



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Commission On Disability

Meeting Date: January 14, 2019
Room 204
Time: 6:30 pm

MINUTES

Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath,
Director, Planning &
Development

Rachel Powers
Manager
Community Development

Tiffany Leung
Planner
Community Development

Members

Rob Caruso, Co-Chair
Girard Plante, Co-Chair
Jane Brown, Treasurer
Lucie Chansky
Lakshmi Kadambi
Anne Marie Killilea
Rosemary Larking
Sandra Lingley
Barbara Lischinsky
Matt Volpi

Jason Rosenberg
Chairman Emeritus

Advisor

Sergeant Bob Lee, Jr.
Newton Police Department

Staff

Jini Fairley
ADA/Sec 504 Coordinator
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Commission Members Present:

Rob Caruso, Co-chair
Girard Plante, Co-chair
Jane Brown, Treasurer
Lucie Chansky
Barbara Lischinsky
Rosemary Larking, participating remotely
Anne Marie Killilea, participating remotely
Sandra Lingley
Matt Volpi
Lakshmi Kadambi

City Staff Present:

Jini Fairley, ADA/Section 504 Coordinator
Tiffany Leung, Planning
Sgt. Robert Lee, Police
Dana Hanson, Mayor's Office
Lily Reynolds, Planning

Guests:

Warren Abramson
Eileen Sandberg

1. Introductions (6:30-6:35)

All 10 COD members were present, 8 members were in person and 2 members were participating by phone.

2. Washington Street Corridor Vision Update (6:35-7:00)

Lily, Community Engagement Planner, gave the following presentation about the progress of the Washington Street Corridor Vision Plan (some graphics have been eliminated):

HELLO WASHINGTON STREET!

Commission on Disability Presentation

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January 14, 2019

What are the priorities for accessibility on Washington Street?

What have we done so far?

Project Launch

May 1, 2018

Public Design Week

June 5 –12, 2018

Plan Open House

October 24, 2018

first draft Vision Plan & Zoning Toolkit

November 1 –December 2, 2018

Help your community define the vision for Washington Street!

Video clip:

https://youtu.be/J_LMR6oUWvA

What makes Washington Street authentically Newton?

Life and Death by Car -people forced onto sidewalk

The Challenge

How do we keep our village centers authentically Newton while also adapting to the needs of citizens?

Not One Size Fits All Approach

Plan for people or plan for cars?

the-merc-waltham-gallery-2018-014.jpg

Market Driven Precedent

Diagram_Existing_Buildings.png

Typical Condition

Block

Lots

Buildings

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Streets

Diagram_Existing_Lots.png
Multiple Properties are Bought

Lot 1

Lot 2

Lot 3

Lot 4

Diagram_Single_Lot.png

The Large Site is Assembled

One Big Lot

Diagram_Market Garage.png
Market Driven Development Occurs

3 Story Parking Garage

Market Driven Option
Diagram_Market Ground Floor.png
Hide the Parking

Line the Garage at the Ground Floor

Market Driven Option
Diagram_Market.png
Line the Upper Floors to Surround the Parking

1 Building with High Parking Requirements

Market Driven Option

Courtyard

Precedent

Diagram_Single_Lot.png

We need more parking, but want the Human-scaled places?

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One Big Lot
Courtyard Option
Diagram_Courtyard Garage.png
Courtyard Option
Create a Large Common Garage
Underground Parking
Diagram_Courtyard Lot.png
Courtyard Option
Share the Parking with the Entire Block

Courtyard

Building Areas

Common Parking Access
Diagram_Courtyard.png
Courtyard Option
Traditional Formal, Convenient Parking

4 Human-scaled Buildings on 1 Block

Courtyard
Precedent
Diagram_Single_Lot.png
Is there another way to control development?

One Big Lot
Incremental Option
Diagram_Incremental Lots.png
Create Human-scaled Architecture

Subdivide the Block into Multiple Lots

Create Alleys and Lanes for Service
Incremental Option
Diagram_Incremental Garage.png
Subdivide Land at the Right Scale & Provide Transportation Choices

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Basement Parking for Larger Buildings

Parking in the Center of the Block
Incremental Option
Diagram_Incremental.png
A Traditional Approach to Development

12 Human-scaled Buildings on 1 Block
Incremental Option

CharterAward-ClarendonArlingtonVA.09_#thisisCNU.jpg
90.jpg
IMG_6996.JPG

Incremental Precedent

How can development enhance the villages?

What building shapes and sizes should zoning allow along Washington Street?

ExistingConditions
Conventional Form, Convenient Parking
3 to 4 Story Streetscape
Washington Street at Crafts Street

Streetscape will likely be entirely publicly funded if development is at 3 Stories

5 to 6 Story Streetscape
Washington Street at Crafts Street
3 to 4 Story Streetscape with 10 – 12 Stories at Central Location
Washington Street at Crafts Street

NEXT STEPS FOR COUNCIL PROCESS

list of 7 items

- November 26 –ZAP -West Newton deep dive**
- December 6 -Full Council -Review of Vision Map**
- January 14 –ZAP –Newtonville & Crafts Street deep dive**
- January 28 –ZAP -Zoning Toolkit**

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- February 11–ZAP -Vision Plan Draft #2
 - TBD presentations
 - April/May –ZAP -Final Vision Plan & Zoning presented to Council
- Open Comment Period
&
Drop-In Office Hours
Community Forums

THANK YOU

Follow us on Facebook: “Hello Washington Street”

WASHINGTONSTREET@NEWTONMA.GOV

After Lily’s brief presentation and video (and first draft of the WashingtonStreet Vision Plan available on the Planning Department’s webpage) of the above slides, she asked for comments and questions regarding accessibility concerns along this corridor, the limits is just west of West Newton Square, where the on and off ramps for the MassPike are, east to Crafts Street, which is east of Newtonville. She shared some of the ideas proposed for Washington St., to have more buildings/businesses on the MassPike side of Washington St. and along the bridges, as some communities have put a park over a lower roadway, so that it would feel more like a village/community. Rosemary commented that she would like to see some form of transportation, a shuttle perhaps, that travels down the length of Washington St. within Newton. Her other comment was that there often is not enough time allotted to cross Washington Street safely. Barbara commented that the portion of Washington St. west of the on and off ramps of the MassPike, to Newton Lower Falls has been neglected and it is impossible to walk, say from Newton Wellesley Hospital east into West Newton Square without fearing for your safety. The sidewalks were in terrible shape, but recently DPW has a sidewalk contractor improving this situation. Girard added that accessible sidewalks are critical to this plan and move cars above or like in Allston’s plans. He said the future is having people walking and riding bikes, not competing with vehicles. Lily agreed with this and the CIP projects will be considering changes for Washington Street itself, not just a zoning plan for this street. Matt wanted to know how they were going to improve the area with the on and off ramps area just outside of West Newton Square and Lily said they were looking at a better connection with the streets north and south of those ramps. He also mentioned that many of the businesses both in West Newton Square and

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along the corridor that this plan is including, have inaccessible entrances, and that some effort must be made to make the store fronts of the existing building accessible. Warren cautioned that when main streets such as Washington Street are reconfigured, not to do what other towns have done, making the curbs so high that it is very difficult for someone using a walker, cane, or crutches to get up on the sidewalk from where they parked. Lucie said she attended a recent Newtonville Area Council meeting where the sentiment of the group felt that the Mayor isn't listening to them and that the direction that the consultants are going is not what they want for Newtonville. Lucie voiced a personal concern about the neighbors who live where much of this development is targeted, seemingly unfair, for them to invest in their home and neighborhood and have all this development thrust upon them. Her third comment was disagreeing with reducing the vehicle parking as many people will own and drive cars, and one can look at using a car as an accommodation for some people with disabilities who cannot walk a distance who can drive or be driven, in order to be part of their community. Wider sidewalks are needed everywhere, but reducing vehicle lanes for bike lanes may not always work in the same space. Sandra brought up the proposed design in West Newton Square where next to the curb is a bike lane, then parking and then the vehicle driving lane. She asked if there is space between the parked cars and the bike lane, and Lily said yes, there is a buffer space so parked cars can open their doors without being in the bike lane. So the only issue, she sees, is the difficulty someone might have crossing the bike lane to get to the sidewalk, especially pedestrians who are blind or have low vision, or move slowly due to a mobility disability. She just doesn't see serious bikers slowing down for someone crossing their lane. Lily talked about how pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles need to negotiate the road and one good way is to make eye contact, but as Barbara pointed out, she cannot do that and she doesn't even feel safe in a crosswalk. Rob thanked Lily for coming and presenting on this important project and hoped she will come back.

3. Approval of 12/10/18 Meeting Minutes (7:00-7:05)

Rob asked if there were any changes needed to be made to the minutes of the December 11 COD meeting. Although not mentioned at the meeting, Sandra was in attendance at the award ceremony of the Human Rights Commission . Jini will add Sandra's name to the COD members in attendance that evening. Jane Made a motion to accept the minutes as

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amended. Barbara seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 10-0.

4. CDBG Report (7:05-7:15)

Tiffany gave the following report on the CDBG funded access projects:

Highlands Playground Access – (CD15-032 Budget: \$123,750.00; Expended: \$117,562.50; Balance: \$6,187.50). Accessible pathways component began in spring 2017 with contractor David White & Son. **Staff is proceeding with project close-out and will pay retainage upon receiving the bill.**

Newton Corner Curb Cuts – (Project CD15-034 Budget: \$141,940.00; Expended: \$123,633.40; Balance: \$18,306.60). The project included the installation of 11 accessible curb cuts on Washington Street and around the Newton Corner Circle. The Highway Division completed several curb cuts in and around Park Street improvements during the previous fiscal year. A. R. Belli also completed improvements through an existing contract with the City. **Staff continues to coordinate with DPW and Parks & Rec for the installation of planters at Peabody and Washington Street intersection. Upon completion, staff will pay the retainage.**

FY19 City Hall Wheelchair Accessible Single Use Toilet Room- (CD19-03A Budget: \$114,822.33; Expended \$0; Balance: \$114,822.33) The COD voted to allocate FY19 architectural access funds to the installation of a wheelchair accessible toilet room on the first floor of City Hall. The project will be managed by the City of Newton Public Buildings Department. **MOU has been executed. On 1/30/2019, staff will meet with Public Buildings and the contractors to sign additional documents and host a pre-construction meeting.**

Lucie commented that the planters around the city look dead in the winter and her question as to whether they are maintained year round. Jini said that Parks & Recreation only maintain them from the spring to fall, although some have greenery that lasts through the winter. Lucie suggested that something should be done for the city planters, in general, rather than have dead flowers. Tiffany said that the planters in her report are for safety reasons due to the shape of the curb ramp at Peabody and Washington St. Lucie asked Tiffany what is retainage in her report. She said it is a percentage of the cost of the project which is held back until the project is fully completed, usually about 5%. Barbara asked about why the Newton

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Highlands project is being closed out when the fields still have a drainage problem. Tiffany said that it was because the part of the project, the accessible pathways within the park, is complete. Barbara asked what is the status of this drainage problem, and also about Waban Commons, so it was agreed that someone from Parks & Recreation would be invited to the next COD meeting to get some answers.

5. Ideas for FY2020 CDBG-Funded Access Projects (7:15-7:25)

Jini reported that the Pathways to Playstructures project that she applied for an MOD ADA Improvement grant was denied. She suggested that This project, would provide 13 asphalt pathways from existing sidewalks to playstructures in 8 parks, already has cost estimates, locations and drawings developed, and vetted by Parks & Recreation Dept., should be considered, as it was also proposed as a possibility for 2019 CDBG funding. Tiffany said that the access projects that the COD recommends will need to be included in the Community Development Annual Action Plan, which has a deadline of April. The approximate CDBG funds for FY20 will be \$86,000 (FY20 allocation) plus remaining CDBG funds for another \$30,000. There was much discussion about ideas for possible access projects, mostly to city-owned facilities, better lighting or a flashing beacon at specific crossings, such as at Pelham crossing Centre St., making the toilet rooms accessible at the Auburndale Library, new pathways to playground structures throughout the city, or a perimeter pathway around a city park, etc. No decision was made, and Jini will look into the flashing beacon idea, and will invite Parks & Recreation to describe current plans that might involve accessibility. Lucie and Rob thought we should somehow reach out to the non-profits who serve people with disabilities and open to the public for possible access projects, as was done in the past. Members remember having departments and non-profits present their access projects and the COD made a five-year plan and prioritize these projects. They recall that it was the Planning Department who must have put out an RFP, or a Call for Projects, to the community and city departments for this effort. Tiffany said she would run it by Rachel and check how that could be done, although it might be too late to start that effort for FY20 CDBG funding.

6. Accessible (HP) Fines Reports (7:25-7:35)

Sgt. Lee gave the following report of the tickets issued to violators of the accessible parking laws, during the month of December:

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PARKING TICKET AND FINES REPORT

DECEMBER 2018

TOTAL NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	71
TOTAL VALUE OF TICKETS ISSUED	\$ 14,200.00
REDUCTION AMOUNT	\$ 3,000.00
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$ 2,400.00
TOTAL OUTSTANDING	\$ 8,800.00

CODE # 26 ACCESSIBILITY SPOTS

NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	63
TOTAL VALUE (63 @ \$200)	\$ 12,600.00
REDUCTION AMOUNT	\$ 3,000.00
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$ 1,800.00
TOTAL DUE	\$ 7,800.00

CODE # 27 CURB CUTS

NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	8
TOTAL VALUE (8 @ \$200)	\$ 1,600.00
REDUCTION AMOUNT	\$ 0
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$ 600.00
TOTAL DUE	\$ 1,000.00

Sgt. Lee said that some of the Operation Access tickets may be in the above totals. Also he does not have a year-to-date report as the report he received from the vendor was not accurate.

7. Operation Access Update (7:35-7:45)

Operation Access is a targeted enforcement of the accessible parking laws and took place this past holiday season, from November 28, 2018 through December 26, 2018. Sgt. Lee reported that 51 tickets were issued, for a value of \$10,200 and the cost of the overtime for the Police Officers was \$5,156.32,. As of Friday, January 11, 12 tickets have been paid for a value of \$2400, 23 dismissed, (value of \$4600), and 16 tickets outstanding for a value of \$3200. Sgt. Lee said that it was particularly difficult to recruit Police officers for this overtime effort, and their Parking Control Officers were also short staffed at the time. Lucie commented on the high number of the tickets issued during Operation Access were dismissed and at some

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point, would like to understand better, maybe from the Parking Manager, what some of the reasons/situations cause for dismissal. Both Sgt. Babcock and Sgt. Lee have said that often the placard is not hanging properly or they forgot to put up the placard, and when they either copy the placard as part of their appeal or come in for a hearing with a valid placard, the ticket is dismissed.

8. Treasurer's Report (7:45-7:50)

Jane, COD Treasurer, gave the following Treasurer's Report:

As of January 9, 2019, the balances of the COD accounts are as follows:

Account #14-3314M3 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: **\$59,883**

Account # C108006-513001 Operation Access – Disability Commission

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

Type: Special Appropriations

Balance: **\$ 7,160.97**

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 #13D10901 Set up in Fall 2015 to receive Community Access Monitor Program fees and pay expenses)

Type: Revolving Account

Balance: \$940.00

Account# 29B22001 Disability Commission Gift

Type: Gift/Donation Account

Balance: \$0.00

9. ADA Coordinator's Report (7:50-8:00)

Jini gave the following report of her activities for December:

Site Visits:

- Waverley & Tremont Intersection - Checked out 8 newly installed APS units
- Comm & Walnut Intersection – Checked out 8 upgraded/installed APS units

Trainings:

- Seminar on ADA Transition Plans - Offered by the Framingham COD

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Meeting/Events/Conference Calls:

- Land Use- Re: Northland Development
- Rev. Haywood's Celebration
- Austin Street Housing - every other week meetings
- Fair Housing Committee- I attend this monthly- Save the Date- April 25 from 6:30-8:30!
- Complete Streets Committee & Road Paving- I attend, every other week
- CODA- monthly meeting

She mentioned that with 2 holidays, 2 sick days, and 6 days of vacation, this report represents just a little over 2 weeks of the past month. She also mentioned that MOD granted one of the 2 projects she applied for, for the city, which was an APS project for 83 units at 14 intersections. Lucie asked about the seminar she went to about ADA Transition Plans, which she is updating. She found out about the firm that was giving the training about evaluating sidewalk for accessibility features, since the technology is not reliable enough. This is a person with a tool that is run along the sidewalk as they walk the sidewalk and uses an IPAD to record the condition of the sidewalk as it relates to accessibility. It is very expensive but may be something that could be done in phases, as we have more than 300 sidewalks.

10.COD Member Applicant-W. Abramson (8:00-8:10)

Warren Abramson applied to become a member of the COD in August of 2018. He has attended 4 COD meetings. This was an opportunity for the members to get to know Warren and to ask questions. Warren grew up in Newton, had moved away and has now moved back to a one floor condo in an elevator building as the stairs were too difficult for him anymore. He worked in a family business until the mid-90s and is now in the mortgage business. He has always volunteered his time with non-profit organizations, including the Greater Boston Aid to the Blind, which was disbanded several years ago. He has become more observant of access issues for people with disabilities like himself, here in Newton. He mentioned the height of curbs can be a real access issue when the curbs are steep, he can hardly get onto the sidewalk, or has to walk a distance to an intersection to use a curb ramp, as he uses a walker. His disability began when he was hit by a car when he was in Elementary School, causing severe injury to his legs, and most recently took a bad fall on a public bathroom's wet floor.

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Although usually after the COD has had a chance to meet a COD applicant, Warren has been appointed by the Mayor and will be interviewed by the Zoning and Planning Committee, then voted by the full City Council, and then will be instructed to be sworn in by the City Clerk's office.

11. Officer Elections (8:10-8:25)

Rob asked if there were nominations for Chair or Co-chair for the COD. Jane nominated Rob and Girard to continue as Co-chairs. There were no further nominations for this position. Rosemary seconded the motion to elect Rob and Girard as Co-chairs to lead the COD for the calendar year of 2019. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 10-0. Lucie nominated Jane to continue as the Treasurer for the COD. There were no other nominations for this position. Rosemary seconded the motion to elect Jane as the Treasurer for 2019. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 10-0.

12. Old/New Business (8:25-8:30)

Rosemary wanted to know if the COD or a member of the COD could be involved in the selection of a new Transportation provider for seniors. Jini said she would look into it, as she doesn't know who is on that selection committee. The new Mexican restaurant in West Newton, used to be a Chinese restaurant, has taken away the automatic door opener panel when you are exiting the restaurant. Jini explained that this falls under ISD and they should be made aware of this, especially if they took away access. Also the COD can write a letter to the owner of this restaurant. Many businesses, even new construction, are not required to provide an automatic door opener.

13. Adjournment (8:30)

The meeting adjourned at 8:40PM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by Jini Fairley

NEXT MEETING DATE: February 11, 2019

The location of this meeting is wheelchair accessible and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons 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.

