

**MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**  
**March 17, 2008**

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

**PRESENT:** Doug Sweet (Co-Chair), Jane Brown, Rob Caruso, Lucie Chansky, Jini Fairley, Linda Hiller, Jeff Hutter, Rosemary Larking, Barbara Lischinsky, Girard Plante, Jason Rosenberg, Janna Zwerner (Co-Chair)  
**REGRETS:** Heather Platt  
**STAFF:** Beverly Droz, Amy Yuhasz  
**GUESTS:** Nick Parnell, Public Buildings Commissioner; Rob Juusola from Turner Construction

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The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm. This meeting was chaired by Janna.

**A motion for the minutes of the 2/20/08 meeting was made and accepted.**

It was noted that we received a letter of resignation from Herb Cole. Herb has given 12 years of service to the MCPD. Linda Hiller stated that she was moving to Hingham and will also have to resign. We briefly discussed acknowledging both of them at a future meeting. We will miss them very much.

**Walgreen's /Newton Centre**

Rob reported that Walgreen's in Newton Centre has 78 parking spaces, which mandates that they have 4 HP spaces. Upon each visit, he has seen a truck parked over some of the HP space. Rob met with the store manager, Joe Roberts, who was not aware of the parking situation but said he will look into it. He and Rob went outside to review the situation. There are not enough spaces, they have to follow the regulations of the slopes and have enough area for striping. The manager will go up chain of command to pursue it.

Rosemary mentioned that she's had problems with store associates not assisting her. Jason said it depends on the corporation educating the employees. Some store chains, such as Walmart, CVS and Target seem to be very helpful to people with disabilities, while others are not.

Janna suggested we wait 30 days to see what has transpired. Rob will write a visit acknowledgement letter.

**Statement of Mission and Organizational Structure:**

The Committee reviewed the Statement of Mission and Organizational Structure document (3<sup>rd</sup> draft, dated 2/21/08) and made some wording changes. Members were concerned with having 2 Co-chairs. Several members expressed concern with having Co-chairs. Lucy reminded the Committee that they had voted on having co-chairs.

Bev reminded the Committee that this structure document allows for the MCPD to have Co-chairs or a Chair and Vice-Chair, and members are free to vote as a group at a meeting on which structure they prefer. She reminded them this is to serve as a policy guidance document while we still are operating as a Committee.

**A motion to approve was made by Jason, seconded by Rosemary and approved unanimously.**

**PRESENTATION: Newton North High School**

Nick Parnell from the Buildings Department and Rob Juusola from Turner Construction presented further information about accessibility issues and plans at the Newton North High School. They showed the proposed layout of new school and reviewed accessible sites proposed for the high school including several accessible sites at Ceremonial Drive and Elm Road and other points. They then noted that the staircase on Hull Street goes up 15 feet and hence, they would need 180 to 200 linear feet for a ramp in that area and said it would produce a skate boarding opportunity.

They presented the two possible ramp options for the Hull Street side including (a) three long “V” shaped ramps going back and forth, and (b) one long large “V” ramp option. They are requesting a waiver from the AAB to keep the stairs but not have the ramp. They showed that along Hull Street is a mature growth of trees which serves as an important neighborhood buffer and that the “V” ramp options would greatly cut into this vegetation.

There is a gate off of Hull Street to the tennis court. They want to designate a handicap drop-off at that gate area. There are 5 residences on the corner of the property on Walnut Street as it bends around into Hull Street. They propose an accessible walkway starting at this entrance point (the gate will be gone). The distance is about 150 feet up to the building.

Jason requested that they look at HP spaces near by. In the Ceremonial Drive there will be 8-12 spaces. The school will be much closer to Walnut Street. There will be 4 elevators. The design is much more user friendly. The majority of the school is on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The School is expected to open in 2010.

The MCPD requested that, if they are granted a variance, they would include handicapped parking and appropriate signage in the area of the Hull Street entrance to the tennis courts, since that would be designated as a handicap drop-off area. Nick Parnell agreed.

**A motion made by Jason in favor of a waiver to forgo the V ramp options, and have handicapped parking and appropriate signage at the Hull Street designated drop-off area was seconded by Rob and passed unanimously.**

The Committee thanked Nick Parnell and Robert Juusola for their presentation and also for their initial presentation at the 12/17/07 meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS continued**

**Commission Status Discussion** - It was tabled until next meeting.

**AAB Training in March**

Janna, Doug, Rob, Girard and Bev attended the training co-sponsored by the Inspectional Services Department and MCPD held March 3 at the library auditorium. The event was well attended by representatives from Newton departments and some from other towns and cities. Tom Hopkins presented and it was an excellent presentation: “Who is responsible for interpretation and enforcement?”

Afterwards, Janna spoke with John Lojek about doing a Housing Training in a more joint way and that the MCPD would help to promote the event. Janna also spoke to Tom Hopkins about 2 housing trainings: one to be more technical in nature and one more geared towards advocates.

Doug had attended the Fair Housing Task Force meeting with Bev and reported that they discussed and were in favor of the 2 trainings. Janna noted AAB and ISD have no jurisdiction for the ADA aspect of it and that Tom Hopkins would want to contact MOD.

**A motion to co-sponsor the 2 trainings was made by Jane, seconded by Rosemary and approved unanimously.**

### **CVS and STARBUCKS in Newton Centre:**

Rosemary said neither location shovels the snow at the curb cuts. Amy will have Lowell email his file to her about notifying businesses.

### **Letters to Businesses**

It was noted that we should standardize the letters according to the situation. Doug will look at some of his letters and make some templates.

### **St Petersburg Cafe:**

Jason reported that what is in front of the AAB was remanded down for further hearing. The landlord refused to do certain things. The tenant made some modifications. The AAB found that the access changes by the tenant triggered more access for the whole building. The landlord insisted that the tenant is responsible but the cost for what's involved will most likely put the Cafe out of business.

The AAB has scheduled a hearing with the idea that they want testimony from someone from MCPD. Jason reviewed past information that we've discussed at previous meetings - we want the tenant's entrances per the work they've done to be accessible. Although we want the whole building to be accessible, we don't agree that the burden should fall on one tenant. If they move out, that might trigger a review of the situation.

**A motion made to endorse Jason as the MCPD representative passed unanimously.**

### **Other items**

- ✓ Janna said she has seen no signage at the Newton Community Service Center's "Student Center" on Cherry Street to indicate where the accessible entrance is.
- ✓ Rob's proposal for changes to the AAB's 521 CMR should be sent to Tom Hopkins. Jason will look at it and send something out.

### **CDBG ACCESS PROJECTS REPORT for March by Amy**

This report was submitted to MCPD by email before this meeting for their review. Per usual it is copied here within the minutes. Comments are noted at the end of this report.

- Accessible Pedestrian Signals (Project CD0703C. Expended, \$25,015; Budget balance: \$19,813) – No change since last report, but a decision is needed regarding paying for installation. The Committee has requested the installation of APS-10 audible pedestrian signals at the intersections of Walnut and Cabot, Beacon and Chestnut, and Adams and Watertown. The total estimated hardware costs for these three intersections is \$4,200—based on a cost of \$350 per pedestrian button. We have requested that the Department of Public

Works pay the approximately \$1,200 for installation; however, they do not have the funds needed at this time. Centre St. and Centre Ave. is a fourth priority intersection. Our hope is to initiate separate and independent crossing signals for the two streets, straighten the crosswalk across Centre St., and place the vehicle stop line before the crosswalk. The intersection would be best served by Polara Navigator signals because of ambient sound control and beaconing capabilities. Washington St. and Commonwealth Ave. is a fifth priority intersection. National Development and Newton-Wellesley Hospital have agreed to contribute \$90,000 toward improvements at that intersection. The Board of Aldermen voted to seek design recommendations from a consultant. Because the Purchasing Department is requiring that the consultant contract be bid, nothing will be determined until early in 2008. We are hoping that the project will include accessible pedestrian signals, preferably Polara Navigator signals.

- Wellington Park Access (Project CD0303C. Expended, \$5,411; Budget balance, \$0) – *No change since last report; anticipate bench installation in April.* This project is a joint project using CDBG funds and Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. The CDBG portion of the project is complete, except for the installation of benches. *[See the following project.]* It consists of an asphalt walkway providing an accessible route from the park entrance on Kilburn Street, past the basketball and tennis courts, then to the park entrance on Princess Road. *The CPA portion of the work was delayed because of a disagreement among residents regarding the location and surface material of additional walkways in the park. We have been told that the matter has been settled and all walkways will be constructed with asphalt surfaces to enhance accessibility. (Expected Date of Completion: Spring 2008)*
- Benches (Project CD0403C. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$3,000) – *No change since last report; anticipate bench installation in April.* The current budget will be limited to installation of benches at Wellington Park when the construction of walkways in the park is completed. *(Expected Date of Completion: Spring 2008)*
- Curb Cuts (Project CD0803G. Expended, \$47,941; Budget Balance: \$134,887) – *No change since last report.* The Dept. of Public Works has finished its curb cut work until next spring. During the late summer and fall they completed 38 of the 62 curb cuts we had requested for installation. We've also recommended the removal of 10 poorly located and non-conforming curb cuts. Ironically, it was one week after construction ended when we finally received state approval to construct needed curb cuts at the intersection of Boylston St. and Hammond Pond Parkway. The approval process took a mere eight months. We are still expanding our list of curb cuts to be done in the 2008 construction season. Mayor's Committee members are encouraged to report priority locations for needed curb cuts. *(Expected Date of Completion: None. On-going work.)*
- Public Facilities and Parks Access (Project CD0703A. Expended, \$27,975; Budget balance, \$40,075, of which \$28,882 has yet to be committed.) – *No change since last report.* The first project that was completed under this budget was the construction of two sets of stairs and railings in Burr Park. The second project under this budget is the construction of the accessible walkway from the Mason-Rice School parking lot to the planned accessible play area within the Newton Centre Playground. The project is being managed by the Dept. of Parks and Recreation and carried out by the Dept. of Public Works. *Work has been completed on the section of the walkway from the school parking lot to the brook. The remaining portion of the walkway beyond the brook will be completed in 2008 following the installation of the new play area. There will be approximately \$28,882 remaining in this budget following the completion of the Newton Centre Playground walkway. We can assign these remaining funds to a public facilities or parks project at any time. There is a*

potential long-term request from the Dept. of Parks and Recreation for accessibility improvements at the Newton Highlands Playground and Upper Falls Playground. (EDC: none)

- FY08 Uncommitted Funds (Project CD0803A. Budget balance, \$61,470) – *This represents funds available for project(s) to be determined.* Because of the on-going need for accessible curb cuts, this budget is a logical source for applying to future curb cut construction, but other projects can be considered.
- FY09 Funds (Project CD0903A. \$123,485) – *This represents funds available for project(s) to be determined.*

## COMMENTS

### **APS-Audible Pedestrian Signals**

DPW does not have the money to pay for the hardware costs. Amy urges the Committee to pay the \$1200 for the hardware. Adams and Watertown has been done but it still needs to be paid for.

**A motion was made and approved to pay for the costs.**

### **Curb Cuts**

It was noted that Lowell had done a lot of work identifying curb cuts over the years. If Committee members know of other curb cuts needing attention, please now pass them along to Amy Yuhasz.

### **Public Facilities:**

It was noted that the Parks and Recreation Department may have to come before MPCD to present again. We have over \$61,000 in Fiscal Year 08. It was noted that we need to discuss this.

**There was a motion to adjourn at 8:55pm.**

**Due to the April 21 holiday, it was agreed that the next meeting will be Wednesday, April 23 at 6:30pm in the cafeteria. (Note: instead of Monday, April 28)**