

Brookline Commission on Disability

Thursday, January 17, 2019

6:00 to 7:30PM

Town Hall Room 308

Present: Chair, Saralynn Allaire, Members:, Elaine Ober, Ann Kamensky, Jim Miczek , Ben Franco, Myra Berloff, Henry Winkelman; Cindy Lee, Transportation Board Liaison

Absent: Joan Mahon, Rob Heist

Ex Officio: Sarah E. Kaplan, ADA Coordinator/Community Relations Specialist, Office of Diversity, Inclusion, & Community Relations

The meeting commenced at 6:05 PM.

- I. Identification of note taker – Sarah Kaplan
- II. Introduction/Public Comments
 - a. Ray Masak, Project Manager for the Building Department and three Architects from William Rawn Associates: Andrew Jonic, Nikul Patel, and Andrew Weber – came to the meeting to present drafts of 2 variances related to renovation of Tappan Gym and Kirrane Aquatics center
 - b. Ihssane Leckey – resident who has friends with disabilities that comes to visit and she wants to see what the Town is doing to be more inclusive. The Commission welcomed her.
- III. Review of Minutes
 - a. Minutes from December 2018 – approved as written.
- IV. Variances
 - a. Brookline variance drafts:
 - **Tappan Gym elevator:** Started with a quick overview of the renovations, which are related to the Brookline High School expansion. Addition of new Cypress Building (111 Cypress St.) for the 9th graders; addition of new STEM wing in High School Building; changes to the Tappan Gym and Kirrane Aquatics Center.. Showed the changes to the sidewalk on Cypress St, and how the new building will go over the tracks at Cypress St. An elevator will be there to access the station and the school. Questions were asked about the use of stair lifts vs the use of elevators. Elevators are being upgraded as part of deferred maintenance, and upgrading all lifts. Myra was not sure you can replace a lift “in kind.” If new lifts are small, you may need new variances. The current Tappan Gym elevator is short door to back wall by one inch and extra long side wall to side wall. Commission members thought this was acceptable, as there was room to for a wheelchair to enter and face an elevator side rather than the door..
 - **Pool Bleachers Wheelchair spaces request draft:** The bleacher style stands for the main pool are currently inaccessible. Seating is at 225. If seating was required to become accessible, seating would be reduced to around 136. Also there would be a loss of storage space and plumbing would need to be moved. Plans were to add accessible seating (3 WC spaces and seats for 3 companions) on the floor by another adjacent wall. Myra pointed out this will isolate swim event attendees with disabilities from the other attendees, and Jim described how he had been so isolated when he attended his son’s swim meets. We advised adding additional permanent seating

for attendees along the wall. Ray Masak was empathetic to Jim's experience and so agreed to come back with new ideas.

- **112 Centre St. variance requests:** Two variances: A) Regarding handrails for emergency egress. They want to leave the current handrails in place (currently 18 inches vs 22 inches as required and currently 10 inches vs 12 inches as required.) B) The height of the garage does not meet 521 CMR. Does fit a small accessible van, but not a high-top van. It is impractical to make the changes to the van without ripping the garage or the building down. They do need a policy that if someone moves into the building that has a high-top top they will need to work with Town to get an accessible parking spot. Variance was approved unanimously.

b. Ongoing variances:

- **Gen Sou En:** Commission voted to send information back to AAB that they have received complaints and believe that Gen Sou En are not in compliance with their stipulated order.

V. Old Business

- Meeting with Brookline Bicycle Advisory Committee (BBAC):** Saralynn, Jim, and Myra attended a meeting with BBAC. Jim expressed that "we don't want to go back" and the BBAC also has compelling case for need for the bike lanes. Saralynn wants to talk to Andrew Pappastergion about getting involved in transportation plans early, like the do in Cambridge (according to Saralynn). The ADA Coordinator mentioned that a resolution to include disability point of view in all planning may be put forward. The action item is a small group of Commission members to meet with Commissioner Pappastergion to discuss how to they can get in on projects early.
- Follow-up on MBTA crossing hazardous to people who are blind:** The ADA Coordinator emailed the MBTA ADA Coordinator, has received no response as of this meeting.
- Pedestrian Advisory Committee:** Tabled due to lack of time.
- Update on Uber focus group held at Boston City Hall:** Jim attended this meeting, but had to leave before giving his feedback.
- Follow-up on Beacon Street by Holiday Inn:** Saralynn reported Planning Dept staff said this would be addressed when renovations planned for the inn are carried out. **9-1-1 Disability Indicator Form:** not discussed.
- HP space in Marion St lot:** Not discussed.
- Placement of new "no bicycle attachment" signs:** The signs have been purchased and should arrive soon.

VI. New Business

- AAB Bill:** An update to the AAB is being requested in legislation before the MA Senate and House. The update is for AAB codes to include employee spaces and certain housing renovations. The Disability Policy Consortium is asking Commissions to help on this. BCOD member contacts and possible meetings with State Reps and Senators were discussed
- **Boston Mayor's Committee on Disability meeting – February** – Saralynn may attend to hear presentation on AAB bills.
- Kent/Station St. Senior Housing Proposal** – RFP submitted to the Board of Selectman.
- New BCOD project ideas**
 - **Making Town Meeting visual presentation materials ADA compliant:** Complaint about Town materials not being accessible. Saralynn suggested putting together some kind of guidance on how to create effective and ADA compliant presentations. Saralynn Allaire, Elaine Ober, and Sarah Kaplan will meet to discuss this issue.

- **How to address reasonable accommodation requests Town-wide:** It seems that some elected officials may not fully understand their obligation to abide by the ADA and do they know how to effectively provide accommodations. Discussed possibility of developing guidance document on this.
- **Materials for BCOD website** – Examples are map of HP space locations and video on how to assist persons with blindness

- e. **Accessible Parking Spaces on Beacon:** Discussed the need for additional parking spaces given the changes to Lower Beacon due to the addition of the bike lane. Discussed people parking in accessible spots and what other towns do to curtail illegal parking in accessible spaces.
- f. **BCOD meeting timing:** Discussed extending meeting for 2 hours and/or creating a standing sub-committee for variances. Vote on these issues has been pushed to the February meeting.

VII. ADA Coordinator update:

- a. None – the ADA Coordinator left at 7:30 pm. Saralynn did relay to the Commission that **Brookline was awarded an MOD grant**. The money awarded will be use to update the four corners at Beacon and Harvard Sts. (Coolidge Corner) to eliminate pooling and bring them into full compliance.

VIII. Announcements

- a. Temple Sinai is having a speaker about coming of age with a disability in February.

IX. Date for next meeting: **February 21, 2019 @ 6 pm; Room 308 in Town Hall.**

Meeting adjured at 8:06 PM