

MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
January 11, 2010

MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Cafeteria

PRESENT: Rob Caruso (Co-Chair), Girard Plante (Co-Chair), Jane Brown, Lucie Chansky, Jini Fairley, Rosemary Larking, Barbara Lischinsky and Heather Platt

REGRETS: Jeff Hutter, and Jason Rosenberg

STAFF: Beverly Droz (Human & Vol. Services), Kathleen Cahill (Planning & Dev.)

GUESTS: Sue Abele and Cindy Stone from the Newton History Museum & Jackson Homestead; Carol Schein and Stephanie Pelkowsky from the Department of Parks & Recreation

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The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm and chaired by both Girard and Rob.

We reviewed the agenda of the 13 presentations before us this evening and welcomed the presenters. All information was provided ahead of time to MCPD by computer links.

Kathleen reminded MCPD that we have 21 total proposals. Each presentation will be heard and the rank profile will be considered according to the FY11-FY15 Consolidated Plan Access Priorities. A preliminary ranking form will be used. The remainder of the presentations will be heard on January 25. We will use a preliminary ranking form that evening as well. Then we will go through a process of ranking our priorities and making recommendations.

1 Historic Newton Archives Preservation and Access Project

Applicant: Historic Newton/The Jackson Homestead

Susan Abele described the project, which involves the rehabilitation and expansion of the museum's archival storage area. Rehabilitation will include insulation to improve climate control and installation of a fire suppression system. The relocation of the HVAC units will provide maximization of space for compact shelving as well as provide the opportunity to create a new, universal entrance (with either a ramp or a path) to the historic Jackson Homestead. Cindy Stone noted they will approach the Historic Commission and the Access Board for their feedback, but due to the fact that this is a historic building, the goal is to keep it that way. Girard noted that a pathway works as well as a ramp, requires less financial upkeep and it may also suit the historical needs better. The cost for the entrance is expected to be about \$100,000. They will be seeking other funds from CPA and other sources. Kathleen stated that the vote for our funding will be contingent on CPA funding.

CDBG funds requested are \$40,000 for FY11.

2 Burr Park Accessibility

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

Stephanie Pelkowsky presented the project and noted that the park covers area from Park Street to Waverly Avenue to Arlington Street. The project entails the second of a two phase proposal to make the park accessible from Park Street to Waverly Avenue. Phase Two is to consist of a new turn about for drop off purposes, three parking spaces and creating an accessible walk in entrance from Waverly Avenue leading to the playground equipment and attaching to the accessible areas of Phase One.

CDBG funds requested are \$50,000 for FY13.

3 Burr Park Stair(s) Handrails

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

Carol Schein presented the proposal for stair(s) and handrails. The Planning Department notified Parks & Recreation that the existing handrails, which were installed years ago at the stairs located at Arlington Street, and the two sets of stairs at Park Street, are non-compliant and need to be replaced to meet compliance requirements. The cost to replace all of the rails is expected to be about \$5,000.

CDBG funds requested are \$5,000 for FY11.

4 Farlow Tot Lot

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

Stephanie Pelkowsky summarized the project, which includes the installation of rubberized surfacing to replace the manufactured wood fiber to key areas on the play structures for accessibility. The current use of manufactured wood carpet is no longer acceptable for wheelchair and other accessible uses. It was noted that the \$75,000 for this playground was raised by the community, and built by volunteers in conjunction with Parks & Recreation on an old site between the Newton Corner Library and the Eliot Church. The park was dedicated to a little neighborhood boy who died and loved fire trucks; so it has that theme. Stephanie noted that rubberized surface costs approximately \$23 per foot.

CDBG funds requested are \$5,000 for FY11.

5 River Street Accessible Route

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

Stephanie Pelkowsky presented the project which proposes to replace 620 square feet of manufactured wood fiber safety surfacing with rubberized pure in place for accessibility to the swings. The wood fiber surfacing has been found to be unacceptable for accessibility use. She described a blueprint showing the park which is considered a “pocket” playground in West Newton. It used CDGB funds in 2003.

CDBG funds requested are \$12,500 for FY11.

6 Newton Centre Playground Pathway Phase IV

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

Carol Schein presented the project summary. It was noted that Frederick Law Olmstead was the designer and his plan included a network of pathways to make it accessible. The MCPD has funded various parts of the playground in the past. In the coming spring, an accessible path will be built from Bowen Street. The proposed segment will be constructed of asphalt to provide an accessible route across a lawn area where there is currently no paved route. The project also includes redoing a part of the paved walkway in front of the tennis courts to provide access to the courts and the new HC accessible bubbler.

CDBG funds requested are \$40,000 for FY11.

7 Newton Centre Playground Pathway Phase V

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

Carol Schein summarized the proposed project, which includes an asphalt segment providing accessibility from the entrance to the tennis courts/HC bubbler, easterly to Centre Street. This will enable a user to travel the entire route from Centre Street to Mason-Rice School and back.

CDBG funds requested are \$50,000 for FY13.

8 Newton Centre Playground Pathway Phase VI

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

Carol Schein described the project, a continuation of the Centre Playground Accessibility Plan. This portion of the improvement consists of an asphalt-constructed route providing accessibility from the Homer Street entrance to the Little League field bleacher area. In order to make this major and well-used entrance accessible, it will require a good deal of fill to appropriately raise the grade.

CDBG funds requested are \$50,000 for FY14.

9 Newton Centre Playground Pathway Phase VII

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

Carol Schein presented Phase VII of the Newton Centre Playground Pathway project. This is the final proposed segment and includes an accessible route, constructed of asphalt to provide access from the Little League bleacher area to the Universal Play Area. This segment will hook the Homer Street entrance to the overall pathway network. With the completion of this project, one or two HP accessible spaces could be added to Homer Street.

CDBG funds requested are \$40,000 for FY15.

10 Cabot Park Master Access Plan

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

Carol Schein stated that Cabot Park is a large well used park, over 11 acres in size. There are no pathways that connect any of the facilities nor is there any HP accessible parking. The park has a small field house, regulation baseball field, softball field, Little League field with bleachers, soccer/football field, 2 bocce courts, 2 tennis courts, a basketball court with bleachers, a fenced tot lot, 2 swing areas and a school-age structure. To date, money has been invested in the tot lot and Little League field, but the basketball and tennis courts are in need of repair. Carol noted there is no sidewalk on the Cabot Street side of the park, nor on the Eastside Parkway side, and that is considered a “fast” street.

The intent of this project is to take a big picture look at the park and facilities, hold 3 public hearings, and develop and draft a final plan for access that would remove the barriers to the park’s facilities. Included in this proposal is to retain a professional licensed surveyor to do a topographical survey of the park and hire a landscape architect for master planning services. Because the park is not a historic site, it does not qualify for historic funding.

CDBG funds requested are \$42,000 for FY12.

11 Cabot Park Access, Phase I

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

Carol Schein proposed this phase of the Cabot Park Access, assuming that the Cabot Park Master Access Plan is completed. This phase will involve incorporating access to the HC bubbler alongside the basketball and tennis courts, to be installed in spring 2010. This phase was not presented in detail given that the scope is likely to change.

CDBG funds requested are \$40,000 for FY13.

12 Cabot Park Access, Phase II

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

The scope of this project was not presented in detail due to the undeveloped scope of this phase of the project, but involves furthering the accessibility of the park as done similarly in other parks.

CDBG funds requested are \$40,000 for FY14.

13 Cabot Park Access, Phase III

Applicant: Parks & Recreation

The scope of this project was not presented in detail, due to the undeveloped scope of this phase of the project, but involves furthering the accessibility of the park as done similarly in other parks.

CDBG funds requested are \$40,000 for FY15.

In conclusion, Carol Schein noted the Cabot Park Master Access Plan is the major first step. Then it will go through the appropriate steps and phases to meet the master plan.

The MCPD thanked the presenters for their time.

DISCUSSION

After the presenters left, the Committee took time for discussion and the ranking procedure.

Heather brought up her frustration that the City doesn't have an Open Space Plan and therefore is not qualifying for other funding such as the state's urban self-help grants. Other MCPD members share her frustration. Heather stated that she could think of other ideas for the improvement of Newton Centre Park. Jini stated that there is no access from Centre Street to this large park, so she thinks that issue deserves a higher priority.

Each member was given time to individually rank their priorities on the projects that were presented. We review the list of CDBG Access Applications by Fiscal Year and the total CDBG access funds requested for each year from 2011 through 2015. We reviewed project ranking considerations including:

- ✓ Is the application consistent with the needs and priorities identified in the proposed FY11-FY15 Consolidated Plan?
- ✓ Does the proposed application demonstrate an unmet need?
- ✓ Is the ration of the number of person who will directly benefit from the project to the proposed cost of the project low, medium, high?

We reviewed our 4 major Consolidate Plan Access Priorities, including:

1. Public Thoroughfare Improvements
2. Public Buildings Improvements
3. Parks & Recreational Facilities Improvements
4. Non-Profit Agency Improvements

Members then shared their individual priorities per project. Bev took notes and will make this information into a ranking score tally. We briefly reviewed the plan for the January 25 meeting.

MINUTES

Lucie made a motion to accept the December 14, 2009 minutes, which was seconded by Rosemary and the **minutes were approved.**

NEW / OLD BUSINESS

Handicapped Parking

Bev described the handicapped parking application for a HP space in front of 30 Circuit Avenue, a residential home owned by seniors. Bev had previously emailed details out to the MCPD. Lucie had made a site visit and reported her findings by email to Bev. Bev summarized this to the

Committee. The driveway is very steep and narrow and there is no room to exit from their HP van. There are woods across the street and it would not inconvenience the flow of traffic. Lucie stated that she believes the space is warranted. A motion was made and passed that the MCPD recommends the HP street space at 30 Circuit Ave be designated and that the occupants be allowed to park overnight year-round.

Snow Committee

Rosemary stated that she found sidewalk snow plowing to have been much better during the last storm. Bev reported on the coalition working on the issues regarding sidewalk snow removal. The Board of Aldermen meeting took place on January 6, 2010 and Girard and Nancy Jodoin attended. The Aldermen did move the issue to committee. Alderman Danberg is now the chair of the Aldermen snow sub-committee. Danberg is taking a pro-active role and met with coalition members this morning. Terry Yoffie, the president of the League of Women Voters, will have Girard and Nancy on her New TV program talking about this issue. The coalition group is also pursuing letters to the editor and other educational and advocacy outreach as well. Bev is on this coalition and will keep MCPD posted.

A motion passed to adjourn at 8:35 pm.

Note:

***We have another meeting January 25, 2010 to continue hearing the presentations.
The next regularly scheduled meeting is February 8, 2010.***