

Chairperson
Robert Bureau

Members
James Delage (A)
John Finn
Dee Karuna
Kate McGrath (A)
Joseph Prochilo
Stephen Stolberg



Vice Chairperson
Elizabeth Myska

City of Worcester
Accessibility Advisory Commission
Tuesday, September 17, 2024,
4:30pm
Worcester City Hall
455 Main Street, Worcester, MA

Virtual Meeting with ASL interpreters

Members present: Chair Robert Bureau, John Finn, Jr., Darya Karuna, Associate Kate McGrath, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo, Stephen Stolberg (arrive 4:41)

Members absent: Associate James Delage.

Staff present: Human Rights and Accessibility Director, Patricia M. LaFore, Esq., and Coordinator of Disability Rights Projects, Dawn E. Clark

Guests: None

1. Call to order, instructions for virtual meeting, introductions

Chair Bureau requested P. LaFore provide the technology instructions for public access to the meeting. A roll call was taken to start the meeting at 4:32 pm. The following answered present; Robert Bureau, John Finn, Jr., Darya Karuna, Kate McGrath, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo, Stephen Stolberg.

2. Approval of July 18, 2024 minutes-

Comm. Prochilo made a motion approve.

Comm. Karuna seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote/yes/unanimous

3. Discussion on recruiting new members for the AAC

Suggestions included:

Contact College Disability Service Offices particularly Quinsiquamond

Contact WPS Transition Program

Need AAC Brochure

Prepare sheet saying why participate and list previous activities – Commissioners were asked to identify activities

Table at community events

Need as many types of disabilities on the agenda as possible

4. AAC Elections- this is a holdover item that shall be carried on the agenda for several months going forward

No Action taken

5. Debrief /discussion about Thursday 7/25/24 Downtown BID Tabling Event (various Commissioners)

Needed a sign or other to identify the table -Comm. Karuna subsequently bought a cloth with AAC on it

Many people came to table wondering what it was

Good event – people came – Table was grouped with other disability services

Had Borad and Commission vacancy list - Needed information about AAC – Commission needs a Brag” Sheet

Comm. ordered AAC identified tablecloth

Lots of youth took information/needed sign up sheet to follow up.

6. Debrief August 4, 2024 Polar Park Blind Awareness Day. (Comm. Myska)

Visually Impaired services providers asked Polar Park to have a Blind Awareness Day on August 4th.to enjoy a ball game for blind youth and other Visually Impaired people (VIP). Eye Audio Radio provides audio description which explains what is happening on the field that others see.

There was a tabling event featuring the Programs that assist the Visually Impaired People. The tables were off to the side where people did not see them. The accessibility issues at Polar Park continue.

The locale Beep Baseball Team was also present. Beep basketball is people who are Bind or blindfolded play basketball.

The hope was to have an announcement on the Jumbotron which identifies the day and gives the sense this is an official day. This did not happen. The provider group hope this will be an annual event like the Deaf Day.

In conclusion, t the annual accessibility review at Polar Park, the AAC may want

to talk with George Lorin about hosting a Blind Awareness Day.

Question: Is this an annual event?

Response: this is the first year and was for the most part funded by The Memorial Foundation for the Blind which was established in the early 1900s. To be used for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Central Massachusetts. This day was to introduce youth to baseball who have never been able to see. May the Commission would want to have an all-abilities day and work with Mass. Office on Disability.

7. Action taken for two requests for use of Union Station for their event that were not disability related

The office received two requests for the use of Union Station Grand Hall. One came thru email wanting to hold a baby shower for military related families. The other was requested via a phone call. AAC leadership was consulted and agreed neither request meet the requirement for free use of the hall. Staff checked with Public Facilities Dept. to clarify and was told the restaurant in Union Station had responsibility for booking the hall.

8. Review of AAB notices and applications –

Variance

- 501 Shrewsbury Street

Notice of Action

- 51 Gage Street (2)
- 501 Shrewsbury Street

Decision

- 2 Ionic Avenue

No action taken.

9. Update on hiring process for Chief Equity Officer and EODEI Program Coordinator

Applications have been received and are in the review process for both positions. Those meeting the qualifications for the EODEI Coordinator are slim. The Human Rights and Accessibility Program Coordinator is posted. Commission asked if applicants had ADA experience. A discussion ensued about

the need for accessibility experience.

10. **Suggestions for future agenda items-**
Request for sidewalk on Clark Street

11. **Announcements**

***Next Accessibility Advisory Commission meeting: Tuesday, October 15, 2024.**

***WRTA Transportation Advisory Planning Group – Wednesday, September 25, 2024 – 1-2:30pm 25, 2024 - 1 -2:30pm**

***Emergency Preparedness Tip: Click here for a list of items and other helpful tips: <https://www.ready.gov/>**

Adjournment:

Comm. Bureau made a motion to adjourn @ 5:34 pm

Comm. Prochilo seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote/all/yes/unanimous.

Items relied upon for this meeting-

-Agenda

Use of Union Station for Disability Funding Events