

Commission on Disability Meeting  
Minutes from Wednesday, June 13, 2012  
Worcester Public Library – Saxe Room  
4:30PM

**Attendance:**

**Members:** Rachel Shannon Brown, Herbert Cremer, Charles Hiamah, Deborah Malone, Steve Stolberg, Lynne Towler

**Associate Members:** Pauline Piso, Javier Pena

**Members of the Public:** Jackie Norton, Emily

**Staff:** Dawn E. Clark, Jayna Turchek

The meeting began with welcome from the chairperson and around the room introductions. The Chairperson welcomed Javier Pena, new Associate Member, to the Commission.

Clarification was made via phone about the ability of a chairperson to raise associates members to full membership for the purpose of voting when a quorum is not present. The longest serving Associate Member, Pauline Piso, was raised to full member for the purposes of voting for this meeting.

**Minutes**

Since there was a section missing from the May minutes, voting on acceptance was tabled to July.

**Communications and Reports: Chairperson and Staff**

**A. Correspondence**

- a. Correspondence – The Chairperson did not receive any correspondence.
- b. Future meeting space – discussion about the Commission moving the meetings back to City Hall since the city hall garage is now reopen. Since there is no appropriate meeting space at city hall during the Commission's

meeting time, the Commission will meet at the library in the Green Room for the July meeting.

- c. John Street Church – Item was tabled to give the Chairperson the opportunity to review the work that has been completed.
- d. Commission Annual Report – After a lengthy discussion regarding the content of the report, the Chairperson asked that if there are any more amendments to be made to the Commission’s FY 12 Annual Report that they be forwarded to her or the office to be included in the revision. A vote will be taken at the July meeting.
- e. Elections will be in July. Any recommendations for officer nominations should be forwarded to the office. Nominations will also be taken at the July meeting.

**B. Director of Human Rights & Disabilities**

- a. Service Animal/ Companion Animal Ordinance – Jayna reported on the results of conversations with the city solicitor. Jayna read part of the response. After a survey, Dawn discovered that many municipalities use doctors’ notes and observations for verification. Worcester is the only municipality that mentions service animals as part of their licensing policies. Recommendation made by the chair for the law department to research about what can be used as verification for companion animals.
- b. Report on meeting with commissioner Moylan – After the meeting, Jayna followed up with a memorandum summarizing the issues discussed and adding additional issues, some of which include the temporary events policy, and the DCU Center. She is waiting for a response from Commissioner Moylan.
- c. Census Information – Jayna asked for and received statistics regarding people with disabilities. She will distribute copies of the statistics to be discussed at a future meeting.

- d. Retrofitted Desk at City Hall for clerk use – The City Clerk has proposed a desk to be used by customers who cannot use the standard high counter at that office. The Commission wants to commend the City Clerk for bringing this issue forward.
- C. City Council approved the Director of Human Rights & Disabilities as a full time position beginning July 1, 2012. The Disability Intake Coordinator’s position continues as well.
- D. Announcement – 6/21/12 event from Massachusetts mentoring Program. Flyers will be available from Jayna.
- E. Jayna suggested that possibly the Commission have an activity to celebrate the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the passing of the ADA. The Commission will ask the city to do a press release about the full time states of the Director and their commitment to people with disabilities. Jayna suggested a proclamation be issued as well by City Council.
- F. JCC event with the director of the movie “Bully” on October 14, 2012 – Would the Commission like to sponsor or support this event? After some discussion, the Commission decided to postpone further discussion until the July meeting.
- G. HP parking at City Hall Garage – Jayna provided a description of the new spaces and asks that Commission members inform her of any problems.

Motion carried to table the remainder of the agenda until the July meeting.

Reminder was made by the Chairperson for members to submit nominations for officers. Elections will be held at the July meeting.

Next meeting date is July 11 in the Green Room at the Worcester Public Library.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Debbie Malone, Secretary

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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TO: MEMBERS

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY  
JAYNA TURCHEK  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE ON DISABILITIES  
DAWN CLARK  
DISABILITY INTAKE COORDINATOR

FROM: RACHEL SHANNON BROWN  
CHAIR, COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

SUBJECT: DRAFT COMMISSION ON DISABILITY  
ANNUAL REPORT

DATE: JUNE 11, 2012

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The Worcester Commission on Disability is pleased to submit this annual report to the City Manager to discuss our undertakings, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations over the past year. Despite this having been a year of transitions, especially with respect to staffing for the Commission and the Office on Disabilities, we are pleased to report the following:

As a continuation of our interest in accessible voting and our work with the office of the City Clerk, in August and September 2011 members of the Commission on Disability conducted training sessions to train election wardens and clerks on the Americans with Disabilities Act, “people first” language, accessible voting requirements, and best practices. The Commission also worked

with the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board regarding our concerns for accessibility at the City's (now former) Anna Mara College polling location. We also wrote to local newspapers to share information about accessible voting, specifically highlighting the AutoMARK machines that are available at all Worcester polling locations. After elections, we provided feedback to the City Clerk regarding our first-hand observations as to the set-up of polling sites and the conduct of election workers.

One member of the Commission on Disability continued his work as liaison with the Human Rights Commission, sharing information with the two Commissions about bullying, both in the City of Worcester and elsewhere.

Members of the Commission participated in the City's Emergency Preparedness Taskforce, which helped evaluate the accessibility of proposed Worcester sheltering locations. Participation in the taskforce meant numerous location visits for Taskforce, and Commission members.

The Commission also continued its work towards updating the City's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan. Self-assessments were distributed to various City departments in early 2011. The Commission hopes to reconvene its ADA Transition Plan Subcommittee, as staffing permits, to evaluate the completed self-assessments and to make recommendations as to how to fully update the City's plan.

As in years past, transportation is an ongoing theme for the Commission on Disability. Members regularly shared information about transportation concerns in Worcester. Members also attended, and then shared details of, the Transportation Planning Advisory Group that is hosted by the Worcester Regional Transit

Authority (WRTA). We supported a local disability grass-roots group, REDD (Rights, Equality, and Dignity of the Disabled) in its efforts to reach the WRTA about its automated call-out system. We contacted the WRTA to express our support for functional needs assessments as part of the WRTA's paratransit application process. We also met with WRTA Administrator Stephen F. O'Neil regarding the WRTA's plans for a new transportation hub, and we provided feedback regarding visibility, accessibility, and restrooms, among other topics. Later, we were visited by Wendy Steinhilber and Jim Delage from PBSI (the WRTA's paratransit brokerage service), who shared information about paratransit and accessible services offered by the WRTA. They shared information about local service, the application process, the service area and service limitations, and present/future projects for the WRTA. The Commission also reviewed usage of the City's accessible taxicabs.

The Commission continued to share feedback with City officials regarding construction projects in the City of Worcester. For example, at our July 2011 meeting, we met with Joseph Borbone, Director of Traffic Engineering, to review plans for, and suggest improvements to, McKeon Road and Winthrop Street. The Commission requests that City officials continue to seek comment from the Commission on Disability regarding proposed construction projects.

We also hosted guest speakers who could encourage public awareness of disability issues. For example, in August 2011, we were visited by Dr. Dale Magee, then Commissioner of Public Health, who provided the Commission with a Power Point overview of the Health of Worcester 2011 report.

Staff of the Office on Disabilities has kept the Commission up-to-date on the types of complaints that citizens have regarding disability-related issues. In response to one such complaint, the Commission has proposed a change in the City's service animal ordinance; we look forward to working with the Law Department to finalize that ordinance and hope that the Department will consider extending free licenses to those who utilize companion animals. We have also continued to monitor the City's response to a complaint received about accessibility of sidewalks relating to a church located on John Street.

Snow removal continues to be of interest to the members of the Commission on Disability. We had previously encouraged the members of City Council to reconsider a moratorium that had been passed that failed to guarantee that all sidewalks in Worcester would be cleared following a snowfall. This year, the Commission continued to remind the public, both at meetings and through a letter to local papers, about the importance of snow and ice removal and about what to do if a property owner has failed to fulfill snow and ice removal obligations.

The Commission has continued its discussions about accessible parking in Worcester, most notably focusing on handicap placard violations. The Commission contacted the Department of Public Works and Parks to encourage ticketing those who violation accessible parking laws, and provided follow-up information about areas where violations appear to be particularly high.

In response to public inquiry, the Commission reviewed a proposed policy to deal with temporary events in the City of Worcester, and has forwarded that policy for consideration to the City Manager's office.

We were delighted to meet with Mayor Joseph M. Petty at our May 2012 meeting, at which we described some of our goals and shared concerns about accessibility and inclusion in the City of Worcester. We invite our City Councilors, and other members of City government, to attend our meetings.

Finally, following the departure of Fran Manocchio from the Office of Human Rights and Disabilities in January 2011, the Commission's Chair (in conjunction with the Chairs of the Human Rights Commission and the Status on Women Advisory Committee) contacted both City Manager Michael V. O'Brien and then Mayor Joseph C. O'Brien to encourage the City to refill that position as swiftly as possible. After the decision was made to re-staff that position on a part-time basis, the Commission's Chair participated in applicant interviews. The Commission is delighted to now be working with Jayna Turchek, Director, and commends Dawn Clark, Derek Brindisi, and Christina Andreoli for their hard work, willingness to provide support to the Commission, and dedication to disability and accessibility issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Shannon Brown

Chair, Worcester Commission on Disability

# COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Wednesday, June 13, 2012

4:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Tentative Meeting Space: Worcester Public Library, Banx Room

## DRAFT MEETING AGENDA

### **1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions**

### **2. Acceptance of May Minutes**

### **3. Communications and Reports: Chairperson and Staff**

#### **a. Chairperson**

i. Correspondence

ii. Future Meeting Space

iii. John Street Church

iv. Commission Activity Report

#### **b. Director of Human Rights and Disabilities**

i. Service Animal/Companion Animal Ordinance

ii. DCU Center

iii. Temporary Event Accessibility Policy

iv. Report on Meeting with Commissioner Moylan

v. Census Information

vi. Retrofitted Desk at City Hall for Clerk Use

### **4. Nominations of Officers**

### **5. Old Business and Updates**

a. Construction Project Wish List

b. AAB Updates

c. Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Management

- d. Discussion: Advisory and Executive Commissions
- e. Library Accessibility

## **6. Member Update and New Business**

## **7. Announcements and Adjournment**

## **8. Items for Future Discussion:**

- a. Friends of the Commission
- b. Transportation and TPAG
- c. Transition Plan Update
- d. Bullying Project