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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Commission On Disability

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Meeting Date: September 12, 2018  
Room 204  
Time: 6:30 pm

MINUTES

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

Barney Heath,  
Director, Planning &  
Development

Rachel Powers  
Manager  
Community Development

**Members**

Rob Caruso, Co-Chair  
Girard Plante, Co-Chair  
Jane Brown  
Lucie Chansky  
Rosemary Larking  
Barbara Lischinsky

Jason Rosenberg  
Chairman Emeritus

**Advisor**

Sergeant Bob Lee  
Newton Police Department

**Staff**

ADA/Sec 504 Coordinator  
Jini Fairley  
617-796-1253

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**Commission Members Present:**

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

**City Staff Present:**

Jini Fairley, ADA/Section 504 Coordinator  
Tiffany Leung, Planning  
Sgt. Robert Lee, Police  
Shane Mark, DPW  
Terry Crowley, DPW

**Guests:**

**Lakshmi Kadambi**  
**Nathan Persampieri**  
**Warren Abramson**  
**Rodney Bianchi**

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

**At the start of the meeting and introductions, all were present either on the phone or in person except Girard. He joined the meeting later.**

**2. Approval of July 9, 2018 Meeting Minutes (6:35-6:40)**

**Rob asked if everyone had read the minutes that were distributed in advance, and if there were any changes to be made. Hearing none, Lucie made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Barbara seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 8-0.**

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**3. CDBG Report (6:40-6:50)**

**Tiffany gave the following CDBG report on the Access Projects:**

**FY17 Curb Cuts Funding Pool/FY16 Curb Cuts Funding Pool** – (CD17-03A/CD16-03B Budget: \$108,500.92; Expended: \$97,405.67; Balance; \$9,822.33). The FY17/FY16 Curb Cut project was completed in conjunction with the COD and DPW/Engineering based on the recently completed inventory. DPW/Engineering sought to complete 30-40 curb cuts in the Carr School area by spring 2018. **Site visit was performed on 7/19/2018 and 34 curb cuts were reviewed. 4 additional curb cuts were found at Churchill/Broadway, but it is unclear if the installation was part of the current project or a previous year. Curb cuts were not installed at Watertown/Albemarle and North/Albemarle. Several deficiencies have been corrected as of 9/10/18.**

**Carroll Center Accessibility** – (CD15-035 Budget: \$111,745.92; Expended: \$100,698.62; Balance: \$11,047.30). The Carroll Center Accessibility Project was approved by the Planning and Development Board January 11, 2017 and Funding and Owner/Contract Agreements executed on December 14, 2017. **Elevator modernization and accessibility improvement project is complete. The project has been inspected, approved and certified by the Commonwealth. NCEA site visits (Housing & Community Development Division) were performed 8/23/18 and 9/7/2018. Staff is proceeding with project close-out and paying retainage.**

**Highlands Playground Access** – (CD15-032 Budget: \$123,750; Expended: \$117,562.50; Balance: \$6,187.50). Accessible pathways component began in spring 2017 with contractor David White & Son. **Project has reached substantial completion. Contractors are fixing irrigation issues and repairing cracked concrete. Commissioner is considering an opening ceremony this fall.**

**Newton Corner Curb Cuts** – (Project CD15-034 Budget: \$141,940; Expended: \$98,957.87; Balance: \$42,982.13). 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. **Site visit was performed on 8/1/2018 and 23 curb cuts were reviewed. There is a concern for a curb cut design**

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located at Washington/Peabody, outside Corner Café, with a substantial drop from the sidewalk to the road. DPW is working to address this concern.

#### Curb Cut Locations:

Centre St/Jefferson St

Washington St/Channing St

Washington St/Charlesbank Rd/Centre St

Washington St/Peabody St

Washington St/Bacon St

**FY18 APS** – (CD18-03B Budget: \$17,457; Expended: \$16,918.50; Balance: \$538.50)

The COD voted to approve the installation of Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) at the locations listed below. Site visit was performed on 8/6/2018 and 22 APS were reviewed. A memo was sent to DPW, outlining staff recommendations and concerns, such as the removal of a protruding object, lengthened time on the pedestrian signal, and enablement of the extended press feature. DPW has reviewed the memo and is working to address these concerns.

#### APS Locations:

Beacon St/Washington St

Newtonville Ave/Harvard St

Grove St/Central St/Auburn St

**FY19 City Hall ADA Accessible Single Use Toilet Room**- (CD19-03A Budget: \$127,862; Expended \$0; Balance: \$127,862) The COD voted to allocate FY19 architectural access funds to the installation of an ADA accessible toilet room on the first floor of City Hall. The project will be managed by the City of Newton Public Buildings Department. Environmental review is complete. Site visit was performed on 8/23/2018. Waiting for Public Buildings to finalize the drawings and execution of a MOU.

**Barbara asked if there was a perimeter pathway at the renovated Newton Highlands Park. Jini said she didn't believe there is a perimeter path around the park limits, but there is a pathway into the edge of the woods and comes back out to the main pathways. Altogether, there are  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles of pathways throughout the park. Barbara asked about the entrance(s), and Jini described 2 entrances, one on Winchester Street and one on Dedham Street.**

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**4. Accessible (HP) Fines Reports (6:50-7:00)**

**Sgt. Lee gave the following Accessible (HP) fines reports:**

**PARKING TICKET AND FINES REPORT AUGUST 2018**

**PARKING TICKET MONTHLY TOTALS**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED 24**

**TOTAL VALUE OF TICKETS ISSUED 24 @ 200) \$ 4,800.00**

**REDUCTION AMOUNT (2 @ 200) \$ 400.00**

**TOTAL AMOUNT PAID (4 @ 200) \$ 800.00**

**TOTAL OUTSTANDING \$ 3,600.00**

**CODE # 26 ACCESSIBILITY SPOTS**

**NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED 18**

**TOTAL VALUE (18 @ 200) \$ 3,600.00**

**REDUCTION AMOUNT (2 @ 200) \$ 400.00**

**TOTAL AMOUNT PAID \$ 400.00**

**TOTAL DUE \$ 2,800.00**

**CODE # 27 CURB CUTS**

**NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED 6**

**TOTAL VALUE (6 @ 200) \$ 1,200.00**

**REDUCTION AMOUNT \$ 0**

**TOTAL AMOUNT PAID (2 @ 200) \$ 400**

**TOTAL DUE \$ 800.00**

**PARKING TICKET AND FINES REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2019**

**As of September 1, 2018**

**FY 2019 Year-to-date Parking Ticket Totals – August 2018 (2 months)**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED 58**

**TOTAL VALUE OF TICKETS ISSUED \$ 11,600.00**

**REDUCTION AMOUNT \$ 3,200.00**

**TOTAL AMOUNT PAID \$ 3,610.00**

**TOTAL OUTSTANDING \$ 5,210.00**

**CODE # 26 ACCESSIBILITY SPOTS**

**NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED 45**

**TOTAL VALUE (45 @ 200) \$ 9,000.00**

**REDUCTION AMOUNT (16 @ 200) \$ 3,200.00**

**TOTAL AMOUNT PAID \$ 2,200.00\***

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**TOTAL DUE \$ 4,010.00**

**\*a violator paid \$ 400.00 for a \$ 200.00 ticket)**

**CODE # 27 CURB CUTS**

**NUMBER OF TICKETS ISSUED 13**

**TOTAL VALUE (13 @ 200) \$ 2,600.00**

**REDUCTION AMOUNT \$ 0**

**TOTAL AMOUNT PAID \$ 1,410.00**

**TOTAL DUE \$ 1,200.00**

**Lucie asked if he a chance to speak to the person responsible for appeals/dismissing parking tickets. Most of the dismissals are due to drivers, who have either forgotten to display their placard, or the placard fell off or the placard was left on the dashboard wrong side up. Some of the newer cars with all the cameras, it is nearly impossible to hang the placard on the rear view mirror. Now, as long as the placard is visible, right side up, but on the dashboard. At the end of this discussion, Girard joined the meeting. Warren, one of our guests, wondered if the violations could be connected to the Inspection sticker, which is yearly.**

**5. Treasurer's Report (7:00-7:05)**

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

As of September 11, 2018, the balances of the COD accounts are as follows:

Account #14-3314M3 HP 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 #14M1146-4710HP Revenue taken in during the year for Fines Collected

Balance: \$0

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: **\$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: \$6400.00

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

Type: Revolving Account

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Balance: \$940.00

Account# 29B22001 Disability Commission Gift  
Type: Gift/Donation Account  
Balance: \$0.00

**6. ADA Coordinator's Report (7:05-7:10)**

**Because there are many guests on the agenda, Jini deferred her report and announcements under Old/New Business.**

**Jini distributed the following ADA activities report:**

Site Visits:

- FY18 CDBG Funded APS – 3 Locations
- CDBG Funded Curb Ramp Locations (near Carr School)
- Newton Corner Improvements- 2 visits
- Waban Square- 2 locations, island with benches, path at end of Montclair
- Underwood Playground- to check out 'grass mats' over wood chips
- Location for City Hall single use toilet room on first floor
- Waban Hill Reservoir- path around the reservoir at top
- Carroll Center- inspected new elevator

Trainings:

- Webinars: Section 508 and Reflecting on the ADA

Meeting/Events/Conference Calls:

- Meeting with Mayor and Co-Chairs
- Traffic Council- for accessible parking space out front of Waban Post Office
- MBTA- Track & Signal Project- attended public meeting
- CIP- on Steering Committee
- Austin Street Housing - every other week meetings
- Fair Housing Committee- I attend this monthly
- Complete Streets Committee & Road Paving- I attend, every other week

**7. High School Disability Awareness Campaign (7:10-7:25)**

**Nathan Persampieri is a high school Senior at Newton North, and a member of the city's Youth Commission. When he interned with Understanding Our Differences this summer, a disability awareness program in the Newton elementary schools, he came up with an idea. His goal is to educate more people, especially teens, about disabilities, as he himself is. He feels that many teenagers are very self-absorbed in their own**

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minds and activities, and don't notice or look around outside themselves. He described his plans to launch a Disability Awareness Campaign at both Newton high schools this fall. He has come up with an acronym, THINK, which represents T-Teens, H-Help, I-Include, N-Notice, and K-Kickstart a conversation. He has also organized a film series showing several movies about students with disabilities, and a panel discussion/forum, as well. The first movie being screened is "Intelligent Lives", on September 25 at the Eliot Church. The next movie in the series is on October 23, and the movie is "Wonder", same time (6:30) and place, Eliot Church. Last spring he organized 2 panels called Beyond Kindness, in hopes to encourage his peers to be more compassionate towards people with disabilities. He is a firm believer that all people should be treated equally and included, whether they have a disability, a different background, color, LGBTQ, sexual orientation, etc. When Lucie asked him what the members of the COD could do to help, he asked if they could spread the word about the film series and if we know high schoolers who might like to help on the Campaign, they can contact Jini for his contact information. Also, he will keep the COD updated on his film series and high school campaign.

**8. Accessibility Discussion with DPW Staff (7:25-7:50)**

Shane Mark, DPW Director of Street Operations, and Terry Crowley, DPW Construction Coordinator, were invited to address some serious concerns regarding the state of disrepair of sidewalks in general and in specific areas of the city that Barbara has experienced firsthand. Barbara is visually impaired and has a Drop Foot and wears a brace, and uses a guide dog. Despite her disabilities, Barbara walks miles every day. Back in the spring of 2017, She received instruction from a trainer from the guide dog school where her new guide dog came from, and learned a new route along Washington Street, between Woodland Station and Prospect Street, as a friend of hers was moving to that area. Together they discovered many sidewalks in disrepair, major tripping hazards, sinkholes in the sidewalk and street, just how terrible the conditions were for walking. She and her instructor reported these crumbling sidewalks, with photos, to the city, both through emails and 311, and frequent follow-up correspondence for over a year. She is now being told by DPW that it will now be another year, in 2019, before this long stretch of sidewalk will be replaced. In the meantime, many asphalt patches have been made to temporarily fix the heaved sidewalks, etc., but in some cases these patches have made it worse

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for her. Girard added that the lack of an adequate explanation for the delay in response and repair from DPW is unacceptable, to the point of indifference, and that is why we invited you both to explain why the repair/replacement of these sidewalks have not had a higher priority and what can be expected going forward. Terry explained that she was the Citizen's Assistant under Mayor Warren's administration for 4 years and became the DPW Construction Coordinator since January of this year. Although she is a novice in some of these areas, not with all accessibility issues, and that 'indifferent' would not be a word staff and others would use to describe herself, she works closely with all DPW staff and with Jini to ensure attention is given to access issues as they arise. She meets weekly with Jini and they conduct site visits of access issues frequently. Rob added that the 311 reporting system, when there is an access issue, is woefully inadequate, sending completion emails when the issue has not been resolved, especially under DPW's purview. Rob and the Commission want to work alongside with DPW to resolve these issues, but certain ones have been going on too long. Barbara added that she hasn't gotten a straight answer why the repair and replacement of sidewalks ended at Chestnut St. on Beacon, instead of going through Waban Square and all the way to Washington St, even though it appears that section of Beacon Street was paved over. Shane addressed Barbara's first area of concern, the sidewalk from Woodland Station to Prospect Street, by apologizing that someone dropped the ball and it shouldn't have taken 15 months to replace the cement panels of that stretch of sidewalk, as DPW takes these issues very seriously. Shane explained the Roads program where the city is spending \$9.5 million to repave the 685 miles of roads. Before embarking on this ambitious endeavor, the city, through a vendor, employed a StreetScan company to evaluate the condition of our roads, called a pavement condition index. Through that effort, the city discovered that many roads were in poor condition, with a low score on the PCI, and mapped out a plan to address the worse roads first. In addition, there are 2400 sidewalks repairs in the queue, that have come in from 311, and the dilemma is to start with the oldest ones first, some 4 and 5 years old, or more recent ones. DPW mitigates safety issues, such as heaved sidewalks, due to trees, etc. and put asphalt where the panel has raised up so that there is no longer a tripping hazard, and will eventually be replaced. Their plans on Washington Street are to work out front of Warren House. They hope to be out there this week. Also they will be replacing a driveway apron at Chetlin



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(sp) with asphalt, instead of concrete. In addition, a bid has gone out to hire a contractor to replace concrete panels along sections of Washington Street this fall, as it is too long a stretch to be done in-house. Shane also addressed the 311 system, saying that complaints come into his division, staff go out and assess, and ramp with asphalt to make safe and then it goes on the long term repair list, to be replaced in the future. The message to the resident is to indicate what has been done and that it is on the long term list for replacement, but he will look into why this is not happening. Lastly, Shane said that the volume of work that DPW does on a daily basis is huge, and sometimes things get lost, not intentionally, but it does happen, and that is why they have Terry's new position, both as a liaison to the public and to prevent things getting lost. Jini and Terry meet weekly both for site visits and for updates on complaints that have come into her. So there is just one contact point, Jini will pass onto Terry any access issues she receives that have to do with DPW she will pass on to Terry and get back to Jini, who will report back to you or anyone who has an access issue. Girard had gone out to Waban Square to view the sidewalks, near Manitoba, and wondered why there were some new sections of sidewalk but not far from those there are disintegrating sections of sidewalk. In the past, the SPW had tunnel vision and only fixed the cement panel that was a problem without looking at the ones nearby. That is why Shane has taken over and has a more holistic approach, and more than the repair for safety is considered. The Co-chairs thanked Shane and Terry for the explanations of how sidewalks repaired and replaced, along with the roads program. Shane also thanked the COD for having him and Terry to bring these access issues to their attention.

**9. Accessible Parking Space Request (7:50-8:00)**

Rodney Bianchi attended the meeting on behalf of his 95 year old mother, Mary, who has several disabilities, including mobility impairments. His driveway is narrow, has roots heaving the old driveway, and it is a longer route for his mother to get in and out of his car at the driveway. Often, out front on Watertown Street, cars are parked there when he needs to take her to doctor's appointments, etc. Sgt. Lee had a chance to drive by the location of where an accessible parking space would be very helpful, out front of Mrs. Bianchi's residence. Lucie Made a motion to recommend that an accessible parking space be installed out front of 851 Watertown St. Jane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 9-0.

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**10. Ideas for MOD FY19 Grant (8:00-8:15)**

Jini presented several ideas that were discussed at the July COD meeting and letting the members know that there is only 2 weeks left before the grant application is due for this MOD ADA Improvement grant. There is enough data already gathered to put together two project grants, asking for APS for several intersections, and asking to create pathways/accessible routes from sidewalk/parking to playgrounds. Another idea discussed was the audit that Jini had initiated and has results, to restripe or pave and restripe some of the 51 parking lots audited. Even though there is a lot of information in this audit, there may not be enough time to select which parking lots to improve. The consensus was to apply for either the APS or the park pathways, or both if there is time to get all the data and selections together for the application deadline.

**11. Old/New Business (8:15-8:30)**

Jini made some announcement of events coming up that folks may be interested in, such as, the MOD Disability Summit on October 5 in Somerville, a program at the library on Hearing Loss at on September 26, the CAM Training on October 16 and 17 in Natick, and in movie theaters, a movie about guide dogs, called “The Pick of the Litter”.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:24PM.

**NEXT MEETING DATE: October 10, 2018 (Note this is the second Wednesday due to the Columbus Day holiday )**

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](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.