

# Draft minutes of 2023 October 10th SCPD meeting

## ROLL CALL

### Members

Deborah Haber,  
Pauline Downing,  
Harriotte Ranvig: Vice Chair,  
Holly Simone: Chair,  
Katie Milton,  
Frank Lee: associate member

### City Staff

Adrienne Pomeroy: ADA Coordinator and Staff Liaison to the Commission,

### Guests

Allie, Emma: journalism students from Emerson college,  
Collin Killick,  
Councilor J.T. Scott (joined later in the meeting)  
Helen Corrigan (joined later in the meeting)

### Absent

Brian Postlewaite: Director of Engineering, ex-officio member, secretary

## Minutes

In Brian's absence, associate member Frank was unanimously elected to take minutes for this meeting.

Frank asked Chair (Holly Simone) whether he could record the meeting to help with the minutes taking. Holly granted permission.

Describing the OWL, a Zoom telepresence device.

Agenda being read aloud.

The meat of the meeting will be the first 21 pages of the COS ADA Transition Plan. The latest Plan is the 2013 version.

Adrienne Pomeroy gives the ADA Coordinator and Staff Liaison update

Oct 11, 6:30pm doors open OSPCD (Office of Strategic Planning and Development) is presenting at the Arts at the Armory the Climate Forward plan. Staff did a workshop today on the plan. Armory 1st floor.

Harriotte asked whether the meeting will be on Zoom as well, or remotely attendable in any way. Adrienne said she would check.

Someone joined on Zoom (HCORR), possibly Helen Corrigan who came last time, but not sure. Having tech issues and unable to unmute.

Fall 2023 season of Community Meetings is starting. Ward 4 is the next one. Wednesday the 18th Ward 1. Thursday 19th at Kennedy School Ward 5. Monday is Ward 3 at Somerville High School. Wed. 25th Ward 2, Argenziano School. Thursday 26th is all-Portuguese meeting. Wed. Nov 1st, all-Spanish meeting.

Thurs Nov 2nd is virtual-only meeting. RSJ (Somerville's Department of Racial and Social Justice) is NOT doing a formal presentation but will be tabling. Adrienne will be at Ward 1 and 3 meetings.

Oct 30th: Women's Commission and RSJ will be holding a anti-violence event.

Every year MOD gives each city ability to apply for a grant to start or improve its ADA Transition Plan. Adrienne is applying for \$75k for a consultant. Somerville has applied before, eg Oct 2020. We've never gotten the grant. We're not very competitive because we already have a Plan and a Commission. Grants team submitted on 14 Sept., it was due on Sept 15th.

End Adrienne's report.

Harriotte asks about updates for the interviews and the interview prep. meeting.

Adrienne says she needs to finalize the RSJ staffer who will be attending. Women's Commission and Human Rights Commission are recruiting members simultaneously. Harriotte, Holly, and I, and an RSJ staffer will get together to plan who asks which question of the standardized interviews at the interview. Adrienne plans to have that staffer confirmed tomorrow. There are 7 applicants! We currently have 6 full commission members. Katie won't apply to be reappointed when her term ends in December.

### Vice Chair's Report

Holly and Harriotte went to State House to testify for H.220, which would create a State level commission to study how to improve best practices for blind pedestrian safety. Harriotte believes the composition of the proposed commission is flawed-- too many state officials and engineers, not enough blind consumers. Also the only output is a report that goes to some state department heads. When will they actually go to municipalities? How long will this take? Hence Harriotte is not in favor.

Holly says the hearing room was inaccessible. There were cables across the floor making a tripping hazard and making wheelchair access questionable.

Adrienne says the state is obligated to provide Braille materials even retroactively upon request.

Harriotte says there were two ASL interpreters on screen.

Holly says there was live captioning. Captioning was too small to see.

Collin Killick says: we have folks working on ASL-accessibility at the statehouse. The State House's ADA coordinator is aware of the problems but is fighting an uphill battle.

Harriotte asks Collin for bill number for the ASL bill, but he didn't have it.

Deborah: What was nature of bill 213?

Holly: "An Act to increase the safety of individuals with disabilities relying on life-support equipment." Would mandate that when persons with disabilities are discharged from hospital that the hospital medical staff is responsible for handoff to at-home services for care.

Holly: when we testify we can only testify as a resident but CANNOT represent the SCPD, though we can identify that we are members of SCPD.

Harriotte asks: can you keep me apprised of all the bills you'll be testifying on?

Holly: I can BCC whoever is interested.

Pauline: When Mitt Romney was Gov., I testified that we who are disabled are marginalized. Don't remember result. But seems like we're going a step back. When I was a little girl, when I needed Braille I got it.

Katie: Why is this?

Pauline: When someone is deaf and has jury duty they can provide an ASL interpreter but I couldn't get Braille.

Katie pointed out the logistics differences between having real-time interpretation and getting ahead-of-time Braille copies of documents.

Pauline: If I'm called for jury duty and need braille doc, but I can't get it. A few years ago, I served on a jury, where the deposition was read out loud, which was great because I then knew what was going on. If that hasn't happened, I wouldn't have been able to serve adequately on the jury.

Holly: I appreciate your feedback and I am sorry for the negative experiences of the past.

Deborah Haber: Supreme Court may remove Disability testers.

Harriotte: Please send particulars about this Supreme Court decision.

Holly: ask Helen C. if anything to add. No.

### [Handicapped Parking Fines funds report](#)

Holly: We currently have \$164,000. Haven't gotten latest deposits. We have the Celtics tax. This funds total is after the scholarships we recently gave.

Holly: Any more ideas for HP funds? Open floor.

Pauline: When are the tickets for the (disability-inclusive Celtics game outing)?

Holly + Harriotte: 29th January 2024

Katie: inclusive dance class?

Holly: accessible yoga?

Harriotte: rehearsal/perf. of Boston Pops, Symphony, and even free concerts at New England Conservatory.

Deborah: social event like gaming night, movie night.

Adrienne: Talking to Mobility about the signs we wanted on the Community Path.

Adrienne: We have substantial money because we're a populous city. Signs on Path would be a great collaboration with city departments. RSJ wants to do a film series on inclusion, racial, social justice. Think about films to suggest. The film "Crip Camp" is great from education point of view but also highlights many disability advocates. HRC and WC will be suggesting films too.

SCPD should select 1-2 films so Adrienne can start the licensing process for showing.

Adrienne: Want to be very intentional in our choice. Many disability films have good intentions but miss the mark.

Holly: Suggesting books about disability inclusion? Also, many kids nowadays have zero physical books. We could perhaps give out books about disability to kids.

Ward 2 City Councilor J.T. Scott is joining.

Helen Corrigan chats that she's here to learn more about our commission. (Interjection)

Harriotte has some books in mind.

Holly: we should consider a range of age groups.

Harriotte has a friend who does translation in Amherst schools, they have a program that gives kids books in their HOME language and parents agree to work with them.

Deborah suggests "Sound of Metal": hearing loss as an adult.

Katie gives thumbs up!

Katie: The book "True Biz" about a school for the hard of hearing.

Holly recognizes Councilor Scott, and thanks him for attending.

Councilor Scott says he's only here to listen.

Holly summarizes to Councilor Scott what has happened in meeting thus far.

Holly: beautify sound-barrier murals on Mystic Ave. that go through the Somerville Arts Council.

Katie asks if we can cosponsor artists.

Holly says today she and Harriotte saw testimony at State House about advocating a bill to provide employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the arts. The bill asks for half a percent of the state budget to fund this employment and training.

Harriotte: [OpenDoorArts.org](http://OpenDoorArts.org)?

Adrienne: They're now in Boston.

Holly says she and Harriotte spoke with Christopher Robbins at the State House event. Christopher testified on a panel with [OpenDoorArts.org](http://OpenDoorArts.org) in Roxbury.

Holly shared about the upcoming White Cane Day at the State House. Many blindness advocacy and support orgs will be tabling. For example, the City of Boston Disability Commission, the MBTA.

Pauline asks when the White Cane Day is. Holly says it's this Friday.

Adrienne: Posted on SCPD FB page about White Cane Day. There's a boundary on posting non-City events to the city calendar.

Holly invites Pauline to go.

Holly found TheImpossibleDream.org, shows a catamaran that was universally designed to be accessible.

Pauline: Carroll Center May-Sept. has sailing program for blind folks, every Saturday.

Adrienne: White Cane Day is in person only. First time in 4 years this is in person. There is food and maybe that's why they need registration.

Holly asks Emerson students for ideas.

Emma: Goat yoga! Scary. The goats can bite you and step on you!

### [Discussing the ADA Transition Plan](#)

Brief description of disability law and inclusivity.

Katie: ADA was passed in 1990.

Holly: In 2013, 3rd party invited to assess City of Somerville for accessibility. This self-assessment helped create the ADA Transition Plan. Adrienne has led community feedback events on the plan.

Holly wants to discuss the first 21 pages.

Holly thinks certain sections are important to concern SCPD.

Councilor Scott: I'm impressed with the living experience of Goat Yoga in this room (meaning Emma).

Holly: Back to ADA Trans. Plan: SCPD will have role in reviewing. On

Adrienne: Perkins hit a formatting issue with the ADA Transition Plan and could only mail out the Braille copy today,

Holly said in 1973, Congress passed the Rehab Act. The ADA extends Sect. 504 of that Act. Section 504 says that if any municipality accepts fed. money it must make what it builds with the funds accessible. ADA extends this to say REGARDLESS of funding source, city facilities MUST be accessible.

Holly explains the difference between "ADA compliant" and truly accessible. We can continue discussing the ADA Trans. Plan next meeting.

Adrienne: Please communicate which new sections we want Brailled asap. I could work with Frank to check formatting.

Holly: We advocate for building things universally designed, but also simultaneously fix existing accessibility issues. Eg. in a park, ALL swings should be accessible. Only having one accessible swing makes me feel I'm different.

### [First-responder trainings on working with persons with disabilities](#)

Pauline: Adrienne, can we talk about the training?

Adrienne: Last year and early this year, I did Cultural Competency training for Police and Fire depts. on how to work with PwDs. This year, Pauline joined me for the Fire Dept. training -- went well. Firefighters enjoyed meeting Pauline and asked very good questions.

Pauline: don't know how the training went but the firemen seemed to enjoy. One fireman recognized Pauline.

Harriotte: Training was multiple days?

Adrienne: Yes. Firefighters split into diff. companies, like Engine 3, Tower 1. Four mornings, four fire companies each session. Each session was 20 minutes plus Q+A. Received well. Was repeat info for many. Giving the training also has me learn more about firefighters. Pauline had voiced that wasn't sure how they could get out in case of fire at her building. Fire Dept. added Pauline to their registry.

Adjourned at 8:32pm. Motion to adjourn, Pauline seconded. Unanimous acceptance.