

**MAYOR’S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
MARCH 16, 2009**

**MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Cafeteria**

**PRESENT:** Jane Brown, Lucie Chansky, Rob Caruso (Co-Chair), Jini Fairley, Rosemary Larking, Heather Platt, Girard Plante,  
**REGRETS:** Barbara Lischinsky, Jason Rosenberg  
**STAFF:** Beverly Droz (Human & Vol. Services) Kathleen Cahill (Planning & Dev.)  
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The meeting was called to order at 6:40pm and chaired by Rob Caruso.

**A motion** was made by Lucie and seconded by Heather to accept the resignation of Douglas Sweet, with appreciation for all he has done for MCPD over the years, and the motion passed unanimously.

**A motion** was made by Lucie and seconded by Jane to nominate Girard Plante as Co-Chair and the motion passed unanimously.

There was brief discussion of members missing meetings, and how many meetings they can miss before they are no longer part of the Committee. Our adopted Statement of Mission and Organizational Structure has a paragraph which states:

The Nominating Committee shall periodically review the active participation of its membership. Members who have attended fewer than four monthly MCPD meetings over any twelve month period shall be contacted by one of the MCPD co-chairs or other person designated by the Co-chairs regarding their interest in continuing as members. Members whose attendance continues to fall below that level for a second year shall be asked by the MCPD Co-chairs to tender a letter of resignation.

**MINUTES**

**A motion** was made by Rosemary and seconded by Jane to accept the minutes from the February 23 meeting and the motion passed unanimously. Bev thanked Kathleen for taking the minutes in Bev’s absence.

**Consolidation Plan – Kathleen Cahill**

The Consolidated Plan is a five-year plan that establishes priorities for the expenditure of CDBG funds. The last Consolidated Plan covers FY06-FY10 and the Planning Department has begun the process for the next Consolidated Plan which will cover FY11-FY15. As part of this process access needs are evaluated and priorities (including projects) are established based on these needs. During the last needs assessment, Lowell Haynes organized 3 public meetings, held in April, May, and June scheduled during the regular MCPD meetings. The Departments of Public Works (DPW), Parks and Recreation and Public Buildings are typically invited to these meetings. Each department provides a perspective on what they see as the access needs in the City . The public is also invited to participate in these meetings.

The members discussed whether to invite all 3 departments to one meeting, or include two departments in one meeting and the remaining department at the other meeting. The public will be invited to submit comments in writing if they are unable to attend the meetings. The decision

was made that the Committee would have a public meeting to evaluate access needs on 4.22.09 and 5.18.09. June would be a “wrap-up” meeting for the Committee to prioritize the needs that resulted from the April and May meetings. If there was an overwhelming response to the April and May meetings the MCPD’s June meeting may be added as an extra public meeting. Access needs need to be prioritized by the end of June.

### **MCPD Possible Meeting Date Changes**

Rob brought up the overall idea of changing our meeting to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday vs. the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday. Members agreed they prefer it on a Monday, not another day. However, Lucie brought up that the Human Services Advisory Council meets on a Monday.

**A motion** was made by Rosemary and seconded by Jane to move the MCPD meetings to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month, starting 7/09 - depending on cafeteria availability. The motion passed. Bev will research the availability of the cafeteria and report back.

### **CDBG ACCESS PROJECTS REPORT**

This report was submitted to MCPD by email before this meeting for their review. Per usual it is copied here within the minutes. K. Cahill presented the report. Comments are noted after each project.

**Accessible Pedestrian Signals** (Project CD0703C. Expended, \$7,818; Budget balance: \$11,995). The installation of APS-10 audible pedestrian signals at the intersections of Walnut and Cabot and Beacon and Chestnut, Commonwealth Avenue by St. Ignatius and Beacon and Hammond St. near McElroy Commons was completed in November. Centre St. and Centre Ave. is a priority intersection; however that is on-hold until pending a final decision by the Newton Corner Advisory Committee on VHB conceptual plans. Washington St. and Commonwealth Ave. is another priority intersection. A list of improvements funded with traffic mitigation funds have not be released. Other priority locations submitted to traffic engineering include: Washington and Beacon as well as Washington Street by Newton-Wellesley Hospital. The City’s contract with Republic ITS is currently expired and awaiting renewal.  
*-The following was discussed: Polara w/audible countdown would cost \$750 each uninstalled. Priority locations for these types of audible signals need to be established. Clint is proposing changing the intersection at **Centre and Beacon St.** from mutually exclusive to concurrent. This means that instead of pedestrian buttons triggering all traffic to stop only traffic on Centre or Beacon would stop, depending on which pedestrian button was activated. Clint was invited to the meeting tonight but at the last minute and he was unable to attend. Heather weighed in on the change at Centre and Beacon. She believes that without changing traffic hardware at the intersection a switch from mutually exclusive to concurrent would be dangerous for visually impaired people. Heather suggested that Watertown Square is looked at as a model. This is a busy intersection that has safely implemented concurrent crossing.*

*Lucie suggested the Committee sends an email to Clint to meet at the intersection with Heather, a Carroll School student and Kathleen Cahill before the April meeting and before he moves forward with the changes. Bev will email Clint.*

*Lucie asked if stimulus money can be used to make this intersection safer within the context of Clint’s proposed changes. Kathleen said it is possible, however the money must be expended quickly and so stimulus funds will only be allocated to “shovel ready” projects. The Planning Department’s project recommendations must get the Mayor’s blessing before projects are finalized.*

Rosemary asked what the policy is for replacing inaccessible pedestrian buttons. Kathleen received an email from Clint who responded to this question by indicating that DPW is replacing these buttons over time but would appreciate any help with additional CDBG funds. The cost of the buttons is \$60 each.

**Norumbega Gardens** (Project CD0903B. Expended: \$28,475 Budget balance, \$28,165). Project includes accessible improvements to interior pathways in the Norumbega Garden Apartments, a complex operated by the Housing Authority. Work began September 16, 2008, 100% complete (on time--November 1<sup>st</sup>). A total of \$19,214 will be requested for curb cuts.

*-The following was discussed:*

*Girard reported that a crew from DPW dug up parts of the new sidewalks while looking for a water main, therefore parts of the recent CDBG project work needs to be redone. The additional work will not require additional CDBG project funds.*

**Charlesbank Playground** (Project CD0903C. Expended: \$0 Budget balance, \$30,000). Project includes the installation of a ramped concrete walkway with metal handrails, designed to complement new play equipment, benches, and picnic tables and allow access through the park.

**Curb Cuts** (Project CD0903G, Expended \$58,689 Budget balance, \$27,400). Funds were used to complete the following curb cuts: Auburn and Washington (4/widening of island) Mason-Rice (6), Temple and Myrtle (2), JFK Circle (2). Committee earmarked remaining funds for curb cuts on Everett and Gibbs and Sumner and Gibbs in Newton Centre. Construction on these curb cuts will begin in the spring.

**Retrofitting Curb Cuts** (Project CD0903E, Budget balance, \$6,000). A list of 7 locations (Homer Street, Beacon St. @ Dalton, Centre Green @ Langley, 1188 Centre Green, 82 Lincoln Street, 100 Walnut Street, 28 Commonwealth St) (19 curb cuts) have been identified by committee members and staff. Work will take place during the spring construction season.

**FY09 Funds** (Project CD0903A. \$15,045) – *This project represents funds available for project(s) to be determined.*

*-The following was discussed: These funds will be transferred to FY09 Curb Cuts. The Committee has already established a list of priority curb cuts for these funds.*

### **Annual CDBG week 4/13/2009**

National Community Development Week will be celebrated the week of April 13. In celebration of the week there will be a photo display in the City Hall rotunda, and brief show on New TV. On Monday, April 13, members are invited to a ribbon cutting event at Coletti-Magni Park from 4:30 to 6:30pm. The program begins at 5:30pm with speakers Mayor Cohen and Congressman Barney Frank.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Lucie reported that she read that the state is repairing Nonantum Road. It has dangerous road conditions and intersections. Part of it is in Newton. We should find out what the plan is.

### **Snow Removal:**

- Rob handed out memo from Aldermen Scott Lennon, Bill Brandel and Vicki Danberg with a summary of information and answers to frequently asked questions about the original

docket item language, the points of discussion, the objectives, an initial strategy, the short term and long term goals, and areas of concern.

- Who wants to serve on our MCPD Snow Committee? Rosemary, Jane, Rob, Girard, and Heather stated they would. Our snow committee will sit with these Aldermen and have input into this vital matter.
- We understood that one priority was to remove snow from business districts. Lennon said he was told there was no money for this.
- Lucie suggested that stimulus money could go for more sidewalk plows.

**Johnny's Luncheonette:**

Bev reported a letter was sent to AAB with attachment regarding the entrance. Kathleen visited and took measurements. It is within compliance. Rosemary is still concerned. Girard explained how he turns his chair at an angle to fit at the table. Kathleen clarified that the front area is an accessible version of the counter – a triangle area for 1. In the back area, they can pull 2 tables together when it is needed. David Norton from Inspectional Services Department can be contacted directly and he can go out and examine such situations.

**Other Notes:**

Lucie reported that door openers do not always work at:

- Shing Yee, West Newton - 1255 Washington St
- Rice Valley, Newtonville – Washington St
- The Education Center, Newtonville – 100 Walnut St

**Committee vs. Commission:**

Bev reported that she and her boss David Naparstek had met in February with Sandy Pooler, the Mayor's Chief Administrative Officer. He requested that they each research some information. Bev contacted Mass. Office on Disabilities but they had the wrong contact information for the Waltham Handicap Commission and it took a while to find out the appropriate contact. Bev has been playing phone tag with him and needs to connect to learn more about how they handle the collection of handicap parking fines.

There was a motion to adjourn at 8:30 pm.

**The next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 22, 2009 at 6:30pm in the cafeteria.**

(Note the date change due to the 4/20/09 holiday.)

Respectfully submitted by Bev Droz