



City of Worcester
Department of Health and Human Services
Disabilities Division

James G. Gardiner, Acting Commissioner
Health and Human Services

Lawrence M. Raymond
Director, Disabilities

**City of Worcester
Commission on Disability**

Type of Meeting: Regular
Date and Time Convened: March 11, 2009
Place Where Convened: City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber,
Worcester, MA
Members Present: Rachel Brown, Dawn Clark, Grace Clark, John
Cronin, Jacqueline Norton
Associates Present: Jill Swerzenski
Members Absent: Joseph Sinasky
Staff Present: Michael Galvin, Larry Raymond
Public Present: Mike Kennedy, Owen Skoler

1. **Call to Order and Introductions.** Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.
2. **Acceptance of Minutes.** Motion to accept minutes for February meeting by Rachel Brown, seconded by John Cronin.
3. **Communications and Reports.**
 - a. **Chairperson's Report.**
 - i. Dawn discussed that on March 10, 2009, the City Clerk recommended that their office and the Commission on Disability should work together in identifying and drafting a list of private accessible meeting places. The Office on Disability is already in the process of floating around strategies in identifying suitable meeting places. This initiative is important as there are times when public meetings need to be held in private locations, some of which may not be accessible to people with disabilities. The Commission recommended we first use polling locations, as we need know those are accessible. In drafting the list of private accessible meeting places, it will also be important to be aware of public transportation schedules and where the drop-off sites are. In regards to the time expectation, the City Clerk would like to have this expedited. The Commission will likely have the list drafted and discussed at the May meeting.

- ii. The stimulus packaged was then discussed, specifically, over the 300 projects in Massachusetts that will have “blanket time variances” on stimulus-funded projects, and therefore will affect access for individuals with disabilities. Essentially, the Architectural Access Board (AAB) would give up its oversight powers in order to speed up approval of construction projects. It was recommended by the Commission that we send two letters, one to the Governor and the other to the City Manager of Worcester which outlines our intention to monitor applicable projects.

b. Director’s Report.

- i. The School Department’s ADA transition plan was then discussed. Larry noted that Stacey Dubois-Luster, the Human Resources Director and ADA coordinator of the Worcester School Department will attend the April meeting to discuss the plan. The Commission would specifically like to see the transition plans for the schools that are currently used as emergency shelters, such as Burncoat and Doherty High Schools.
- ii. The AutoMark machines were then discussed and it was recommended that the Commission send a letter to the Telegram & Gazette which commends the City of Worcester for using the AutoMark voting machines for local elections.

4. Transition Plan, Accessibility, and Access Board Issues.

a. Updates on City and School Dept. This was discussed in the Director’s Report.

b. Sidewalks, Curb Cuts, and Chirpers.

- i. **List of Chirper Locations.** No updates on when the list would be made available.
- ii. **Sidewalks.** The Department of Public Works recently had a public hearing in order to discuss how the allocation of funds per district in the City of Worcester to fix sidewalks. It was also discussed that the Commission has a fund of \$200,000 that could be used to repair the sidewalks and curb cuts and that we have been providing recommendations to the respective parties from concerned citizens. The Human Rights Housing Worker offered to distribute Office on Disability materials during her visits to community outreach centers as a reminder of our objectives.

c. HP Parking Fines. There was no report this month.

5. **Transportation and TPAG**

- a. **Buses and Para-transit.** Larry announced that he was not able to attend the last TPAG meeting; however, Dawn chaired the meeting. It was stated that the next meeting will be March 18, 2009. The Advisory Board will meet on March 19, 2009. As funding is very unstable at the moment, bus routes may be cancelled, which would therefore affect paratransit as well. Dawn wanted to know whether the Commission wanted to send a letter to the WRTA Advisory Board reiterating how important public transportation is to people with disabilities and that we request the WRTA Advisory Board to maintain at least the current level of paratransit. There was a unanimous decision to do so. During the conversation, Larry also mentioned that Worcester may see additional funding for transportation due to the stimulus package.
- b. **Taxicab Statistics.** There was no report for this month.

6. **Emergency Preparedness**

- a. **Local Registry.** Larry had discussions within his department in order to take the local registry to a more manageable level. An Emergency Medical Technician is also in the process of looking and possibly revising the list from the perspective of a first responder. Updates on this initiative will be forthcoming.
 - i. Larry also reminded the Commission that “Go Packs” will be distributed at the Worcester Public Library on April 1, 2009 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

7. **Old Business**

- a. **Federal Square Plaza Renovation.** No updates.
- b. **UMASS Valet Parking.** No updates, however, Rachel and Mike Kennedy are still waiting for additional correspondence from UMASS. A letter may be sent to UMASS in order to establish next steps.

8. **New Business.** No items were on the agenda.

9. **Announcements and Adjournment.**

- a. Mike Kennedy announced that his wheelchair basketball team, Bay State Clippers, won their most recent game with a record of 4-2.
- b. Motion to adjourn at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ms. Jill A. Swerzenski, Secretary