittee members in attendance.

Variances: Discussion: There are no current variances and haven't been any since May. Saralynn called William Joyce at AAB who said that the number of variances AAB had received statewide had been about average since they have been without a Director. Saralynn also reported that William Joyce had been appointed the new Director of AAB by the Board. The role of Assistant Director of AAB now needs to be filled.

Action: The ADA Coordinator will call the Building Department to check-in regarding the lack of variances.

Old Business:

Promotion of Sighted Guide Video:

Discussion: Rough draft completed by Corbin at BIG, and posted in private YouTube link for viewing by members of the Commission. There will be a few final edits. Corbin said he would get back to us about increasing the font size on the closed captioning. Discussed adding a special thanks to Corbin for all his hard work at the end. The ADA Coordinator mentioned that the visual information of one of the actor's name on the screen does not match up with the narration of it. She suggested extending this name on screen by 2-3 seconds. The Commission discussed ways to promote the video.

Action: Saralynn would write up the list of people/places for promotion. Tina said that after this next round of edits she would set up another sub-committee meeting to provide final feedback. The ADA Coordinator plans to email Tina with notes regarding editing.

Change of Day for Monthly Meetings:

Discussion: Talked about changing the regular meeting date of the Commission on Disability to the second Wednesday of every month due to scheduling issues for both current members and a potential member. Vote was taken – the move to the second Wednesday was supported unanimously.

Action: February 2020 meeting is officially scheduled for Wednesday, February 12, 2020 @ 6 PM – 7:45 PM. The second Wednesday is now the regularly scheduled date for meetings moving forward.

Harvard Ave. Tree Removal Update:

Discussion: Tree obstructing Harvard Ave. still not removed. The Town Arborist, Tom Brady, is now saying that Eversource will remove the tree. The Chair of the Commission then sent a note to Mr. Brady emphasizing the need for a speedy removal of the tree in question due to a complaint from a resident in a wheelchair who can't get by the trees on either side of the street and as such has to resort to driving her wheelchair in the street. There has been no further response from the Town Arborist.

Action: Ben Franco said he would get in touch with the Chair of the Tree Planting Committee.

Update for Town Meeting Accommodations Subcommittee:

Discussion: The subcommittee met twice is working to identify barriers to access and has developed suggestions for remediation. The subcommittee is now developing a document so that the barriers and remediation are more easily understandable.

Action: They plan to bring that document to the Commission's February meeting on February 12, 2020. The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2020, location TBD.

Further discussion on plan to reverse parking and bike lanes on Lower Beacon:

Discussion: Saralynn contacted the Chair of Bicycle Advisory Committee about the proposal to put a marked bicycle lane on the sidewalk – Cambridge is using this model in some places. The Chair of the Bicycle Advisory Committee said they would consider that proposal, but he thought much of that sidewalk is privately owned. Ben Franco confirmed that much of that sidewalk is privately owned, but he is not sure of the dimensions.

Transportation Board Liaison:

Discussion: The Transportation Board does plan on naming a new Liaison to Commission on Disability, but the Chair was unsure if that person will be able to attend Commission Meetings regularly.

Action: Once a new liaison is named, the Chair will work with them regarding how to handle communication between the Commission and the Transportation Board.

New Brookline Affordable Housing Coalition:

Discussion: The new coalition is being headed by the Commission on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Relations. Currently the Coalition is planning a Stakeholders Educational Forum to be held in April. Henry will represent the Commission in the Coalition meetings.

ADA Coordinator Update:

- **Brookline's MOD grant application for 2020 was not approved:** The ADA Coordinator was told by MOD that they received over many applications this year, requesting over \$13 million dollars.
- **Confirm that there are four HP spaces at the Ridley school:** The Chair suggested adding additional spaces for Election Day. Ben said that Pat typically has temporary spaces added on Election Day, and suggested talking to Linda Golburgh from the Town Clerk's Office about getting additional temporary spaces for the March Primary Election.
- **No Parking/No Stopping Sign @ 70 Pearl St.:** The sign said there was a \$50 fine for parking or stopping at 70 Pearl St., which would adversely affect people using THE RIDE or The Elder Bus, so worked with Transportation to get the sign changed to No Parking Anytime Sign.
- **MLK Day Event on January 20, 2020:** Two ASL interpreters from Partners Interpreting would be there to provide access to the event.
- **Please complete the Commission, Committee, and Board Survey that Saralynn sent out on behalf of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Relations.**

New business

Tertiary sidewalks: Originally brought up by Jim, who is not in attendance. The ADA Coordinator remembered that Jim brought it up at the very end of December's meeting. He is concerned about the upkeep and accessibility of sidewalks for non-main streets (mostly, residential streets). The ADA Coordinator said that in passing discussion with Todd Kirrane of Transportation, they were working with a company called BETA about a Town wide survey of the sidewalks. Also discussed was the hiring process for a new DPW Commissioner. The Chair requested an opportunity to give feedback to the search committee like they did with the Chief of Police. Other discussion was tabled for a future meeting.

2020 project ideas:

- **Needs assessment:** Issues creating such an assessment could include – define disability, how to reach people, how to get them to respond? The Town already works with the National Citizen Survey – could they help us with over-sampling.
Action: The ADA Coordinator offered to reach out to IHCD for insight into how to create such a project. Saralynn will bring it to CODA and Joan will reach out to her network.
- **Work with sr. ctr. Low Vision group on large print materials:** The ADA Coordinator will work on this issue with the Age Friendly Business Initiative.
- **Voting site access:** How accessible are the voting sites? Video on how to use the voting machine. There seemed to be interest in working on this issue.
- **Police response to drivers who are deaf or HOH?** – not discussed.
- **Improve BCOD website:** The Chair would like to update the site and make it a place for people to seek resources.

Actions: Elaine will do some research on what other communities are doing.

- **Emergency response program:** Rob suggests that we continue to work on promoting the Disability Identification Form. Lockbox program – Salem, MA has such a program. Discussed grant recently received from the State re: Emergency Response.

Action: Rob will reach out to Cheryl Snyder

Variance review training? – not discussed

- Transportation: improve Brookline Rideshare program – People with disabilities below 65 are eligible, is income dependent. Program currently lacks wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- Affordable housing? – not discussed outside of conversation of New Brookline Affordable Housing Coalition
- Something with schools? – not discussed

Warrant Article passed re: Community Engagement: Make Commissions and Committees go through a core checklist regarding ways Commissions etc. engage other underserved groups. In-depth discussion tabled for a future meeting.

Announcements:

- None

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- Wednesday, February 12, 2020 @ 6 pm

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.