



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Commission On Disability

Meeting Date: January 31, 2022

MINUTES

Room Zoom

Time: 3:30PM

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

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“Funding for the Benefit of People with Disabilities” Subcommittee

Subcommittee Members Present:

Rob Caruso, remotely on Zoom

Lucie Chansky, remotely on Zoom

Nancy Kritzman, remotely on Zoom

Anne Marie Killilea, remotely on Zoom

Eileen Sandberg, remotely on Zoom

City Staff Present:

Jini Fairley, ADA/504 Coordinator

Guests:

Councilor Danberg

Councilor Bowman

Councilor Downs

1. Introductions

The meeting started at about 3:35 with introductions. All Subcommittee members were present.

2. Chair Selection for Subcommittee

Lucie nominated Rob and Nancy seconded it. Lucie asked if Girard should be a Co-chair and Jini and Rob indicated that Girard was not interested. The vote was taken and Rob was elected Chair of this Subcommittee by a vote of 5 – 0.

3. Membership

COD members present affirmed their decision to be part of this Subcommittee.

Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath,
**Director, Planning &
Development**

Amanda Berman
**Director, Housing &
Community Development**

Nika Sandal
**Planner
Community Development**

Members

Anne Marie Killilea, Co-Chair

Eileen Sandberg, Co-Chair

Jane Brown, Treasurer

Warren Abramson

Rob Caruso

Lucie Chansky

Lakshmi Kadambi

Nancy Kritzman

Darby Leigh

Sandra Lingley

Barbara Lischinsky

Girard Plante

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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4. Mission of Subcommittee

Rob suggested raising City funds for the benefit of people with ALL types of disabilities. Nancy suggested services be included. Keep it general without specifics yet.

5. Ideas/Projects for ARPA Funding

Anne Marie asked where we should begin? Maybe projects that haven't been approved by the COD due to lack of available funds. Rob thought that other projects throughout the City need attention.

Lucie and Rob thought that the ARPA funds would be a potential source, under the Mayor's discretion. Councilor Bowman talked about what the ARPA funds were designed for which included people with disabilities that have been impacted by the pandemic especially if they have pre-existing conditions. A second group would be those who are in a lower income group. And she suggested to create a master plan of things to get done. Councilor Downs thought that a master plan with multi-year spending should be developed. Lucie asked if the Mayor controlled the CDBG spending. Councilor Vicki Danberg answered yes, but only in certain areas of the City because CDBGF funds are driven by the AMI (Area Median Income) and certain areas are above that level like Newton Centre. Rob corrected her and said that the Planning Department informed him that CDBG funds could be spent anywhere in the City. Vicki said that from her discussions with the Mayor, that even though the City would receive \$63M in ARPA funds, the Mayor already had requests for \$500M! So, we have to be very competitive in our ask. Lucie asked what is the deadline for the budget? Vicki said that the budget gets passed in late April early May. So we have some time. But ARPA funds will probably be laid out over years. Jini said that the regular budget is passed by Department. But ARPA is different. Jini confirmed that CDBG does not do neighborhoods anymore. It's basically affordable housing with 60%, 20% open space, 5% access and remaining administration.

6. Ideas/Projects for Funding Beyond ARPA

Rob asked Councilors if anything should be added? Alicia suggested a master plan. Andrea talked about the master plan for biking and walking that she thought had an accessibility component. Alicia said that the accessibility component was probably not what the Subcommittee envisioned. Jini said that she will be part of the discussions about the plan because there has to have an access component mostly about sidewalks. With curb ramps as a part of sidewalks. ARPA funds can be used for a consultant. Jini is working on the transition plan which is mostly barrier removal. Accessibility will be part of the bike and pedestrian plan, but not in the title. Because the COD is a stakeholder, the plan will have to come before the COD for input. Nicole will come before the COD soon. Jini will be reviewing the plan. A good start for the subcommittee might be the projects that the COD didn't or couldn't fund, just like you were talking about. ARPA is good for shovel ready or almost shovel ready projects similar to the 2008-09 projects to get the economy back. Good for the next two to three years, not a complete streetscape for Newton Centre. Lucie suggested a disability consultant.

Eileen wants to know where to begin. Lucie suggested members coming up with ideas and submitting to Rob.

Jini said that you should not mix up master plan with transition plan. Rob envisions looking at projects that were previously before the COD where there is a dollar figure for and start from there. But that's not the only things to look at. We should also be considering services for mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities.

That's what this group has to come up with. The all-inclusive aspect of this group. Lucie asked about complaints. Andrea says that you will want limits for ARPA. You will want limits on budget items. Alicia does not want to lose sight of making Newton more livable. Possible override? Can a master plan be accomplished in 20 or 30 years? ARPA funds for planning with master plan. Rob says handling such a large plan is much too large for this subcommittee. Putting plans into the CIP is just kicking the can down the road. We need to get things done on a more immediate basis. Safety is an immediate problem that has to be addressed. Accessibility is in the same category. Jini says that a curb ramp inventory and sidewalk inventory is close to being finished and that should help to locate problems. Plus, a parking lot inventory. Specific problems. The transition plan has a lot of this in it. A lot of things are going on behind the scenes. Maybe just the non-compliant curb ramps? An accessibility consultant be on board for large projects. Andrea is working with Alicia and Ted Hess-Mahan to get accessibility consultant for any affordable housing units. Maybe through an ordinance.

Eileen suggesting action items, looking at the CIP for items having to do with safety. High priority is safety.

Lucie sees welcoming people into Newton through a program in the high schools using volunteers. She suggests each member come up with 5 things and submit to Rob. Starting with the CIP. Jini is on the steering committee for the CIP. Maybe putting money into existing services.

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7. Next Meeting Dates-Monthly -Same Day/Time?

Rob suggests another Monday for another meeting.

Jini suggests Monday, February 28th at 3:30. All agreed.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned a little after 5PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE: February 28, 2022

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.