



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Commission On Disability

Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath,
Director, Planning &
Development

Lara Kritzer
Director, Housing &
Community Development

Sharon Cullins
Planner
Community Development

Members

Ima Jonsdottir, Co-Chair
Jack Lovett, Co-Chair
Nyree Kibarian, Treasurer
Jane Brown
Lucie Chansky
Petr Chovanec
Nancy Kritzman
Sandra Lingley
Barbara Lischinsky
Matt Volpi

Jason Rosenberg
Chairman Emeritus

Advisor

Sergeant Michael B. Wade
Newton Police Department

Staff

Jini Fairley
ADA/Sec 504 Coordinator
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Minutes

Meeting Date: March 11, 2024

Room: Zoom

Time: 6:00PM

This meeting was a virtual meeting on Zoom, by phone or by computer/iPad:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84610100556?pwd=L2FuS2Rsemt1UDlNeGIHOEpndnJ6QT09>

Meeting ID: 846 1010 0556

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Commission Members Present:

Ima Jonsdottir, Co-Chair, participating remotely
Jack Lovett, Co-Chair, participating remotely
Nyree Kibarian, Treasurer, participating remotely
Jane Brown, participating remotely
Petr Chovanec, participating remotely
Nancy Kritzman, participating remotely
Sandra Lingley, participating remotely
Barbara Lischinsky, participating remotely
Matt Volpi, participating remotely

Commission Members Absent:

Lucie Chansky

Staff:

Jini Fairley, ADA Coordinator
Sgt. Mike Wade, Police
Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Mayor's Office

Guests:

R. Feynman, Disability Policy Consortium
Ester Schlorholtz, Chair, FHC
Lucia Dolan
Councilor Downs
Heather Wood
Jo-Louise Allan
Rob Caruso
Joanne McKenna
Christine Kerry

1. Introductions (6:00-6:05)

Jack introduced the 7 COD members present at the start of the meeting, staff attending, and several guests.

2. Approval of the February 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes (6:05-6:10)

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Jack asked if there were any objections to the Draft minutes of the February 12, 2023 COD meeting. Hearing none, Matt made a motion to accept/approve the minutes as distributed. Jane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 7-0, with 3 members absent at the start, Barbara and Sandra joined a little later and Lucie was absent.

3. Accessible Fines Reports (6:10-6:15)

Sgt. Wade gave his 2 reports, February activities and the fiscal year to date. These 2 reports can be viewed on pages 6 & 7. He also gave an update on the restaurant where vehicles were using the accessible parking spaces for take-out. He did reach the landlord and they will assess the situation and most likely install 2 or 3 15 minute parking spaces to the right as you enter the parking lot. Sgt. Wade hasn't had a chance to see if they have done this yet. updated . Barbara asked if the speed bump, which doubles as a crosswalk could have white lines on either side of this speed bump to indicate that it is a crosswalk. This crosswalk leads from the Woodland apartments on Washington St. over to the Woodland T station. Sgt. Wade said he would look into this, but it may be on either the MBTA property or the apartment complex private property, and in either case, the city has no authority as to how they paint the speed bump/crosswalk.

4. DPC Legislative Priorities-Housing (6:15-6:40)

R Feynman, community organizer for the Disability Policy Consortium, presented the housing legislative priorities for DPC this year and ways to advocate for these legislative bills and budget items. The presentation can be viewed on pages 12 & 13.

R covered basic information about the different housing vouchers, especially the AHVP, Alternative Housing Voucher Program, the only voucher program for people with disabilities between the age of 18-60. DPC and BCIL have made substantial progress over the last few years, increasing the budget so that many more can become eligible and be able to rent an apartment in Massachusetts and pay 30% of their income and the remaining rent is paid by the local Housing Authority with the funds allocated by the legislature. R covered the basics of affordable housing, concentrating on AHVP, but also legislation that increases funds for the Home Modification Loan Program, for the mass housing registry, Housing Navigator and MassHome, and a bill to establish a Commission on Accessible Housing.

There were several comments and questions from members and the public. Barbara asked why the bill for AHVP would want to also offer project-based vouchers instead of keeping it as a mobile voucher. R said that in some cases, this helps individuals to get a housing more quickly. Barbara also asked about the 50 AHVP vouchers set aside for getting folks out of nursing homes, and R said there was a partnership with the 10 statewide Independent Living Centers to assist those voucher holders to search for housing using the voucher and to arrange to set up services for them. Jack asked about funds for older housing to make them accessible, besides the Home Modification Loan Program (HMLF). R said there is some federal funding being proposed to rehab Public Housing Authority properties to become accessible, but not realized yet. Ima asked if there is any thought to expanding the eligibility of the HMLP to homes where a relative has a disability and comes to visit, as she has been able to take advantage of the HMLP but there are relative and friends who would like to make their homes more accessible so her son could visit there. R said that visitability is becoming more into the conversation and requirements of housing, but that is more directed to new multi-

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family housing and he really didn't know if advocates have recommended for the HMLP. Ima asked about how COD members and others can advocate for the bills and budget items that DPC and our Representatives and Senators are sponsoring. Recommended that one takes advantage of DPC's online program which makes it quite easy to write to your Senator and Representative and to ask them to sign on or vote for the bills described tonight. The DPC website action center can be found at www.dpcma.org. If one is interested in advocating or helping to promote these bills and budget items, one can contact R at Advocacy@DPCMA.org. Matt had the last question asking if someone right now is eligible for the AHVP but are still living at home, should they apply now. R said it takes a long time to get off the waitlist, so the AHVP is not for someone who needs to move in 3 months. If you are not ready to move when your name comes up, you can always say no, and you would go to the bottom of the list, but it is still a good idea to apply, especially if you are not in a hurry to find accessible and affordable housing. Jack thanked R for the excellent presentation and for answering all the questions.

5. AP2-24 Accessible Parking Space in Newtonville (6:40-6:50)

Jini explained where this accessible parking space is located with the commercial village of Newtonville, where the CVS used to be. She and 2 DPW Transportation Division staff met with Councilor Lucas, who docketed the possibility of moving the space more southerly, still on the same side of Walnut St., a little closer to more businesses near Madison Street. At their site visit, it turns out that there are no clear furniture zones (between curb and sidewalk) the length of other potential parking spaces, on Walnut St. closer to Madison. Where the accessible space is today affords proximity to a few businesses on Newtonville Avenue and to the crosswalk to the other side of Walnut St. Also since the accessible space is the last space on that side of Walnut before that crosswalk, there is space for someone to pull forward a bit, if one needs to deploy a rear ramp. Sandra pointed out that there is not an accessible parking space in front of the new location of this CVS, on Washington St. Even though there is parking in the back for CVS and several doors in that complex, Sandra said that the closest accessible parking space is about 9 spaces away from the back entrance of CVS and it is for a compact accessible parking space. Jini commented that there is an accessible parking space in the next block on Washington St. in front of the Post Office. Jack asked if there were any objections to leaving the accessible parking space in question, at 304 Walnut St.. Hearing none, the consensus of the COD members was to leave this accessible parking space where it is presently located.

6. 2024 Commission Goals (6:50-7:50)

Jack continued the review of 2023 goals, starting with #8. The 2023 Goals with some updates can be viewed on pages . Ima gave a brief update on school playgrounds saying that the next 4 schools, under construction and in planning, will be fully accessible and inclusive at Lincoln-Eliot, Countryside, Horace Mann, & Franklin. Ima said this still could be an area that the NPS DAG, Disability Advisory Group, could advocate for and advise, especially when existing school playgrounds make improvements. Ima updated the next goal and there were many items where she recommended that the DAG could advocate for and keep on top of, like accessible field trip checklist that she and other COD members put together, including students with disabilities in emergency drills, snow removal on playgrounds, restrooms in

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new school buildings will have blocking in wall for the possibility of installing a changing table in a single use restroom on upper floors

Goal 10, helping to make more accessible and inclusive events, Ima had updated this with the very successful 2023 Harvest Fair efforts, with a friendly-sensory tent area, with comfy chairs, ear plugs, etc. and additional table for board games for children who may not have been able to ride/take part in any of the carnival games. This could be a continuing goal for 2024, with more advertising and perhaps to extend to more events.

. Goal 11, last year's event in May to recognize Mental Health Awareness was a huge success with a concert by the Me2/ Orchestra, co-sponsored by the Elliot House. This could be a goal for every year and the COD has already begun to plan 2024's event.

Goal 12, Lucie added this one and she wasn't present tonight. Jini suggested that we keep in mind a more welcoming and inclusive effort for residents with all different disabilities, including intellectual and developmental disabilities. Goal 13, organizing members to make site visits for any projects recommended, e.g. CDBG projects, MOD projects, etc. This could be a goal each year as these projects come along. Barbara added that it is important to visit the projects after they are completed, as well. Goal 14, Explore accessible sports, Ima updated and included URLs for many organizations who provide accessible activities for people with disabilities. The idea was to see if the COD could collaborate with one of these organizations to bring in, say to an event, or sponsor a sport activity, more of a resource to consider. Goal 15, helping to maintain a database of people who have attended our events, at least since 2020 (Ima offered to work with Jini on this), to update the webpage (Jack offered to work with Jini on this), office hours at Senior Center- no movement on this yet, social media presence, maybe start a new Facebook page. Jack asked for members to think about adding any new goals for 2024, and Jini recommended to indicate where a goal was accomplished and what will be continuing for 2024, and Ima promised to do that and get out by next meeting.

7. Co-Chairs' Corner (7:50-8:00)

Ima updated the members on her involvement in the NPS Anti-Ableist curriculum development, sharing that the group has met with several experts in the field of disability and education. She added that the timeline is for the curriculum to be rolled out in the fall but there will be a lot of training of staff at all levels so that it becomes more than just a lesson once a month. Jack shared some of the points discussed as a member of the Disability Advisory Group (DAG), where they have been reviewing the curriculum so far. He asked what were the metrics for success with this curriculum, will the children be tested or will there be a survey/questionnaire before and after to determine if students with disabilities feel more included and to be able to evaluate the curriculum. The answer was a little of both. Jack also said he attended the Understanding Our Differences (UOD) event at the library on Saturday, Celebrating 200 years of Braille, a very successful and fun time, learning and meeting other disability advocates, mentioning Nathan Persampieri, who may be interested in joining the COD after he graduates from college. Jane vouched for Nathan, saying he has attended COD meetings before and would be great if he wanted to join.

8. 2024 COD Awareness Event (8:00-8:10)

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Ima said that the format for the event, to be held either at the end of October or beginning of November, to have 3 musical groups, 20 minutes each, one hopefully will be the Me2/ Choir, an excellent concert violinist who has a physical disability, and a Jazz group from NSHS., with a possible panel of performers sharing their disability experiences. Also hopefully we can have an artist showcase in the lobby. We are hoping to hear in April as to if and when the NNHS theater will be available. Ima emphasized that the Co-chairs will need help with putting on this event, more organizing and planning, advertising, and day of the event. Jane said she will check in with the New Art Center about artists with disabilities who might be interested in displaying their craft.

9. CDBG Report (8:10-8:15)

Jack read Sharon's report into the record. There were no updates to the status of the 3 projects. This report can be found on pages 8 & 9.

10. Treasurer's Report (8:15-8:20)

Nyree gave the Treasurer's report which can be viewed on page 10.

11. ADA Coordinator's Report (8:20-8:25)

Jini gave a report of her activities for the month of February. Her report can be found on page 11. She highlighted a site visit to the completed resurfacing and restriping and accessible route improvements at the Pearl Street parking lot, which looks terrific! She also mentioned some of her meetings, such as attending the Finance Council to request the acceptance and expenditure of the MOD grant the city was awarded in February .

12. Project Ideas for MOD Grant (8:25-8:30)

Jini was informed that the MOD Municipal Accessible Improvement grant cycle for Fy26 has an earlier application deadline, which is June 13, 3 months earlier, which hopefully will give awardees more time to accomplish their project. Jini was eliciting ideas for projects, although the city of Newton did receive an FY25 MOD grant to purchase and install a swing structure, swings and provide a surface below the swings at Williams Playground. Barbara would love to see a safe way to go from Washington St. near Comm Ave either towards Newton Lower Falls or the other way to West Newton. The sidewalks are not in great condition especially from Prospect St. east into West Newton. This would be a good place to look at a possible sidewalk project as an MOD grant project.

13. Adjournment (8:30)

The meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

These minutes were prepared and respectfully submitted by Jini Fairley, staff to the COD.

NEXT MEETING DATE: April 8, 2024

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The location of this meeting is wheelchair accessible and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities requiring assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the city of Newton's ADA/Sec.504 Coordinator, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: jfairley@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253. For Telecommunications Relay Service, please dial 711 or call City Hall's TTY/TDD line at 617-796-1089.

Supplemental Materials and Reports:

NEWTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

NEWTON COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

PARKING TICKET AND FINES REPORT

February 2024

TOTAL NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	20
TOTAL VALUE OF TICKETS ISSUED	\$ 4,000.00
SUCCESSFUL APPEALS	\$ 600.00
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$ 1,400.00
TOTAL OUTSTANDING	\$ 2,000.00

CODE # 26 ACCESSIBILITY SPOTS

NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	18
TOTAL VALUE	\$ 3,600.00
SUCCESSFUL APPEALS	\$ 600.00
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$ 1,200.00
TOTAL DUE	\$ 1,800.00

CODE # 27 CURB CUTS

NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	2
TOTAL VALUE	\$ 400.00
SUCCESSFUL APPEALS	\$ 000.00
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$ 200.00
TOTAL DUE	\$ 200.00

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NEWTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

NEWTON COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

PARKING TICKET AND FINES REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2024

As of February 29, 2024

FY 2024 Year-to-date Parking Ticket Totals

TOTAL NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	267
TOTAL VALUE OF TICKETS ISSUED	\$ 53,400
SUCCESSFUL APPEALS	\$ 10,000
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$ 15,400
TOTAL OUTSTANDING	\$ 28,000.00

CODE # 26 ACCESSIBILITY SPOTS

NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	241
TOTAL VALUE	\$ 48,200.00
SUCCESSFUL APPEALS	\$ 9,800.00
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$ 13,000.00
TOTAL DUE	\$ 25,400.00

CODE # 27 CURB CUTS

NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	26
TOTAL VALUE	\$ 5,200.00
SUCCESSFUL APPEALS	\$ 200.00
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$ 2,400.00
TOTAL DUE	\$ 2,600.00

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CDBG Access Projects Report

March 11, 2024

FY22 McGrath Park Perimeter Path Installation – (CD22-03A; Budget: \$91,300.00; Expended: \$0; Balance: \$91,300.00)

Constructing an accessible perimeter path around Richard McGrath Park.

The LAX practice wall was impacting the perimeter pathway construction. The League was given a deadline for the 3rd of April to fundraise for said wall and has not responded in time. In lieu of the wall, the pathway will be able to run around the entire perimeter of the park with entry/exits on Washington St and Myrtle St. Designer is re-assessing the parking lot side of the park as well as reconfiguring the irrigation system and redoing the fence around the tennis courts to provide an accessible entry. Due to the rise in costs, the pathway cost is higher than expected, and Parks has requested the Community Preservation Committee to cover the gap of \$48,000, which they agreed to. With the addition of playable fields, McGrath has become close to a million-dollar project. The most up to date design of the park and perimeter was presented during the May meeting. DPW is moving forward with arranging all necessary documentation for the Conservation Commission permit. As they were preparing the Notice of Intent for the Conservation Commission, it came to light that the pathway exceeds the amount of impervious area allotted, which in turn triggers a necessary stormwater permit that must be completed by DPW. DPW is now working to identify a funding source for the required drainage systems.

DPW is moving toward final design construction documents and expects to go before the Conservation Commission and out for construction bid this Winter. **No new update.**

FY23 Langley/Warren/Chase Crossing – (CD23-03A; Budget: \$100,000.00; Expended: \$0; Balance: \$100,000.00)

Installation of accessible crossings at Langley Rd. and Warren St. This includes a bump out on the northeast corner of the intersection to create the space needed to install a curb cut to cross Warren St.

DPW has completed the scope of work and concept design for this project. Project was presented at the December 2022 meeting. DPW posted the bid on the City of Newton's website on January 5th. The bid opening date was January 19th. The contractor chosen was Antonellis Construction. The bid came in just a little under \$150,000. Construction started on May 30th, 2023, and ended on June 16th. Although the bulk of the project has been completed, there is a vendor back order.

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Antonellis Construction is waiting for the push button for the RRFB. It is expected to be in stock mid to late September. In addition, DPW is waiting for the final as-built inspection and report from the Contractor. The Push buttons have been installed. The contractor submitted an as-built plan, but there was some comments and are waiting for the contractor to submit the revised as-built plan. Still waiting for an as-built plan. **No new update.**

FY24 City Hall Campus – (Cost Estimate: \$42,000) Two curb cuts to be added to connect folks to the accessible elevator entrance near the Department Head parking lot. The site visit has been completed. The contractor chosen for this project is Antonellis Construction. Work is set to start on September 9th, 2023. Antonellis is hopeful that the work will be completed in 2 to 3 days of work. After their work is completed DPW will be responsible for the regrading of the pavement and stripping to keep costs down. Majority of the work has been completed. The contractor needs to install pedestrian crossing signs and DPW needs to restripe the crosswalks and reset brick to make the work level. The pedestrian crossing signs have been installed, the crosswalks restriped, and concrete was put in place of the brick to ensure to that it is level with the existing brick. The contractor completed the compliance paperwork but the project hasn't been closed. **No new update**

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Treasurer's Report

Given by Nyree Kibarian, Treasurer of the Newton Commission On Disability (COD)

Presented at the March 11, 2024 Newton COD Meeting

As of March 1, 2024, the account balances have not changed and are as follows:

Account # 5500-335518 H-P. Fines-Disability Commission

Type: Receipts Reserved for Appropriation (These funds have to go before the City Council to be appropriated before being used)

Balance: \$ 76,889.60

Account 01C60218-524090 Set up to purchase accessible play equipment for Williams School Playground

Type: Special Appropriations

Balance: \$10,831.12

Account # 01C10802-513010 Operation Access – Disability Commission

Set up to pay for targeted enforcement of accessible HP Fines violations by the Police

Type: Special Appropriations

Balance: \$166.54

Account # 01C40128 Set up to pay for RRFB at Langley/Warren/Chase intersection

Type: Special Appropriations

Balance: \$18,000.00

Account#C401083-586005 Set up to purchase and install Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) units at the Waverly/Tremont intersection

Type: Special Appropriations

Balance: **\$50.50** (8 APS units installed in December 2018)

Account # 5064D103 Set up in Fall 2015 to receive Community Access Monitor Program fees and pay expenses)

Type: Revolving Account

Balance: \$29**0.00**

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ADA COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Given by Jini Fairley, ADA/Section 504 Coordinator

Presented at the March 11, 2024 Newton Commission On Disability meeting, for activities during the month of February 2024.

Site Visits:

- Pearl Street Municipal Parking Lot with Alfredo and Melissa- great job, surface, accessible parking spaces and access routes

Trainings:

- Great Lakes ADA Center- Accessible Crosswalks Webinar- excellent
- Great Plains ADA Center- ADA Conference- 3 days (Virtual 10:30-6:30 with breaks)- excellent
- MOD sponsored ADA Coordinator Peer Resource Group - Virtually met many ADA Coordinators in the state- excellent
- FHAA Requirement 7-Specification B Bathrooms- excellent
- MOD Quarterly Tea-Architectural Access Updates
- FHAA Requirement 7-Approach to Kitchen Appliances- excellent
- SPED Housing & Transition Group- DDS Self-Direction-very informative
- IHCD : Designing Inclusively, Educating Globally with Disabled Architects- excellent
- Cathy Boyle” Applying for Housing” - excellent

Meeting/Events/Conference Calls:

- Finance Council Committee-for acceptance of MOD Grant- \$30,785 for swing structure, surface, and accessible swings at Williams
- DRC/SBC & Working Group meetings- Countryside School
- DRC/SBC & Working Group meetings -Franklin School
- DRC/SBC & Working Group meetings for Horace Mann addition
- Fair Housing Committee (FHC)- attend monthly meetings
- FHC Subcommittee- attend monthly meetings
- Complete Streets Committee & Road Paving- attend bi-weekly meetings

Commissions On Disability Alliance monthly meetings

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Commission On Disability

newton COD housing 3 11 24.pdf

DPC's priorities:

Presentation to

Newton COD

R Feynman

March 11, 2024

Intro ourselves

and DPC

A drawing of a group of people with various disabilities moving up a teal ramp towards the state house. Disability Policy Consortium is written across the bottom.

Housing: set

the

groundwork

What is Affordable, Accessible housing? What rules govern it?

MA housing is

OLD (median age of housing in 2021 was 57: ie, half of houses were built before 1964),

EXPENSIVE (3rd highest sale prices, 7th highest rent), and

HARD TO GET (lowest vacancy rate of any state)

All of which adds up to: INACCESSIBLE

What is

AHVP?

The Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) provides rental assistance vouchers to people who:

-

Have low income

-

Have disabilities

-

And are under age 60.

The program is very similar to MRVP and can be used to rent an apartment anywhere in Massachusetts.

History of

AHVP

Advocacy

graph showing funding growth for the AHVP program from FY10 to FY25 governor's budget. it starts at about 3 million and grows slowly to a bit less than 17 million in FY 24. The source of the graph is listed below.

Link to source

Housing: Bond

Bill Asks

AHVP: incorporate the rest of the changes in "An Act to create affordable homes for persons with disabilities"

(S.884/

H.1305)

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- Part of our bill (project basing) is already included
- Make AHVP easier to use, administer, and track
- Make AHVP more responsive to needs of communities it serves

- 60 million for Home Modification Loan Program
- 110 million for Community Based Housing
- Establishment of a commission for accessible Housing