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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Commission On Disability

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Meeting Date: May 13, 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  
Warren Abramson  
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, participating remotely**  
**Jane Brown, Treasurer**  
**Lucie Chansky**  
**Barbara Lischinsky**  
**Rosemary Larking, participating remotely**  
**Anne Marie Killilea**  
**Sandra Lingley**  
**Matt Volpi**  
**Lakshmi Kadambi**  
**Warren Abramson**

#### City Staff Present:

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

#### Guests:

**Eileen Sandberg**  
**Pedro Fontes**  
**Representatives from Mark Development**  
**Dennis Rieske, Architect for N.H. Congregational Church**  
**Representatives from Newton-Wellesley Hospital**

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

**Rosemary had not yet joined the meeting on the phone at the time of introductions.**

#### 2. Approval of 4/8/19 Meeting Minutes (6:35-6:40)

**Rob asked if everyone read the minutes and if there were any changes to be made. Hearing none, Jane made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 8 meeting as read and distributed.**



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**Lakshmi seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 10-0.**

**3. CDBG Report (6:40-6:45)**

**Tiffany gave the following report of 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. **In speaking with Carol Schein, Parks & Rec have had some issue with the contractor’s work and as a result, the Commissioner and David White & Sons have not agreed upon a final payment yet and is still pending.**

**FY19 City Hall Wheelchair Accessible Single Use Toilet Room-** (CD19-03A Budget: \$114,822.33; Expended \$46,272.50; Balance: \$68,549.83) 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. Contractors are Vanguard Construction and P.J. Kennedy. **Contractors have installed the soap dispenser, mirror, paper towel dispenser, grab bars, toilet paper holder, toilet, sink, and wireless door operator. In addition, both existing doors have been frosted for privacy. Remaining in the scope of work is the installation of the door lock, second layer of the Epoxy floor, and signage.**

**Rob asked if there is a date for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Tiffany said the date has not been set, depends on when the floor is finished. She will keep the COD posted.**

**Tiffany also mentioned that the city did receive their CDBG allocation of 1.9M, about a half percent down. The Planning and Development Board approved the Annual Action Plan which incorporated the 2020 access projects, and they will be submitting this plan to HUD in the coming weeks. Tiffany is working with Jason Sobol, Director of Transportation Operations on the RRFBs project, to be installed at Christina St. at the crosswalk nearest to the Price Center, on Centre St. at the crosswalk at Pleasant St. (most northern crosswalk), and on Lincoln St. near Chester St. crosswalk, opposite entrance to the Newton Housing Authority and apartments at 82 Lincoln St.**

**Lucie asked if Tiffany could send links to the Planning Department’s webpages where one can view the CDBG allocations to other projects and**

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entities, under Human Services, which she will. The FY20 allocations and recipients will be updated once HUD accepts the Annual Action Plan and the Mayor signs off on all projects/recipients.

Barbara asked if an RRFB could be installed at the west entrance driveway /crosswalk at the Newton-Wellesley Hospital (NWH). Jini mentioned that she had spoken to Jason Sobol, Transportation Director, who said it is not typically used for driveways, but he will research to see what would work there, that is pedestrian activated. Barbara will also bring it up when the representatives from NWH are on the agenda during this meeting.

Tiffany reminded everyone that the celebration at the Newton Highlands Playground is May 16, rain or shine, and hopes that everyone will be able to come out for it, Rob and Girard will be speaking on the program, along with the Mayor, Parks & Recreation Commissioner, Director of Planning, City Councilors, and more. The weather forecast is improving for a nice afternoon from 4-7PM.

**4. Accessible (HP) Fines Reports (6:45-6:50)**

**Sgt. Lee gave the following Accessible (HP) Fines report:**

**PARKING TICKET AND FINES REPORT**

**APRIL 2019**

<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>TOTAL VALUE OF TICKETS ISSUED</b>	<b>\$ 8,700.00</b>
<b>REDUCTION AMOUNT</b>	<b>\$ 2,600.00</b>
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT PAID</b>	<b>\$ 1,300.00</b>
<b>TOTAL OUTSTANDING</b>	<b>\$ 4,800.00</b>

**CODE # 26 ACCESSIBILITY SPOTS**

<b>NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>TOTAL VALUE</b>	<b>\$ 4,900.00</b>
<b>REDUCTION AMOUNT</b>	<b>\$ 2,200.00</b>
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT PAID</b>	<b>\$ 1,100.00</b>
<b>TOTAL DUE</b>	<b>\$ 1,600.00</b>

**CODE # 27 CURB CUTS**

<b>NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>TOTAL VALUE</b>	<b>\$ 3,800.00</b>
<b>REDUCTION AMOUNT</b>	<b>\$ 400.00</b>

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TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$ 200.00
TOTAL DUE	\$ 3,200.00

**PARKING TICKET AND FINES REPORT**

**FISCAL YEAR 2019**

*As of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019*  
**FY 2019 Year-to-date Parking Ticket Totals**

TOTAL NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	384
TOTAL VALUE OF TICKETS ISSUED	\$78,200.00
REDUCTION AMOUNT	\$27,835.00
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$37,770.00
TOTAL OUTSTANDING	\$14,565.00

**CODE # 26 ACCESSIBILITY SPOTS**

NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	258
TOTAL VALUE	\$52,600.00
REDUCTION AMOUNT	\$26,025.00
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$21,475.00
TOTAL DUE	\$6,460.00

**CODE # 27 CURB CUTS**

NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED	126
TOTAL VALUE	\$25,600.00
REDUCTION AMOUNT	\$1,810.00
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	\$16,295.00
TOTAL DUE	\$8,105.00

**5. Treasurer's Report (6:50-6:55)**

**Jane gave the following Treasurer's Report:**

As of May 9, 2019, the balances of the COD accounts have not changed and 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: \$2102.97

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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**

#### **6. Riverside Development (6:55-7:25)**

**Representatives from Mark Development gave a brief overview of the project, which includes the existing surface parking lot at Riverside T Station, and where the Hotel Indigo is located. The vision is to create residences, office space, shops, a hotel, and green space, into a small village, with a parking garage next to the T station/tracks, a transit plaza, a main street about a quarter mile long. The bridge over Route 95 is to be widened and there will be more traffic control, including some stop lights to make it safer for pedestrians crossing Grove and/or coming from Newton Lower Falls walking to the T.**

**More details can be found on the city's website on the Planning Department's webpages. There were several questions and discussion, especially about the only way to get to the T tracks was via an elevator, not a permanent ramp. Pointed out to the architect is that elevators break down, and although there is another elevator, it would require more navigation, if the main one is not working, and what does someone do who cannot use their hands to operate the elevator and get to the T tracks? They took suggestions from members, recommending a completely voice activated set of elevators. Another point was about the design of some of the apartments/condos where there are steps/front stoops to some of the residences, but was assured that there was an adjacent accessible entrance that most residents will use. There are 675 proposed residences, mostly one and two bedrooms, and the building heights range from 5 to 18 stories. These taller buildings are down a hill, by the highway, so will not appear to be that tall. There were questions about accessibility and affordability of the residences, which will follow existing laws, such as the Architectural Access Board, virtually all apartments will be accessible/adaptable (Group 1) and 5% will be more fully accessible (Group 2A) and the affordability will be according to the city's ordinance, right now the average affordability is 65% AMI, and the rents are based on the department of**

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**Housing and Community Development regulations at the time of permitting. The project is assuming that the parking spaces will be shared/used at different times of the day, so they are proposing fewer parking spaces currently required. Part of the parking garage will be just for MBTA commuters.**

**7. AAB Variance-N.H.Congregational Church (7:25-7:45)**

**Dennis Rieske, architect for the Newton Highlands Congregational Church, presented the reasons for the variances he has applied for to the AAB, where some small renovations are being proposed in an existing kitchen and the desire to make a beverage station/kitchenette on the first floor. Since this is not a commercial kitchen, only open to church members, the kitchen falls somewhere in between a residential and public kitchen, with respect to regulations. One variance is about the space between cabinets/countertop and an island, which is being proposed to be 40 inches away, even though the church committee wanted less, and in a commercial kitchen it would be 60 inches, but in a residential kitchen, the range is between 40-48 inches. The counter top is 36" which is allowed in a residential kitchen. Knee space under the sink, no one will be independently using the sink, and the small refrigerator only comes in a particular height, all still useable by someone using a wheelchair. Jane made a motion to support the 4 variances applied for and Matt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 11-0.**

**8. Newton-Wellesley Hospital Ramp (7:45-8:15)**

**Representatives from Newton-Wellesley Hospital (NWH), Cathy and Andrew, first explained the reason to demolish and replace the ramp leading from the Washington Street sidewalk up to the Blue Building entrance. It is almost complete, just waiting on the railings, and should be installed by the first week in June. Although NWH submitted plans for this work, part of a larger utility project and boiler replacement, it wasn't obvious, or communicated to the disability community, of this interruption of access. Barbara mentioned that the barricade that NWH is using to keep pedestrians from the construction along the sidewalk now consists of posts with legs that jut into the sidewalk, especially near telephone poles and they make it very difficult to get around with a guide dog and someone using a wheelchair could not pass by these posts. Andrew said he would rectify that right away and would have done so earlier if brought to his attention. One other request from Barbara was not to place the ashtray for smokers at the**

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ramp where it meets the sidewalk. Andrew explained that employees cannot smoke on NWH's property, so they often smoke there on the sidewalk.

Barbara has an asthma attack walking through the smokers to the ramp, so, if possible, please don't place an ashtray near the ramp.

Other access issues were brought up by Girard, Barbara and Rob, including no curb ramp at the end of the sidewalk along the driveway of the East entrance, the doors at the West entrance, the driveway at the West entrance, and wayfinding signage, except for restrooms, not tactile, no raised letters/numbers or Braille.

Andrew said he is installing curb ramps for that crosswalk that Girard talked about, also in the area of a temporary section of sidewalk due to this construction project. Cathy said that plans are being made to address curb ramps and sidewalks, and crosswalks to make it easier for pedestrians to access the Surgical Center and other entrances.

Rob related his experience with the doors at the West entrance. There is a revolving door at the West entrance and one automatic regular door, where the button panel to operate the door is in an unusual place when entering from the outside and when exiting, it is often blocked by wheelchairs stacked up. There used to be an electric eye type door, but NWH has closed that off, which was a more accessible door. Cathy said they took that door out due to many issues, including airflow.

Barbara brought up this issue that vehicles exiting the West entrance driveway often drive through the crosswalk, after stopping further back, and the drivers are always looking to the left, not seeing a pedestrian crossing on their right. Barbara has wound up on a hood of a car once. Is there some pedestrian activated flashing beacon/sign that could be installed close to the crosswalk warning vehicles that someone is in the crosswalk?

Cathy and Andrew feels this should be a joint effort with the city to figure out what will work here, although cautioned that something flashing so close to a traffic light at Beacon and Washington Street can cause accidents. Cathy proposed that some members of the COD and Jini and possibly other city staff meet with her and staff on a regular basis, like every 6 months, to work out solutions of the above access issues, and to stay informed of any access changes in the future. Rob said that would be very welcomed to open this dialogue and keep it going to find solutions. Rob and others thanked Cathy and Andrew from NWH for coming and to explain their projects and to begin a more fruitful and ongoing dialogue.

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**9. ADA Coordinator's Report (8:15-8:20)**

**Jini gave a very brief report on activities during the month as follows:**

Site Visits:

- Newton Highlands Playground- with Tiffany and Parks & Rec staff
- Accessible single-Use toilet room- with Rafik and Tiffany to locate best placement of dispensers
- Checked out some different detectable warning panels in Cambridge with Lily
- Reviewed the location of the 3 RRFBs

Trainings:

- Fair Housing Training-part of CD Week-excellent presentation
- Signals Workshop- All day workshop with staff from several surrounding cities

Meeting/Events/Conference Calls:

- Gave a presentation on Service Animals at a workshop at the Senior Center
- Attended Gann Academy student presentation
- Met with Newton and Waltham Traffic Engineers about intersection near Newton border
- Joined the COAs Building Domain Action Team (B-DAT) monthly meetings
- NewCAL- every other week meeting
- Walnut St. Enhancements- I attend this every other week
- Fair Housing Committee- I attend this monthly
- Complete Streets Committee & Road Paving- I attend, every other week
- CODA- monthly meeting- on phone with other CODs and ADA Coordinators
- Austin St.- I attend this once a month meeting
- Development Review Team (DRTs)- as needed

**10. Old/New Business (8:20-8:30)**

**Since the meeting ran late, the only new business was Lucie reporting that the April 30 presentation by the Gann Academy was very well attended and was asking how the exhibits the Gann students produced of their research, here at City Hall or at the Library. Dana said that the Cultural Affairs office handles exhibitors, for Lucie and others to follow up.**

**11. Adjournment (8:30)**

**The meeting adjourned at 9:10PM.**



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**Respectfully prepared and submitted by**  
**Jini Fairley**  
**ADA Coordinator**

**NEXT MEETING DATE: June 10, 2019**

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](mailto: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.