

MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

March 19, 2007

MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Cafeteria

- PRESENT:** Doug Sweet- Chair, Jane Brown, Lucie Chansky, Herb Cole, Jini Fairley, Rosemary Larking, Jason Rosenberg, Janna Zwerner
- REGRETS:** Rob Caruso, Linda Hiller, Barbara Lischinsky, Girard Plante
- STAFF:** Beverly Droz, Lowell Haynes
- GUESTS:** Jeff Hutter, Lana Miljkovic, Heather Platt (Carroll Center for the Blind), Donna Suskawicz (Zola Center at Brigham House)

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm and was chaired by Douglas Sweet, Acting Chairperson. The agenda was reviewed and introductions were made around the table. Guests were welcomed.

Snow Removal

Lowell said the snow plow drivers failed to do an acceptable job but in fairness these were icy storms, especially the one on 2/14/07. The city has prioritized sidewalk lists including school zones. Doug asked Lowell to ask Bob Rooney and Steve Tocci for a meeting. We'd like to clarify who has responsibility to plow curb cut ramps in villages. Lucie reported problems of plowing in the Austin St municipal parking lot.

Elevator disturbance David Olson came in the meeting at 6:50 pm to report that the elevator was not functioning and Jason was stuck outside. Several members went down to the elevator to see if they could help with the situation. Dick Corbett from the Buildings Department was called in to help with the elevator. Eventually members made their way into the building and to the meeting.

Emergency Planning Conference

During the absence of the members, Lucie gave a brief overview of an Emergency Planning Conference that MCPD members (Lucie, Linda, Barbara, Doug and Janna) attended on March 16 in Boston, co-sponsored by the Disability Law Center and the Mass. Office on Disability. Titled 'Lessons from Katrina and Emergency Preparedness on the Local Level', it featured Lois Simpson, Executive Director of the LA Protection and Advocacy Center. The conference goal was to help people with disabilities to learn about and become active in emergency planning on the local level. The Disability Policy Consortium handed out a Personal Emergency Preparedness Plan. Lucie gave an extra copy to Bev for the office files.

The meeting was re-called to order at 7:20pm.

Minutes of 2/12/07 were accepted .

Jason added to the Snow Removal Discussion that he was told by Bob Rooney that due to nature of the two storms the sidewalks were not well plowed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Café St. Petersburg (53-57 Union Street):

Jason heard from Asst. Chief Proia who had sent Lt. Rockey from the Fire Prevention division to look at the site. He did an inspection and informed the owner of what the requirements were for egress. He also brought the matter to the attention of Cities Code Task Force Committee so they could keep an eye on it.

Lowell described the general situation, that he had visited the site, as had Rosemary, and there were problems with accessible entry. Bev received a notice from the AAB that the case is being continued on 3/27/07. Jason paraphrased details from the AAB notice. He will take a copy and follow up. He reminded that there are two issues: what they have before AAB, and the egress issue. He'll follow up with the different players and report back.

Businesses ignoring access compliance:

Lowell had a call from Rob who reported that businesses in Nonantum were negligent about plowing. Rob has tipped over his wheelchair several times. Lowell has sent letters to the businesses that were signed by Jason about displayed merchandise being in the way of access. Jason's understanding is that the Police should find them in violation. But Jason and Doug requested Bev ask the Law Department, and find out who the Committee should notify.

Rosemary said there were problems at businesses in Newton Center. Jana said Trader Joe's Handicap parking space was recently full of snow. Lowell said as advocates we should take action and complain to the businesses. Complaints can be made to the Mass. Access Board. The Committee discussed various violations. Jason said once we've reasonably approached businesses and they still do not comply, then we should file reports as needed.

Citizen's Bank on Centre St.

Lowell is pursuing a curb cut for the HP spaces with them. He will find out about the electric door openers. Doug offered to assist if needed. Rosemary said there were problems with service at the low level teller booth. Jason suggested testing them.

NEW BUISNESS:

Crossing at Hammond Pond Parkway:

Lana Miljkovic was introduced. She has recently moved to Avalon Bay at Chestnut Hill. She described how she has to travel in her wheelchair to get to the bus stop. There are 2 needed curb cuts. This is the same situation for Jeff Hutter. It is a very dangerous situation. One curb cut goes into the street and then the second does not follow, leaving her stranded in the street. Lowell had visited the problem area and brought in a map he made. He took measurements of existing curb cuts. He asked John Daghljan to write the state for permission. Lowell will be making this a priority.

There is also the issue of the bus route. Lowell talked to David Koses about the bus stops. He had other complaints and is pursuing it with the MBTA. There was ongoing discussion about what the busses could and should do and can't do due to construction of the intersection.

Jason suggested we ask the Mayor to back the parallel course of pursuing the curb cuts and a change in the bus routes. Jini mentioned that when Avalon came before the Committee they said they would make these crosswalks. These curb cuts don't even have lights. Jason said we should find out what happened with the money that the City was supposed to get for improvements to the Avalon area.

Lana is currently leasing an adaptable apartment but Avalon Apartments has been slow to respond to her: they need to put in grab bars etc. They wanted a doctor's letter about her wheelchair situation and it takes them 15 days to install items.

Brigham Community House:

The Committee was emailed the price list for the Brigham Community House bathroom including labor, between \$1,640-1,840. Lowell said you can't put an automatic door opener on a bathroom that locks. Rosemary said she and Linda did not support many of the features because they felt they're not needed.

Donna Suskawicz, director of the Zola Center at BHC, said the BHC has been working, getting CPA money over the past 3 years. The BCH is constructing a whole new bathroom. She met with the architect, Russ Feldman in late February. Russ said none of these items are included in the CPA funds. Donna said the cost would be \$1-2,000.00, while the bathroom being built. If they wait and retrofit it, this would be more costly. Jason said it's frustrating that the current code hasn't caught up with these needed items which should be a part of it. Any brand new bathroom should include such items to be accessible and not just "up to code."

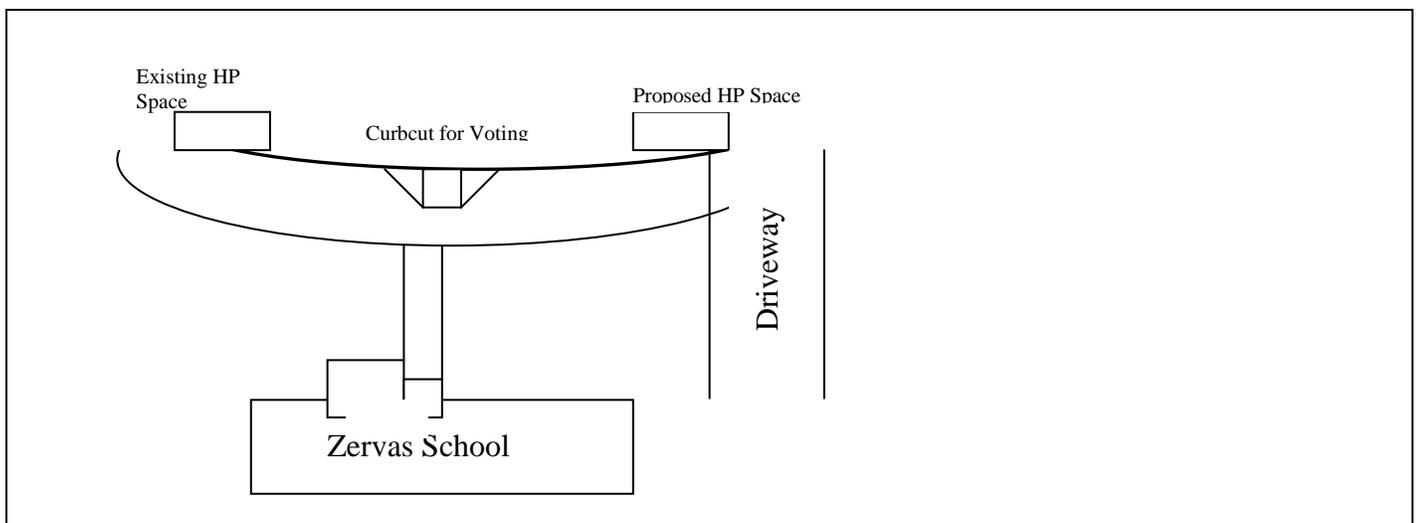
There were questions about the budget as to what they are planning on buying and then what is the cost differential. Lowell will talk to Russ and report back at the next meeting. He stated that we don't pay for maintenance once items are installed.

Donna reported that the Zola Center is celebrating its 1st anniversary at the Hyde Community Center on April 21st. They have various programs from support groups to specific programs and classes which she described.

HP Space on Beethoven Street:

Lowell handed out a map showing the blue zone in front of Zervas School. The curb cut is directly in front of the school. The Traffic Council wants to remove the HP space. They have a non-compliant ramp in the parking lot. There already is HP spaces in the parking lot.

Motion passed to ask the Traffic Council to move the HP space to the end of the blue zone.



CDBG ACCESS PROJECTS REPORT for March by Lowell

The report was sent to members by email ahead of the meeting. Lowell handed out hard copies of it but there was not time to discuss it. As per monthly practice, a copy of the emailed report is pasted below.

• Current Projects:

- Police Headquarters Annex Access Ramp (Project CD0203A. Expended, \$245,218; Budget balance, \$5,331; Building Dept. budget, \$66,600) – On our final inspection, we found two areas of work that need corrections. The railings need some minor corrections and the concrete surface of the ramp needs to be torn up and re-poured. There were a number of places on the surface of the ramp that exceeded the maximum slope allowance. *We have been told that the contractor is about to start work to correct the slope. (EDC: April 2007)*
- Accessible Pedestrian Signals (Projects CD0203B and CD0703C. Expended, \$25,015; Budget balance: \$14,386) – We have ordered the installation of APS-10 audible pedestrian signals at the

intersection of Walnut and Cabot Streets. We are communicating with the Traffic Engineer to improve the pedestrian crossing at Centre Street @ Centre Ave. in Newton Corner. *The City's signal company says the existing equipment is aging and cannot be corrected. Therefore, our plan is to order two sets of regular APS-10 pedestrian signals. (EDC: fall 2007).*

○ Wellington Park Access (Project CD0303C. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$10,000) – *No change since last report.* Our project is an asphalt walkway to provide an accessible route from the park entrance to some benches and to the basketball and tennis courts. DPW will do the work. The work has been delayed because of disagreement among residents regarding the location of additional walkways through the park that are to be funded by the City's CPA budget. The project will be completed in the spring. *(EDC: spring 2007)*

○ Ware's Cove Accessible Connector Path (Project CD0403A. Expended, \$8,562; Budget balance, \$10,178) – *No change since last report.* Construction is almost completed on the accessible path that begins at the field house, passes east of the children's play area, and connects with the accessible path that begins north of the playground and runs to the pump house on the way to Purgatory Cove. A few locations in the path need minor improvements and these will be made in the spring. *(EDC: May 2007)*

○ Benches (Project CD0403C. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$3,000) – *No change since last report.* The current budget will be limited to installation of benches at Wellington Park when our construction of walkways in the park is completed. *(EDC: summer 2007)*

○ Curb Cuts (Project CD0703D. Expended, \$37,482; Budget balance: \$106,747) – *No change since last report.* The Dept. of Public Works has ended its curb cut work for the summer on the designated sites between Parker Street and Newton South High School. In the spring, they will begin work on the next phase of this project, which includes 40 new curb cut locations. The majority of the new locations are on Woodland Road from Hancock Street to Windermere Road. *We are still expanding our list of curb cuts to be done in 2007. Mayor's Committee members are still encouraged to report priority locations for needed curb cuts. (Expected Date of Completion: None. On-going work.)*

○ School Administration Building Access Improvements (Project CD0603A. Expended, \$21,538; Budget balance, \$12,169) – *This project is now complete. The stairs leading from Walnut Street have a new set of railings.*

○ Public Facilities and Parks Access (Project CD0703A. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$67,293) – *No change since last report.* The Mayor's Committee has voted to include funds for increased accessibility in Newton parks in the current year plan. The one plan that has been presented and approved is for \$30,000 to construct an accessible route from the Mason-Rice School parking lot to the planned accessible play area within the Newton Centre Playground. The project will be managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation and carried out by the Department of Public Works. The second part of this project is the re-construction of two sets of stairs in Burr Park by the Department of Public Works and the installation of railings on all three sets of stairs in the park. The total estimated cost for this project is \$11,243. The work will be done in the spring. *(EDC: October 2007)*

○ **Projects near completion:**

Police Headquarters Annex accessible ramp and entrance,
Ware's Cove connector path,

The Committee was concerned about exiting the building safely given the elevator situation.

Motion to adjourn at 9 pm.

The next meeting will be April 23 at 6:30pm in the cafeteria.