

Minutes

Brookline Commission on Disability
Wednesday, January 12, 2021; 5:30 PM – 7:15 PM
Meeting held via Zoom

Members in Attendance: Jim Miczek, Acting Chair; Jim Lee; Elaine Ober; Henry Winkelman; Ann Kamensky; Rob Heist; Shawn O'Neal; Joan Mahon; Nancy Moore, Transportation Board Liaison

Members not in Attendance: Miriam Aschkenasy, Select Board Member

Note taker: Sarah Kaplan, ADA Coordinator – Ex. Officio

Members of the public in attendance: Abby Swaine, Saralynn Allaire, unidentified call-in user

Acting Chair, Jim M. was not able to stay for the whole meeting. For this reason, Sarah Kaplan, ADA Coordinator – Ex. Officio chaired the meeting in his place.

Meeting commenced at 5:36 PM.

Introductions/Public Comment: Jim announced that he is going to stay for the election and then hand the meeting to the ADA Coordinator to chair the rest of the meeting.

Election of the new Chair of the Commission on Disability: Jim Lee spoke about his tenure as a member of the Commission for over a year and his work on the Variance Subcommittee. He wants to continue the goal of focusing on outreach to people with disabilities in Town. He wants to get more people with disabilities involved in the meetings. He wants the Commission to be the voice for people with disabilities in Town when they need help.

Sean O'Neal has decided to not to run for the position of chair. She feels she needs more time to learn.

Vote on Jim Lee being elected Chair: A roll call vote was taken and all members present voted in favor of Jim Lee becoming the new Chair of the Commission in Disability. **Motion carried 8-0-0.**

Further discussion re: the need for a Deputy Chair or Co-Chair and a Treasurer: The need for these positions was discussed. Members did not feel they need a Treasurer, but the need for a Deputy Chair or Co-Chair was discussed at length. While the ADA Coordinator can chair the meeting if needed, she feels uncomfortable with this as she does not live in Brookline and is not a voting member of the Commission; she also feels staff should not run meetings.

Miriam has expressed that she as the Select Board member is automatically the Co-Chair, but that is new information to the ADA Coordinator.

- **Action:** The ADA Coordinator will check with her supervisor for more guidance. The discussion was tabled for a future meeting.

Review of the December 2021 minutes:

- **Vote:** Jim Lee found a typo which was corrected. Henry made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Jim Lee seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Joan abstained due to her absence in the last meeting. All others members present voted in favor of the motion. **Motion carried, 7-0-1.**

Variances: None.

Old Business

Update on FY 2022 Mass. Office on Disability Grant: The Commission was awarded the grant to upgrade the crossing of Harvard St @ Stedman and Williams with an Accessible Pedestrian Signal. The grant requested \$18,382 to upgrade that crossing and the grant application was funded in full. Acceptance of the grant by the Select Board was completed at the 1/11/2022 Select Board Meeting and paperwork will be signed and sent back to MOD shortly.

- **Action:** The ADA Coordinator will provide further updates as needed and bring any requests from MOD to the full Commission.

New Business

Report from Transportation Board Liaison: Nancy talked about the December 2021 Transportation Board meeting which was an open discussion on traffic calming, Complete Streets, and Vision Zero. Vision Zero is an aspirational statement being adopted by some towns of refusing to accept that pedestrian accidents or deaths and injuries are inevitable and working to eliminate all injuries or deaths as a result of traffic issues. For more info on Vision Zero, go to: <https://visionzeronetwork.org/>

Nancy feels the Transportation Board should have more open sessions in the future.

Tonight at 6:30 PM, Transportation Board is having a special meeting to kick off the **Complete Streets Washington St. Project**. Nancy explained what Complete Streets meant. For more info on Complete Streets, go to: <https://www.mass.gov/complete-streets-funding-program>

A member of the local disability community, preferably a direct abutter, or nearby resident is to be appointed to the Washington St. Design Review Committee. Nancy suggested that it be the Chair of the Commission on Disability or their designee be the

appointed member of the disability community, as they do with the Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Bicycle Committee. Todd K. had no issue with this suggestion; Todd is aware of a local member of the disability community who is an abutter and is interested, but that he agrees the Chair BCOD should make the final decision regarding who to appoint as the Commission's representative on the Committee.

Elaine asked if financial support for Accessible Pedestrian Signals are part of Complete Streets. Nancy says she does not remember APS being discussed in other Complete Streets Projects, but she will ask Todd and get more information to bring back to the Commission. The ADA Coordinator posited that if APS were not part of Complete Streets, it is likely because full APS may be considered best practice but not required.

Jim Lee suggested that if the abutter (who he may know, but is not sure) is blind; and as such, Jim would prefer to appoint someone else with another disability to the Committee as the Commission's designee. Shawn O'Neal volunteered.

Abby suggested widening the sidewalk to allow for more space to get by because people park with the ends of their cars over the end of the sidewalk.

- **Action:** Nancy said she would let Jim know if her suggestion is adopted and if so, then he can appoint himself or a designee. She would also ask about APS as part of Complete Streets.

Review of January 2022 Access Brookline column for TAB: Abby shared her screen. She presented the draft column.

- **Vote:** Rob made a motion that the column be approved as drafted. Elaine seconded. A roll call vote was taken. All members present voted in favor of the motion. Jim M. was not present at the time and did not vote.
Motion carried, 7-0-0.

Support of ASL as a Foreign Language at Brookline High School: Ann's daughter and a friend are working on getting ASL designated as Foreign Language at the High School. Members offered to write a letter of support.

Also discussed was the possibility of drafting an article about how to best communicate with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, especially since most people are wearing masks due to the ongoing pandemic.

Access Brookline column being added to/moved to the Patch: The TAB has been inconsistent about printing the column in the print version and sometimes the online version, so Elaine wondered if the column should be moved to the Brookline Patch – which is 100% online and hyper local. Elaine is happy to reach out to the Brookline

Patch editor if the Commission agrees. Abby suggested doing a 'digest' or shorter version of the TAB column for the Patch.

- **Action:** Elaine will reach out to the Patch and bring back information to Commission. Abby will reach out the TAB and get confirmation the Access Brookline column will be reliably printed going forward.

Discussion of the Access Brookline column By-Line: Saralynn suggested giving Abby and Elaine direct credit on the by-line. It currently reads 'By the Commission on Disability.' Members spoke up in favor of giving Abby and Elaine credit on behalf of the Commission. Abby prefers to be anonymous, but will be named if the Commission feels it will increase readership. Elaine feels it should come from the Commission as a whole. The ADA Coordinator does not want to force people to claim ownership.

ADA Coordinator Update:

- MOD Grant update provided under old business.
- Housing Production Plan Forums – the first is January 26. Gregory Zapata would like to attend next month's meeting to discuss the HPP with the Commission.
- Meredith Mooney from Community Planning and Development wants to use ARPA funding to help local businesses create accessible outdoor seating.

Discussed at length if both should present at the same meeting. Jim Lee will reach out to Greg Z about maybe presenting in March.

Abby talked about using funding to help businesses make accessibility improvements.

Announcements: None.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 9, 2022 @ 5:30 PM via Zoom.

Henry motioned to adjourn. Ann seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:43 PM.