

Minutes

Brookline Commission on Disability
Wednesday, May 12, 2021; 5:30 PM – 7:15 PM
Held via Zoom due to COVID-19

Members in Attendance (Virtually): Saralynn Allaire, Chair; Jim Miczek, Deputy Chair; Jim Lee; Rob Heist; Henry Winkelman; Elaine Ober; Joan Mahon, Ann Kamensky; Nancy Moore, Transportation Board Liaison

Members not in attendance: Heather Hamilton, Select Board Member

Note taker: Sarah Kaplan, ADA Coordinator – Ex. Officio

Members of the public in attendance: Abby Swaine

Meeting commenced at 5:30 PM.

Introduction/Public Comments: None

Report from the Communications Subcommittee: Elaine shared her screen and Saralynn presented to the members what topics will be covered in the first Access Brookline column, which will run in The Brookline Tab. Topics include: Showcasing the Commission on Disability, the ADA Coordinator, News and Events: CART at Town Meeting; Sidewalk Obstruction Infographic/Doorhanger; Information about the Commission's Meetings and Employment Opportunities at DPC, Ernst & Young, and Autism @ Work Job Marketplace. The column needs to be 500 words or less. The ADA Coordinator made one small edit re the section on CART.

Abby spoke about how she set up the column with the Tab. Talked about future features and possible topics – discussion about Green Line Transformation Project; Outdoor Dining. Plan is to write the draft in the first week of the month, review the draft as a whole group at the meeting during the second week of the month; submit to the tab in week three; it appears in The Tab on week four.

Joan suggested acknowledging businesses with accessible features in Town. Members liked this idea. Members thought Cutty's may now be accessible. Several members agreed to check and report back.

Rob wanted to promote the 9-1-1 Disability Indicator Form. Elaine asked Rob to send her the blurb he wrote for the Senior Center. Joan wanted to advertise the Ramp Loan Program and the Assisted Listening Devices.

- **Vote:** Saralynn made a motion to approve writing a monthly column in The Tab that focuses on disability issues. Henry seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken of all

members present. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion. The motion carries.

Webpage Improvement Subcommittee Report: Henry shared his screen. Henry and Ann presented a mock-up of a BCOD webpage which contained icons that illustrate the topic areas. The mock-up was positively received. Rob suggested that we add the content area of the 9/11 disability indicator form. All agreed that that would be useful. There were no negative comments. Accessibility was discussed, and it was determined that everything should be in black and white with a larger font, no italics, and so that it could be a model of accessibility.

- **Action:** The subcommittee will meet again to pick an icon for the 9-1-1 Disability Indicator Form and then pass the edits onto the ADA Coordinator, so they can work with Ben Vivante from IT on the changes.

Review of the April 2021 Minutes: The minutes from the April 14th meeting were reviewed.

- **Vote:** A roll call vote was taken of all members present. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion to post as written. The motion carries.

Variances: None. No update has been received about the status of the Coolidge Corner Theater variance application.

Old Business

Multi-Unit Housing with Limited or No Parking: It was noted of that three ideas emerged from the discussion on parking limits in residential multi-unit housing at last month's meeting. The first was to make it a policy for developers to get extra credit for providing accessible parking dedicated spaces in exchange for permission to reduce the total number of parking spaces. The second suggestion was to do as they are doing in Arlington which is to write an article which would require that when parking reductions are planned that the number of accessible spaces required is based on the original number of parking spaces rather than the reduced number of spaces. The third idea was to require the planning board to consult with the disability commission before approving reduction in parking. Attendees were most enthusiastic about the second idea, that is, basing the number of accessible spaces on the total number of spaces originally zoned for a building.

- **Action:** The Chair plans to invite someone from the Planning and Community Development Office to attend a BCOD meeting to discuss parking and multi-residential units unit buildings.

CART for May 2021 Town Meeting: CART is set up for the upcoming town meeting. Captioning for other meetings, for example Select Board meetings, is being explored, especially since a new Select Board member is hard of hearing. IT and the ADA Coordinator are exploring Otter.ai and Verbit to see what can be done. The other issue is payment for this because this will become too much for the accessible parking fine fund. If members need reasonable

accommodations, they are reminded to email the ADA Coordinator about their reasonable accommodations request.

Person First Language on the Accessible Parking Application: No new update. The ADA Coordinator has emailed Todd Kirriane asking for an update, but has received no response.

- **Action:** The ADA Coordinator will continue to reach out to Todd regarding this issue.

Report from Transportation Board Liaison

The T Board had met on April 24, and there were two items of possible interest to the BCOD. First, the Pedestrian Advisory Board has been working to improve the pedestrian and bicycle pathways around construction projects. They are concerned that the pathways make too great a detour and are often obstructed. Todd said there was little that could be done about the detours, but agreed that improvements might be made in trying to avoid obstructions. There was some discussion about posting notices about the telephone numbers to call to report obstructions, including a number supplied by the contractor, who can remove obstructions quicker than the Town. The second item of interest concerned the extended sidewalks program for Covid and whether the TB wanted to reconfigure these extended sidewalks now that winter was over. There was agreement that we did not want to do as much as was done last summer and fall, but that Todd should bring back limited proposals for areas that appeared to need it the most, e.g., Longwood Avenue.

New Business

Accessible Parking and Bike Lanes: Jini Fairly, Newton's ADA Coordinator is working on a law or regulation that would permit people with Accessible Parking Plates or Placards to park in bike lanes. Currently by State Law, a person with an accessible parking play could be fined for parking in a bike lane.

Accessible Recreation: The idea of getting involved some way in sports and recreation for people with disability was presented. Attendees were enthusiastic. Recreation Specialist, Micah Barshay is employed by the Town's Recreation Department.

- **Action:** The ADA Coordinator will invite Micah to future meeting to discuss his work and explore ways we could work together.

Announcements: ASL interpreters are present at 3 COVID-19 vaccination sites.

Next Meeting: Scheduled for June 9, 2021 @ 5:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM