

Brookline Commission on Disability

Thursday, February, 21 2019

6:00 to 7:30PM

Town Hall Room 308

Present: Chair, Saralynn Allaire, Members: Rob Heist, Elaine Ober, Ben Franco, Henry Winkelman

Absent: Joan Mahon, Jim Miczek, Myra Berloff, and Ann Kamensky

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. Charles Papsadore - Brookline resident attended the meeting. All in attendance introduced themselves and welcomed him to the meeting.
- III. Review of Minutes
 - a. Minutes from January 17, 2019 – were tabled due to need for extensive editing. Minutes will hopefully be approved during the next meeting.
- IV. Variances
 - a. New variances:
 - **Tappan Gym elevator variance:** Draft was reviewed in the January 2019 meeting. Variance concerning the renovation of Tappan Gym at Brookline High School. The variance request is needed regarding an existing elevator is 47 inches door to back, which is 1 inch smaller than is required. It is 73 inches side wall to side wall, which is longer than required by the ADA. Would likely mean that a person using a wheelchair could need to make a turn and face a wall, and then back out. If the variance was not approved they would need to rip out the current elevator and make both the elevator car and the shaft larger to provide access. The vote was unanimous in favor of granting the variance.
 - b. Ongoing variances:
 - **112 Centre St. variance:** AAB agreed with our opinion to approve the variance, but they did not include BCOD's request for a stipulation that the building managers/owners would help any resident of the building that did have a high rise van work with the Town to help the person find a dedicated spot that was accessible for their van to use.
 - **Gen Sou En:** Due to Tom Hopkins death, Saralynn did not contact AAB regarding BCOD's concern about non-compliance. Tabled until later time. May follow-up in a future meeting.
- V. Old Business
 - a. **BCOD/BBAC meeting follow-up:** Saralynn decided at this time to not move forward with the idea to contact Andrew Pappastergion about the Commission's concerns about bike lanes. Instead, she wants to talk with Todd Kirrane, who is currently designing a bike lane for the west-bound side of Beacon St. Saralynn asked if the ADA Coordinator had reached out to Todd Kirrane about BCOD's want to be involved in the design and decision making regarding the construction of bike lanes. The ADA Coordinator did not remember doing so, but if she had, she had received no response. The ADA Coordinator said she would check old emails to see if an email was sent and if not, do so ASAP. The

Commission discussed how to best frame the request. It was decided that the email should state that BCOD would like to either meet with him or have him come to a meeting so that we could relay to him the Commission's concerns and suggestions for all bike lanes built in the Town and to use the current need to design a bike lane for the west-bound side of Beacon as a catalyst for this discussion.

- b. **Advocating for House Bill 2021 and Senate Bill 814:** Saralynn has set up a meeting with Senator Crème regarding the AAB Bill. Meeting set for Feb. 28th. Some people from the Newton Commission on Disability have also agreed to attend. The ADA Coordinator offered to reach out to Colin Killick and/or Lenny Somervell from DPC to see if they could also attend. Tommy Votolo also emailed Saralynn saying that he had signed on in support of the bill. Ben Franco agreed to also reach out to Nika Elugardo, the State Rep for Precinct 5 in Brookline, since he lives in her precinct. Saralynn said she would reach out to Michael J. Moran, State Rep for Precinct 1. She had reached out to Edward F. Coppinger but received no response.
- c. **Letter to Governor Baker regarding replacing Tom Hopkins:** Saralynn relayed to the Commission Myra Berloff (who was not at the meeting) did sign a letter to the Governor regarding the need to replace someone who really understands the ADA and the benefits of hiring someone with lived experience as a person with a disability.
- d. **Status of new HP space in Webster St. Lot:** Saralynn asked the ADA Coordinator to check in with Todd Kirrane about this. He responded saying that it has been added to the DPW list for the coming Spring.
- e. **Tips for viewer-friendly TTM presentation:** Saralynn, Elaine and the ADA Coordinator had met to discuss tips we could give TMMs in order to help them make their presentations more audience friendly. The ADA Coordinator raised her concern that releasing these guidelines which do not make them actually accessible could do more harm than good. Saralynn pointed out that the document had a disclaimer saying that using these guidelines may not make their presentations ADA Compliant/WCAG conformant. Ben pointed out that presentations are not posted ahead of time. The ADA Coordinator pointed out that accessible communication is currently an issue that is coming up right now. We discussed what sort of things would be needed to reach the highest possible standard of accessibility in Town Meeting. We tabled the issue of making Town Meeting more accessible. Ben Franco advised tabling the document for a future meeting. Ben is going to provide some line edits and think about how to best distribute this and meet with the ADA Coordinator about how to best put this out. Elaine offered to edit and make it screen reader accessible. No vote was taken at this time.
- f. **Disability Warrant Article:** Elaine pointed out that the discussion regarding audible pedestrian signals leads back to a larger question of how disability is considered or not considered in the Town's planning process on multiple levels. Saralynn said that this connects to Caitlin's warrant article. The ADA Coordinator confirmed that Caitlin is still working on the warrant article. The Chair asked that the ADA Coordinator relay the Commission's concern that she not develop this warrant article alone and that she needs to work with others. The ADA Coordinator explained that she did not think Caitlin was planning on developing the warrant article in isolation, but also heard the Chair's concern and would take it back to Caitlin.

VI. New Business

- a. **New Minutes Policy:** The Chair proposed a new policy regarding how the Commission deals with minutes. Moving forward, the Chair will not give the Commission time to read the minutes in the meeting. Commission members are asked to read the minutes on their own time and they may offer edits in the meeting or send them to the ADA Coordinator ahead of time. This will hopefully allow for a swifter process so the Commission can focus on more pressing business. The vote was unanimous in favor of the policy change.
- b. **Update on Uber focus group held at Boston City Hall:** Tabled until next meeting, when Jim is attendance.
- c. **Materials for BCOD website:**
 - **Map of HP space locations in Brookline:** The ADA Coordinator contacted Todd Kirrane regarding the CAD files, have not seen the response. May become an intern project for an IT intern.

- **Video on how to help people who are blind:** Discussed sourcing from Commission for the Blind website or Carroll Center. ADA Coordinator will look into it.
- d. **Request re: plans for accessible/audible street signals:** Audible Pedestrian Signals (APS) are not currently required by law; currently if you need an audible pedestrian signal in your area you can make a reasonable accommodations request. Ben suggested creating a working document much like the Bike Committee has to highlight the most important crossings and verify changes. Need to find a metric to evaluate prioritization. There is a Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting on March 13 and several people who are blind or have low-vision plan to speak about the importance of such signals. The ADA Coordinator suggested partnering with the Pedestrian Advisory Committee and BCAN about how advocate for more audible pedestrian signals be put in during the planning/building process.
- e. **Police details on HP space violations:** The Commission discussed how Waltham COD used \$4000 of their budget to hire a police detail over the course of Christmas and netted \$10,000. Discussed when to do it – Christmas or the end of August or the beginning of September during college move-in weekend and where in Town (Coolidge Corner was suggested). The Commission discussed if they wanted to do the same. Ben pointed out that it needed to be done strategically. The Chair requested that the ADA Coordinator check with Public Safety about who handles HP space violations.
- f. **Creating a Working Group for Variances:** The Chair proposed putting together a working group including the following members: Saralynn, Myra, Rob and Jim. The group would meet to discuss the variance separately from the larger Commission and then bring their findings to the Commission for a vote. The public would still be able to weigh in on the variances during the larger meeting. Ben raised some concern regarding what the difference was between a subcommittee and a working group in the eyes of open meeting law. The ADA Coordinator agreed to reach out to Town Counsel for clarification. The Commission voted on the issue. The vote was unanimous in favor of creating such a group as long as it follows OML.

VII. ADA Coordinator update:

- **Trees on Harvard Ave:** Discussed how we found that these three trees on Harvard Ave that cause the sidewalk to be out of compliance with the ADA. The ADA Coordinator sent an email to the Tree Warden in November 2018. Andrew Pappastergion replied to my email in January 2019 explaining that while his department concurs that the trees make the sidewalk to fall out of compliance with the ADA, there is an issue that would require hearings with the Tree Planning Committee and possibly hearings in front of The Select Board. BCOD has asked the ADA Coordinator to pursue this process with the Tree Warden. A description of the trees in question is listed below:
 - Tree by Pierce School Park gate on the Harvard Ave side: distance from tree to fence is 28.5 inches, and deep slope, and roots out
 - Tree by 39 Harvard Ave.: 27 inches of sidewalk clearance, and deep hill/slope on sidewalk. The holly brush on home owners property may also need trimming
 - Tree by 60 Harvard Ave.: 33.5 inches of sidewalk clearance, and a deep slope
- **Communication with the MBTA ADA Coordinator:** The MBTA ADA Coordinator has still not responded to the email sent out by Sarah at the beginning of January. Sarah plans to have a phone meeting with Carl Richardson, the ADA Coordinator at the State House to seek his assistance in connecting with Laura Brelsford.
- **Purchasing single use in-ear headphones for the Assisted Listening Devices:** The ADA Coordinator brought three quotes for supplying the headphones. W.B. Mason is selling them for \$4.13 apiece. Amazon, vendor: \$57.95/100 units. DH Gate, vendor: \$39/100 units. Ben suggested setting aside \$100 for purchasing such headphones and he would check where he bought his. The vote was unanimous in favor of doing so. Money would be pulled from Professional/Tech allotment.

VIII. Announcements

- a. None

IX. Date for next meeting: **March 21, 2019 @ 6 pm; Room 308 in Town Hall.** Meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM.