

Minutes

Brookline Commission on Disability

Wednesday, September 13, 2023; 5:30 PM – 7:15 PM

Meeting held via Zoom

Members in Attendance: Jim Miczek, Henry Winkelman; Miriam Aschkenasy, Select Board Member; Elaine Ober; Saralynn Allaire; Joan Mahon; Rob Heist; Nancy Moore (Transportation Board Liaison)

Members not in Attendance: Jim Lee, Chair; Shawn O’Neal

Members of the Staff in Attendance: Ben Vivante, IT Operations Director; Bart Brown, ADA Intern (ODEICR)

Members of the Public in Attendance: Anthony Ishak

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

In the Chair’s absence, Sarah Kaplan, ADA Coordinator chaired the meeting at the request of Commission members present. The meeting commenced the meeting at 5:34 PM.

Public Comment: None.

New Business

July 2023 Meeting Minutes: Tabled for a future meeting.

New Variances: None

FY 2024 MOD grant for IT; presented by Ben Vivante: Ben presented the grant application and was looking for Commission support before submission on Friday, September 15, by 5 PM. The town has made advances toward increased website accessibility, but document remediation remains difficult to fund and achieve. The Town has 60 web editors and does provide training on making documents accessible, but compliance remains a struggle. Manual remediation of documents must be done by a human; current AI technology is not readily available to assist the Town with this task.

This grant application is asking for \$30,000 to remediate vital documents that IT and Town Staff have identified – including documents for Town Meetings, Select Board,

Town Clerk, Emergency Management, Council on Aging, and Office of Diversity. The cost is expected to be about \$5 per page, so the goal is to remediate 5000+ documents. The funding will allow the IT department to hire a contractor to remediate the documents. We estimate the project can be completed in about 6 months. If the grant is funded, all tasks and bills must be completed by June 30, 2024.

Commission members made suggestions about training and working with vendors used by other towns to see if that would lower the per page cost.

- **Vote:** Joan made a motion that the Commission support the submission of this grant. Henry seconded. A roll call vote was taken. All members present supported the motion. **7-0-0.**
- **Action:** Henry agreed to assist the ADA Coordinator in drafting a letter of support from the Commission. The ADA Coordinator will also reach out to Newton and other cities/towns to see who they may use when this need arises.

Transportation Liaison Board Update: Next Transportation Board (TB) Meeting will be two weeks from today (9/27). The previous TB meeting was in July. Chairman of the TB, Brian Kane, is working on a micro-mobility regulation and Nancy expects that Brian will be seeking a vote from BCOD on this – but she is not sure when.

Select Board Liaison Update: Miriam will be coming to the Commission to seek support for the Harvard Street zoning changes in October.

ADA Coordinator Update: The ADA Coordinator has seen an uptick in complaints in August and September. She hopes to give a report on complaints at a future meeting.

Time was then given to Bart Brown, the Office's ADA Intern for the 2023-2024 school year. She gave a presentation introducing herself, explaining why she wanted this internship, and explaining what she has been working on. Members welcomed her and asked her opinion on things like follow-up and engagement. The ADA Coordinator explained the Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan process she expects to happen over the next year and also answered questions. She encouraged all members to get involved.

HP Fine Fund Budget Allocation Vote: Tabled for a future meeting.

Old Business:

Review of T-Board Micro Mobility Device Draft Policy & Vote on Letter from BCOD

Chair: The ADA Coordinator asked that the Commission hold off on discussing the draft policy now, as she did not feel prepared to lead that discussion. Anthony Ishak spoke briefly, offering to explain the draft policy that Chairman Kane had sent out. Jim Lee, BCOD Chair, did ask the ADA Coordinator to try and get an up or down vote on whether or not to submit his letter to the Transportation Board. She offered to read that letter, available [here](#). The letter was read aloud to the members present.

Some members liked the letter, others found it confusing. Nancy said that the micro-mobility policy will be taken up by the Transportation Board during their October meeting at the earliest, so there is no rush to submit this letter right now. A straw poll was taken, and overall, there was a majority of Commission members who were not ready to support submitting this draft of the letter. Members advised that further edits were needed to the letter and wanted it brought back to a future meeting. All additional discussion on this issue was tabled for a future meeting.

Announcements/date for next meeting: October 11, 2023 @ 5:30 PM via Zoom

- A representative from Congressman Jake Auchincloss's Office will be attending October's meeting and wants to hear from Commission members on access issues
- Public Hearings are planned for the next meeting on:
 - Warrant Articles 3 (Housing in Brookline) and possibly opposition to Warrant Article 3
 - Warrant Article 16 (Rent control)
 - Info on all Warrant Articles for Fall 2023 Town Meeting can be found [here](#).

Miriam made a motion to adjourn; Sarah, in her role as temporary Chair, seconded. This is the only issue Sarah voted on in this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM.