

**MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
AUGUST 18, 2008**

MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Cafeteria

PRESENT: Jane Brown, Rob Caruso, Lucie Chansky, Rosemary Larking, Barbara Lischinsky, Girard Plante, Heather Platt, Jason Rosenberg, Doug Sweet (Co-Chair)
REGRETS: Jini Fairley, Jeff Hutter
STAFF: Beverly Droz (Human Services), Kathleen Cahill, Lowell Haynes, Amy Yuhasz (Planning & Development)
GUESTS: Mark Lewis

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The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm and chaired by Doug Sweet.

The minutes of the 7/14/08 meeting were approved with a note that Doug is Co-Chair, not Acting Chair.

There was brief mention of the status of members but Beverly reminded the Committee that they had voted to adopt the Statement of Mission and Organizational Structure and therefore there is just one category of membership.

CDBG Access Project Status Report – presented by Kathleen Cahill

This report was submitted to MCPD by email before this meeting for their review. Per usual it is copied here within the minutes. Additionally the prioritized list of potential curb cuts for FY09 Arch. Access CDBG Funds was emailed and presented as well. Discussion notes follow these reports.

Accessible Pedestrian Signals (Project CD0703C. Expended, \$25,015; Budget balance: \$17,135). The installation of APS-10 audible pedestrian signals at the intersections of Walnut and Cabot and Beacon and Chestnut have been completed (estimate was \$4,200). Centre St. and Centre Ave. is a third priority intersection; however that is on-hold until pending the completion of a pedestrian improvement study conducted by VHB. Washington St. and Commonwealth Ave. is a fourth priority intersection. VHB is currently doing the design work for this intersection. We are hoping that the project will include accessible pedestrian signals funded from traffic mitigation funds. A fifth priority location, Washington and Beacon was presented at the last committee meeting. Work on this intersection will be complete in August/September. Two additional locations, Commonwealth Avenue by St. Ignatius and Beacon and Hammond St. near McElroy Commons, will be presented for consideration at the August 18th, 2008 meeting.

Wellington Park Access (Project CD0303C. Expended, \$5,411; Budget balance, \$0) – **Benches were installed in August!** This project is a joint project using CDBG funds and Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. The project is complete. [See following project.]

Benches (Project CD0403C. Expended, \$2,334; Budget balance, \$0) **Benches were installed in August!** (Date of Completion: August 2008)

Curb Cuts (Project CD0803G. Expended, \$154,005; Budget Balance: \$0) – **Work on curb cuts is well underway.** (Expected Date of Completion: None. On-going work.)

Newton Centre Playground Walkway (Project CD0703A. Expended, \$18,807; Budget balance, \$11,193). The walkway is substantially complete; remaining portion to be complete by September.

Norumbega Gardens (Project CD0903B. Budget balance, \$56,640). Project includes accessible improvements to interior pathways in the Norumbega Garden Apartments, a complex operated by the Housing Authority.

Charlesbank Playground (Project CD0903C. Budget balance, \$30,000). Project includes the installation of a ramped concrete walkway with metal handrail, designed to complement new play equipment, benches, and picnic tables.

Coletti-Magni Park (Project CD0903D. Budget balance, \$30,000). Project includes installation of accessible sidewalks around the park's perimeter as well as an accessible ramp and drinking fountain.

FY09 Funds (Project CD0903A. \$89,232) – *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. The committee needs to vote to commit these funds at this meeting. Please see attached list of potential curb cuts identified by committee members, Newton residents, and staff.

POTENTIAL CURB CUTS/SIDEWALKS for FY09 ARCH. ACCESS CDBG FUNDS

Curb Cuts Requested by Newton Residents or Committee Members

***Lowell & Washington.** Total (4) curb cuts (cost estimate=\$30,000)

***Hammond Pond Parkway @ Boylston Street.** (2) curb cuts; (3) cut-throughs. Mass Highway approval received; Department of Conservation & Recreation approval needed (cost estimate=\$25,000).

Dalton & Everett. Total (6) curb cuts (cost estimate=\$30,000). (In Newton Centre)

Pleasant Street. Total (19) curb cuts: (4) Kenwood, Homer & Pleasant; (2) Pleasant & Strafford; (4) Pleasant, Chapin, and Park Lane; (2) Bracebridge & Pleasant; (4) Lake & Pleasant; (2) Crescent & Pleasant; (1) Pleasant & Tyler Terrace. (cost estimate=\$95,000) (In Newton Centre)

Sumner Street & Gibbs. Total (4) curb cuts (cost estimate=\$20,000)

Potential Curb Cuts Locations

***Washington & Walnut Street.** Total (4) curb cuts (cost estimate=\$20,000-\$30,000)

Henshaw Place & Henshaw Street & Kilburn Road. Construction of (3) curb cuts and reconstruction of (1) existing curb cut (cost estimate=\$20,000)

Jackson & Pearl Street. Reconstruction of (4) curb cuts and construction of (1) new curb cut (cost estimate=\$25,000) (Near Lincoln Eliot School)

Washington & Crafts. Reconstruction of (2-4) curb cuts and cut-out to straighten crosswalks (cost estimate=\$10,000 to \$20,000) (Near Whole Foods Market)

Vernon & Baldwin. Creation of (2) curb cuts by the Underwood School and sidewalk repair (cost estimate=\$8,000 to \$10,000).

Sidewalk Repair/Replacements requested by Newton Residents or Committee Members

Sumner (sidewalk in front of 148 Sumner; cost estimate=\$16,250 for 125 feet)

Homer Street (sidewalk along baseball field; cost estimate=\$6,500 for 50 feet)

Marshall (sidewalk along 44 Marshall St; cost estimate=\$13,000-\$16,250 for 100-125 feet)

Waban T Stop. Walkway to the bank, post office. (*Note: Kathleen is researching to see if it belongs to the MBTA. There is also tree encroachment.*)

* Represent recommended priority locations

DISCUSSION

Lowell reminded the Committee that if we want Audible Pedestrian Signals we have to pay for installation as the DPW budget is declining. It was noted the Newton Centre Playground Walkway is from Mason Rice School parking lot to the playground.

Kathleen reviewed the CDBG access project report. A recommendation for the allocation of CDBG access funds was not voted on at the July meeting because members wanted a list of prioritized curb cuts. Kathleen prepared the list with the estimated costs, for this meeting, and reviewed them with the Committee. Amy reported to the MCPD that Planning & Development Dept. (PDD) staff recently learned that the cost of curb cuts has doubled over the past year. In addition, staff submitted curb cut recommendations (based upon resident requests) to Steve Tocci (DPW) in June with funds remaining in the FY08 curb cut project. However, due to a large, unexpected bill submitted by DPW late in July, these requests used up more funds than expected.

Based on the inclusion of sidewalks in the list of prioritized curb cuts Doug expressed concern that sidewalk repair should be done by the City, not through CDBG funds. Girard stated that the Committee has voted on curb cuts in the past where sidewalks were involved. There was some discussion about sidewalks but it was noted that no sidewalks are included in the list of prioritized curb cuts.

Doug expressed great concern about the small amount (\$20k) left in the FY2009 budget. Lowell reiterated that both staff and committee members weren't prepared for DPW's increase in costs. This was an unforeseen and one-time happening. Although staff authorized DPW to complete the curb cuts the costs were much higher than expected. Doug argued that staff is not authorized to authorize the cuts and that when staff found out the costs had risen; they should have come to the MCPD. Amy explained staff did not receive the DPW bills until the end of July. Lowell stated that both staff and the Committee were given the opportunity to work with dedicated city crews and they have accomplished more curb cut work than ever. Doug stated we had not made a commitment for curb cuts at these prices.

Lucie made a motion to allocated 1/2 of the \$69k (approx. \$35K) to pay the DPW bill, since DPW did not inform the Committee of the rise of costs, and that DPW can pay the rest of the bill.

Discussion:

Lowell reminded the Committee that traditionally recommendations for the allocation of funds are made in advance of the construction season. The summer and fall is prime construction season and the DPW does good quality work. Jason reviewed the situation, stating that requesting that these items go out to bid will cost a lot more money and the Committee be cutting our relationship with the DPW. Amy reassured the Committee that arrangements had been made between PDD and DPW. In the future DPW will give the PDD monthly spreadsheets with precise cost estimates so that staff will know in advance and be able to report to the Committee.

The motion died for lack of being seconded.

Kathleen stated the \$69k, recommended by staff for curb cuts, would be allocated for the outstanding curb cut costs. Amy stated that the Committee needs to work out a plan to allocate FY10 funds starting in January. This year, PDD staff got out the word about funding to neighborhoods, non-profits and City departments in concert with the other CDBG advisory committees, and thus they received project ideas, such as Coletti-Magni Park, Charlesbank Park, Norumbega Gardens, etc. There were many funds to be allotted.

Lucie stated we need to prioritize projects so that as funds and costs escalate, we'll know which ones to move forward.

Kathleen requested the \$20k be allocated for curb cuts. There are prioritized curb cut projects on the list. Doug stated we should not allocate our last \$20k.

Discussion:

Lowell said the Committee always recommends a large percentage of its funds to curb cuts. Barbara suggested the retrofitting of curb cuts for people of limited vision.

Girard made a motion that we pay the outstanding bills and that staff comes back with suggestions of the numbers and locations of those in need. Lowell made an amendment to add \$6k for the priority of coloring curb cuts. Girard accepted the amendment.

There was further discussion. Amy reminded the Committee that they had recommendation allocation of funding for interior pathway repair at the Newton Housing Authority as well as approved two out of three Parks and Recreation accessible park improvements. She said that the request from the Newton Housing Development Foundation went through CDBG housing allocation fund and therefore did not come before the MCPD. Kathleen stated that PDD staff will move forward on retrofitting contrasting color on curb cuts, at a price of \$300 each, only with a “Memorandum of Understanding” between PDD and DPW.

Jason seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor with 1 opposed (Lucie). Therefore, the motion that we pay the bills outstanding and that staff comes back with suggestions of the numbers and locations of those in need, and that we add \$6k for the priority of coloring curb cuts – passed.

Amy added that Planning & Development sets aside money each year for contingency. If we go over \$75k, MCPD can ask for some of the contingency funds, but to be aware that other groups also request it. It follows a procedural issue.

Other Business:

- 1244 Boylston Street - FEDEX – Rosemary said that the curb cuts weren’t done right at this location on Route 9 and wondered if it were a state issue. Lowell said whenever it doesn’t meet the law, a complaint can be filed.
- Warren House – Rosemary moved into an adaptable unit and was told it would be made fully accessible but now NCDF is saying they can’t fix the various problems she’s listed such as the threshold, door, etc. She asked if Kathleen or Amy could look at it.

BOSTON COLLEGE

Kathleen introduced Mark Lewis from Boston College, the Project Architect. Mark handed out 2 sets of plans of proposed audible pedestrian crossings and described the locations and what is involved. St. Ignatius to the MBTA stop is about 75 feet across Commonwealth Ave. There are several sets of existing lights and it is quite confusing. He requests chirping APS be located there. He also described the Hammond and Beacon Street cross area near McElroy Commons. There is an island and College Road in this area as well.

Lowell noted that the Committee has previously considered these areas. Mark proposed that MCPD and Boston College share the costs. A total of 2 APS are needed at St. Ignatius, costing \$1,000 and a total of 4 APS are needed at Hammond & Beacon for a cost of \$2,000. The grand total is \$3,000 and Mark requested MCPD allocate \$1,500.

Rob made a motion to allocate \$1,500 for this project from our CDBG APS budget and Lucie seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mark thanked the Committee and we thanked him for his presentation and work.

Other Business:

- Resignation of Janna:

Lucie made a motion which Rosemary seconded to accept the resignation of Janna Zwerner with regrets and the motion passed.

- Electing a Co-Chair:

Bev requested that MCPD elect another Co-Chair. Doug expressed concern about having another Co-Chair at this point. It was noted that while we're still a Committee, we voted to have Co-Chairs and when we become a Commission, we will then determine leadership issues anew. Lucie asked to go through the process of a Nominating Committee to contact members to see who is interested. Bev had notified MCPD that Rosemary put forth her nomination and that Girard is willing to fill in when a Co-Chair is absent. Bev also noted that the Committee has an increased load of work to accomplish and it is difficult to get things done if there is one Co-Chair and that person is indisposed. Lucie said she would work on nominations and asked Rob to help her.

- Planning Board Meetings

Amy said the Planning Board meets the 1st Monday of the month at 7:30pm in Room 209. Whenever MCPD has a recommendation to the Board, a MCPD member should appear before them. Girard will attend on 9/8/08.

- Becoming a Commission

Doug will draft the letter to the Board of Aldermen about us becoming a Commission. Lucie will re-email the information to him that she previously sent out.

- Handicapped Parking in general

Bev had previously emailed members that HP requests now come from the Clerk's Office to her and she detailed the process for handling the requests. Lucie said we should have standard criteria to judge eligibility and there was a little discussion. Applicants should have HP plates or placard, or be using The Ride. There are not that many requests and we take them on a one by one basis.

- Handicapped Parking Request by Resident

Bev had previously emailed the information about the application and needs of Ms. Kimball at 26 Dale Street in Newtonville. Lucie and Rob have already visited the site.

Rosemary made a motion and Lucie seconded at MCPD recommend a HP drop off at the gate closest to Cabot Street to accommodate this request and the motion passed.

Bev will forward the recommendation to the Traffic Council.

- Walgreen's in Newton Centre

Rob reported that they've more than complied, and put in four handicapped parking spaces instead of 3, and also appropriately striped the areas. The MCPD will send a letter of appreciation – Doug will write it and get it to Bev to send.

There was a motion to adjourn at 9:00pm.

The next meeting will be on Monday, September 15 at 6:30pm in the cafeteria.

Respectfully submitted by Bev Droz