

Minutes
Brookline Commission on Disability
Wednesday, July 15, 2020, 5:30 PM – 7:15 PM
Held via Zoon due to COVID-19

Public Link:

https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_M3toLGluRiqu6dpiKbR3eg

Members in Attendance (Virtually): Saralynn Allaire, Chair; Jim Miczek, Deputy Chair; Elaine Ober; Rob Heist; Ann Kamensky; Jim Lee, Heather A. Hamilton, Select Board Member

Members absent: Joan Mahon and Henry Winkelman

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

Members of the Public in Attendance: Tina Kurys

Meeting commenced at 5:35 PM.

Introduction/Public Comments: Saralynn and other members welcomed Jim Lee and Heather Hamilton formally as members of the Commission. Heather was thanked for shepherding through Jim Lee's appointment to the Commission. Jim Lee spoke about his background in construction and teaching construction codes at Wentworth Institute of Technology and his experience as a person with vision loss.

Review of BCOD Meeting Minutes from May 11, 2020: Rob motioned that the minutes be accepted as written. Jim Miczek seconded. All members voted in favor via a roll call vote. The motion carried.

Old Business

Variances: None. There was some discussion about the Commission's role with the variance requests and how we work with the Architectural Access Board.

Update on Sighted Guide Video Distribution: Tina Kurys provided an update – a press release is forthcoming, with help from someone in the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind who works in media relations. As a group we updated the outreach list and added assignments to the list.

- **Action:** Saralynn asked Tina to send out final version of the video to all members. The ADA Coordinator said that Lloyd and Caitlin from her office approved of the draft version of the press release but advised to send it to Dr. Jett, the head of the Department of Public Health in Brookline. The ADA Coordinator will forward any feedback along.

Feedback re: CART Services through BU at Town Meeting: Saralynn received nine emails from residents who used or tried to use the closed captioning during Town Meeting. Seven out of nine found it a positive experience and two had more critical feedback, complaining that it was not 100% accurate or it lagged behind significantly what was being said. The ADA Coordinator said that while it is possible that the captions were not 100% accurate, it is better to have them for the people that need them, then not have them, especially for the people who are hard of hearing or Deaf.

- **Action:** We will continue to use BU's assistance if offered, but will use funds from the HP Fine Fund if the Town needs to pay for such services in the future.

Update on the Affordable Housing Initiative: Saralynn spoke briefly about the four Forums that are planned – one has already taken place. To register for one of the forums go to BuildABetterBrookline.org. Heather updated that the Town has been notified that the Town has reached the threshold of 10% of housing stock is considered affordable housing. This will allow the Town to have more control over 40B projects going forward. The Kent St. Affordable Housing Committee will be presenting their recommendations to the Select Board on Tuesday, July 21, 2020.

Contact with BHA residents with disabilities: Saralynn feels she is often getting information in CODA calls that she feels would helpful to BHA residents. The ADA Coordinator created an invitation that will be posted to the BHA website.

ADA Update: The ADA Coordinator has received the following complaints in the last month or so:

- Received a complaint from a resident regarding overgrown hedges – working with Parks & Open Space

The ADA Coordinator is also worked/is working on:

- Virtual Display focused on ADA Month/Disability Pride Month is up – the display includes the Sighted Guide Video and other national and local disability information
- If there are changes to the Commission's website, send them to the ADA Coordinator.

New Business

Sidewalk Access due to overgrown trees: Jim Miczek spoke about his experience trying to get by trees that have overgrown onto the sidewalk. Jim Miczek says he would like to await a street-by-street report to be done that the Town has paid for. The ADA Coordinator and the Chair encouraged Jim to identify a few trees that we can start working with the process.

- **Action:** The ADA Coordinator said she would come and look if she was given addresses/locations of these trees.

Creating Advocacy Lists: Saralynn has been thinking about how to get together groups of people with similar disabilities. For example: groups for people who have vision loss, hearing loss, wheelchair users. Saralynn said she would write up on the purpose of such groups and how they would work. Finding more advocates that work with us would be helpful to make sure that we are communicating the needs of the wider disability community in Brookline.

New Member Orientation PowerPoint: Saralynn created a PowerPoint for new Commission Members. Saralynn has a phone call with Jeff Dougan of MOD about revising the PowerPoint and using it as an MOD document.

Access Issues of Outdoor Seating at Restaurants: For outdoor seating moved into parking lanes and discussion about providing ramps to restaurants as requested. The ADA Coordinator asked that members send her information about access issues if they encounter any.

Announcements:

Virtual ADA Celebration in Boston – July 22, 2020 – The Chair asked that the ADA Coordinator post it to the Commission website if it was not already done and to send it out via the office's PR list.

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 @ 5:30 pm via Zoom – The Chair will check with other members, as we don't typically meet in August.

Meeting adjourned at 7:24 pm.