

Minutes - FINAL

Brookline Commission on Disability Meeting

Friday, May 20, 2022

11:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Via Zoom

Members in Attendance: Jim Lee, Chair; Elaine Ober; Ann Kamensky; Rob Heist; Henry Winkelman

Members not in Attendance: Jim Miczek, Miriam Aschkenasy, Joan Mahon, Shawn O'Neal

Note taker: Jim Lee

Members of the public in attendance: Sarah Kaplan (ADA Coordinator), Marissa Vogt

Note: Sarah Kaplan created the ZOOM invitations and remained at the meeting until quorum was established; she had to leave before public comment.

Introductions / Public Comment: Marissa Vogt introduced herself as a town meeting member from precinct #6 and member of the pedestrian advisory committee. She clarified her comments at this meeting were as a Brookline resident.

Ms. Vogt informed the Commission that she, along with others, wrote a budget amendment to increase sidewalk repair funding from \$353,000 to \$500,000. The increase is necessary to bring Brookline sidewalks in compliance with Pro-Agg regulations. Ms. Vogt explained it is estimated that \$4.2M would be necessary to bring all Brookline streets to Pro-Agg compliance but this increase could start the process. Henry Winkelman emphasized the need for improvements on Longwood Avenue. Rob Heist agreed, describing the difficulty of traversing Longwood Avenue as a wheelchair user. The chair thanked Ms. Vogt for this information and update on the town budget.

May 2022 Access Brookline Column: The chair thanked Elaine Ober and Abby Swain for their continued efforts writing the monthly "Access Brookline" column. The chair emphasized the importance of the information and resources provided in the May 2022 column; and made a motion for approval. Henry Winkelman seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Variance: A variance application was submitted to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) by the Town of Brookline with architect William Rawn Associates. The variance was seeking relief at the Brookline High School, 115 Greenough St. Brookline, MA. for 2 separate requests.

Request #1 was to install an incline "platform" lift between the 3rd and 4th floor of the Brookline high school. The installation of this lift required relief from 521 CMR 28.12.4. This lift would be a permanent, second means of egress/Access between these floors.

Request #2 was to maintain an incline “chair style” lift at the Brookline High School. This chair lift would only be installed in the event the elevator and permanently installed platform lift were not available. This request was seeking relief from 521 CMR 28.12.5; and would give the ability to install the chairlift without submitting an additional variance.

Jim Lee described the two code provisions, 521 CMR 28.12.4 and 28.12.5. Rob Heist explained the difference between the platform lift and the chairlift. Commission members agreed that a second means of permanent egress/access was necessary between the 3rd and 4th floor. However, with the installation of an incline, platform lift (request #1), the commission did not see the need for a “chair style” Incline lift.

Commission members felt that if both the elevator and platform lift were inoperable, the emergency installation of a chair style lift would not resolve a potentially larger issue. Furthermore, the commission felt the variance process should not be avoided if the need for a “chair style” lift installation becomes necessary.

A motion was made by Jim Lee to support variance request #1 and not support variance request #2. Rob Heist seconded the motion, and a rollcall vote was called by the chair. The commission voted 5-0 to support variance request #1 and not support variance request #2.

Jim Lee made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:37 AM, Henry Winkelman seconded the motion; and the meeting was adjourned.