



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT of RACIAL and SOCIAL JUSTICE
KATJANA BALLANTYNE, MAYOR

COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

14 November 2023

Regularly Monthly Meeting

Commissioners:

Adrienne Pomeroy, Staff Liaison, ADA Coordinator
Holly Simione, Chair
Harriotte Ranvig
Pauline Downing
Deborah Haber
Katie Milton, (absent)
Brian C. Postlewaite, Secretary, Director of Engineering

Assoc. Commissioners:

Frank Lee

Guests:

Viola Augustin, OSPCD, Mobility, Senior Transportation Planner
Kate White, OSPCD, Mobility, Transportation Planner
Jack Perenick
Mike Shaps
Danielle, Close Captioner

Note: Due to COVID-19 Shutdown, all attendees were remote via Zoom Meeting.

General:

- Minutes:
 - VOTE: 10 October 2023: 1 Abstain, All others approved.
 - VOTE: 6 November 2023: Approved unanimously.

Reports:

- Adrienne, ADA Coordinator:
 - Recently passed ordinance encourages businesses to provide closed captioning if their television provides that ability, and provides Commission members the ability to file complaints
 - Remote meeting security, in response to recent “Zoom Bombing” incidents:
 - Best handled by using the Webinar option in Zoom, however this is more complicated to administer
 - The next option would be to regularly change Zoom meeting links
 - Working to get meeting recordings onto the website
- Harriotte, Vice Chair:
 - Reaching out to Somerville Arts Council for signs to educate Community Path users about cane, wheelchair, elderly and other disabled path users

New Business:

- Tufts Street Reconstruction
 - Kate & Viola requesting feedback from Commission members
 - Removed street parking is inequitable to people with mobility disabilities
 - Do not use pavers, and wire-cut brick if necessary
 - Raised crosswalks are difficult to people with vision disabilities to distinguish:
 - It does not have slopes or edges for identification
 - A 48” long detectable warning panel would be better than the standard 24” long detectable warning panels
 - Detectable directional delineators may improve raised crosswalks
 - Brian: Engineering is researching the possibility of using these in Somerville, particularly at skewed intersections
 - Flashing lights would be helpful at Cross St. crosswalk

- Commission Candidates
 - 10 candidates for Commission were interviewed
 - The interview panel recommended 7 candidates for appointment
 - The Commission reviewed the recommendations for each of the 7 recommended candidates
 - VOTE: The Commission voted for each of the 7 recommended candidates individually. Each of the 7 votes were approved unanimously.

Old Business:

- Accessible Parking Funds:
 - \$8000 added to account for the month of October
 - Current balance is \$192,000
 - 2023/2024 Highschool Scholarship:
 - Last year the Commission provided \$50,000
 - Harriotte requests an increase to \$75,000 or \$100,000
 - Brian recommends increase of 2-5% per year so do not have to decrease future scholarships
 - Adrienne recommends using the City Scholarship Program instead of the Foundation we used last year, since it would be easier to administer
 - VOTE: Allocate \$55,000 to the 23/24 school year scholarship fund. Approved unanimously.
 - Desire to fund accessible play features and city playgrounds:
 - VOTE: Allocate \$5,000 for accessible swings. Approved unanimously.

Motion to Adjourn Meeting at 8:48 pm; approved unanimously.