

Minutes

Brookline Commission on Disability
Thursday, June 1, 2023; 5 PM – 6 PM
Meeting held via Zoom

Members in Attendance: Jim Lee: Chair; Rob Heist; Saralynn Allaire; Jim Miczek

Note taker: Jim Lee

Presenters: None

Jim Lee commenced the meeting at 5:07 PM.

Public Comment: None

Variance request @ 1026 Commonwealth Ave. Brookline:

A variance Application was submitted to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) for a renovation project at 1026 Commonwealth Ave. Brookline. The request was submitted by Mr. Michael Stack of the Aijou Group. The specific request was for relief of the code 521 CMR (17.5), which states “All dining areas, including raised or sunken dining areas, mezzanines, loggias, and outdoor seating areas, shall be accessible.”

The renovation project was to add additional seating in a mezzanine area of the building. This mezzanine is currently inaccessible. 521 CMR would require the installation of an Ada compliant Chairlift. The variance applications states, “To gain accessible access to the mezzanine level would require a wheelchair lift which would require extensive demolition and reconfiguration of the space that would affect structural elements, plumbing, mechanical and electrical. It would also greatly reduce the usable square footage of the space and make the program of the space unusable. This level of work would be cost prohibitive to the client.”

The submitted plans indicate the entire first floor of the new restaurant would be fully accessible. The mezzanine area would remain inaccessible, but would only provide additional seating. The subcommittee discussed the need for accessibility to the mezzanine area. Most members agreed, if the first floor of the restaurant is fully accessible, with accessible entrances, bathrooms, etc. and there is no significant advantage to being in the mezzanine, access to seating in the mezzanine would not be consequential.

Therefore, Jim Lee made a motion that the chair send an email to the MAAB stating that, provided the first floor of the restaurant is fully accessible for individuals with disabilities, the Brookline commission on disability would not object to the variance. Saralynn Allaire seconded the motion and they vote was taken. Jim Lee, Rob Heist, and Saralynn Allaire voted in favor of the motions. Jim Miczek abstained.

Jim Lee made a motion to adjourn at 5:24 PM; Rob Heist seconded the motion. The vote to adjourn was 4–0.