

Synopsis of Minutes*

Brookline Commission on Disability Regular Monthly Meeting

Thursday Jul 11, 2019

6:00 to 7:45 PM

Town Hall, Room 308

Meeting commenced at ____6:05____ PM; led by Chair, Saralynn Allaire

Identification of Note Taker: Ann Kamensky

Members present: Saralynn Allaire, Ben Franco, Rob Heist, Ann Kamensky, Jim Miczek, Henry Winkelman; Cindy Lee, Transportation Board Liaison, via speaker phone

Members unable to attend: Myra Berloff, Joan Mahone, Elaine Ober

Introductions/Public comments

Guest names____Daniel Schwartz, Government Affairs officer from Soofa electronic sign company_____

Review of June 19 minutes

Editing of Cindy Lee's June, 2019 minutes by Saralynn were approved as amended

Discussion on future minute taking – 10 min.

Discussion: No one has been hired as yet to take the BCOD minutes, but this effort will continue. Ben suggested Sarah contact the Town's property assessor, Gary McCabe, to get names of property owners on the tax abatement plan, as they may be looking for extra income. The dates for the Sep through Dec monthly meetings were set to enable potential hires know when their service would be needed.

Action: Thurs Sep 19, Thurs Oct 17, Thurs Nov 14, Thurs Dec 12

SOOFA sign pilot proposal

Discussion: Dan Schwartz gave a presentation on the Soofa electronic signs his company is seeking to install in commercial districts of Brookline. The signs show various types of content of interest to passersby, e.g., community events, in addition to ads. The signs are video only, i.e., they have no audio component. The signs are to be placed where they will not interfere with pedestrian traffic, including opening of doors of parked cars.

Discussion: BCOD members expressed concern about sign placement and usability by people with low vision. To address these concerns, Dan said that the exact placement of the signs will be checked by Town authorities, including Sarah Kaplan. Also, the signs can easily be moved if there are complaints. The company was urged to make sure the size of wording on the signs be large enough for people with low vision.

Action: BCOD members present approved installation of the signs, with approval of placement by Sarah Kaplan.

Variances – Saralynn reminded members that the AAB hearing on the BU Howard Thurman Ctr, 808 Comm Ave application is scheduled for Mon Jul 15 at 1:00 PM at One Ashburton Place; she plans to attend.

Old business

Promotion of 9-1-1 Disability Indicator Form

Discussion: Rob contacted Cheryl Schneider about two changes the 9-1-1 Form Subcommittee recommended.

Both recommendations were approved.

Action: The form should be available for distribution at Brookline Day, Sep 22.

BIG contact re: sighted guide video

Discussion: Henry, Ann and Tina Kurys are working on the project. They have gotten input from members of the Age Friendly Cities Committee and expect it will be joint project with that committee.

Action: The subcommittee's action were approved, and the subcommittee advised to proceed.

New business

Saralynn noted a frequent lack of planning for disability access at community events, July 4 celebration.

Action: Ben suggested she talk with Erin Gallentine about this.

Update from ADA Coordinator

MOD grant proposal; due early Aug.

Sarah's ideas:

a. Improve access to The Lynch Center. Caitlin informed me that the application for the Lynch Center grant was rejected in the past, but she was advised to try again in the future.

b. Increase the number of Audible Pedestrian Signals in Town. I know that the Pedestrian advisory Committee is working on a study right now of all the Audible Pedestrian Signals in Town.

Either seem like a worthwhile project to Sarah, but she's open to other ideas. Whatever is decided, she needs to move quickly to get the application in early in the grant cycle.

Discussion: BCOD members agreed both proposals were appropriate and did not express a strong preference for one over the other. Ben noted what would be really valuable is a needs assessment. Perhaps a consultant on how to conduct such a needs assessment could be hired with the grant funds.

Action. BCOD members decided both of Sarah's project ideas are suitable, but that Saralynn Should also talk with her about the possibility of doing a needs assessment.

2. Sarah received a complaint from resident Ray Schwartz regarding the E-scooters. He asked to bring it to the Commission. He says he feels the Transportation Board and the Town is violating the ADA and State Law by approving the contracts for the e-scooter vendors and that he has lodged a formal complaint with the DOJ and the FBI. Sarah will send the complaint document to anyone wanting it.

Discussion: There was much discussion on the problems with e-scooters, but it was thought that their use probably doesn't violate the ADA or other laws.

Action: Saralynn volunteered to talk with Mr. Schwartz about this, if he wishes.

3. Sarah spoke with Jed from IT regarding the HP parking map. He is going to work on making it easier to find on the Town website through key words. She forwarded a follow-up email from Jed to Saralynn.

4. On 7/16 Caitlin and Sarah will be meeting with Justin Casanova-Davis to complete the Self-Eval for the Town Administrator's Office and Select Board. Rob has agreed to attend as a representative for BCOD. An addendum will be added to the Town's ADA Transition Plan.

Discussion: Caitlin has agreed to give a presentation on the results of the Town's ADA Self-Evaluation at the Oct BCOD meeting.

Announcements

Members were reminded to submit their Reappointment forms.

DPW decided to address the sidewalk blockage on Harvard Ave by removing the tree by the Pierce Playground.

Good progress on addition of HP spaces to Town's parking app IS being made. The map includes spaces installed up until ~1.5 years ago; info on 2 new spaces on Harvard St, CC was sent for inclusion.

Members were unaware of any additional HP spaces.

The MOD Disability Summit, 'Improving Access in Our Communities' is to be held Sep 27, 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM, Boston Convention and Exhibition Ctr., 415 Summer St., Boston; it is free but registration is Advised. Saralynn plans to attend.

Date for next meeting – Thurs. Sep 19

Meeting ended at _____ 7:35 _____ PM

*The actual minutes for this meeting were taken on a laptop computer that failed after they could be distributed; the file was not able to be retrieved. Therefore, Commission members who attended the meeting composed this synopsis based on their own notes and memory.