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CITY OF SOMERVILLE
COMMISSION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

March 12, 2024
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (ET)
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>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Can anyone everyone online hear us? I want to make sure.

>> FRANK: The owl is difficult for me because the screens over there.

We tend to look at the screen and talk to the faces on the screen, but the owl is here.

>> ADRIENNE: If the squares, is the Brady Bunch is not engaging as you would like to be, I always recommend you bring your laptop to have the faces in front of you.

That is my suggestion.

I understand that.

>> FRANK: The people online think I am not talking to them.

Looks like I'm looking elsewhere so I'm actually looking at your faces on the screen.

>> ADRIENNE: I think everybody at home can understand we are looking like we are, does not necessarily mean we are not engaging directly.

>> Calling the meeting to order.

I'm going to go through roll call to make sure we have everyone present.

>> HARRIOTTE: Here.

>> FRANK: Here

>> BRIAN: Here

>> DEBORAH: Here.

>> NICK: Here.

>> Mike?

>> Helen, can you hear us?

>> Helen can you hear us?

>> She is not speaking.

>> May need some support to know what to push.

>> We speaking earlier? Nothing was coming up on the screen.

Now it is.

>> Awesome.

Sheila?

>> Here.

>> Ingrid?

>> --

>> Lynn, Laurie.

>> LAURIE: Here.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I am here.

So we have as always.

>> ADRIENNE: I will send her the link.

Here you go.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: And

We have a guest.

I'm going to first start by reading the agenda.

>> Has Laurie been...

no, not sworn in.

>> Soon.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I'm going to start by going through creating the agenda.

And we have against tonight.

I don't think she will be joining us for a little bit.

Her name is Meg Bandarra.

And we are going to go through review and Some minutes.

We are going to have some updates.

And then...

>> There is Ingrid.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Hi Ingrid! We are going to spend about 20 minutes and Meg is going to share some information about the unpaved trails advocacy that seems to be a part of this.

Were going to have Harriotte give us an update on communications.

And then I'm going to go through some things on the bylaws.

The minutes and then we have some great new business.

Disability pride.

Training.

Finances.

We're going to talk about...

Does anyone have any questions about the agenda that I just read? Okay.

I did not yet get the two transcripts for November and September.

I'm going to read to agree to the minutes.

Unless anyone here has reviewed the minutes and has any corrections they would like to provide.

Okay. And, Adrienne, you have the floor.

>> ADRIENNE: So you are tabling the minutes?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I am tabling the minutes.

>> And so a different email.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Would like to talk about that now?

>> After four years of being secretary and seeing that we have a very full contingent of members now, which is really nice to see, I feel it is time for me to resign being secretary.

I am going to have my resignation effective at the adjournment of the April meeting.

So I'm going to take minutes today.

Take minutes in April.

And then I will follow up with folks finishing up the old minutes we have as well as the minutes for this meeting at the next meeting.

That gives everybody time to think about nominating somebody, or be nominated, and we can have a vote next month.

>> Thank you.

>> You're welcome.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Thank you for all that hard work.

That is a long time.

>> ADRIENNE: --

>> (Applause)

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: --

>> ADRIENNE: A couple of items, my name is Adrienne Pomeroy, ADA Coordinator with the City of Somerville.

The first thing is that the first time in the city's history, the city has been approved through the Massachusetts office of disability for what is known as the ADA improvement grant which is a process that the city supply for a day name what they want to do with it and the amount and there is a selection process.

We were notified at the beginning of February that the city is in receipt of around \$75,000 to hire a consultant to do a select, self-evaluation of city buildings, and other infrastructure in the city.

And then sort of help the ADA task force reviewed the existing transition planning this money along with some budget.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Is that (indiscernible) or another? Anybody know?

>> Anybody online hear the funny noise? Okay.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Let's keep going.

>> There it goes again.

>> ADRIENNE: Let's try again.

So, the caveat to this is that we were actually notified about month later than they usually do in their grant process.

We actually only have until the end of June of this year-- this fiscal year-- to utilize this consultant.

I am working on that this week to get that out.

I've already done some prework in contacting potential vendors to let them know that the bidding process will be opening.

>> What do that acronyms mean?

>> ADRIENNE: Request for proposals.

We give them a very specific scope of work.

We give them a timeline, and then we tell them how much we have.

And then they make bids for the work.

And there will be a period where maybe procurement will be able to ask them questions.

But it is a very tight timeline.

And I do know some of the other cities also feel this way.

I know I did not attend last week but it was brought up at the CODA meeting last week about the timeline.

And interesting enough the MOD will be opening up the grant here next year for May and awarding it in August this year to give more time to the cities.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: And the COD is mission on disabilities.

The various cities and towns that get together every month and share ideas.

That is what Adrienne means when she says COD and MOD are mass offices on disabilities.

>> ADRIENNE: It is not decided yet in the city will apply again for more funding.

In the new grant cycle.

Mostly because it is likely that we would not get awarded two years in a row.

It took six years to get the first award.

Unfortunately, there is not enough money to go around.

I think I did see in the minutes from the COD meeting that several commissions had applied this year and not gotten it.

That is not to say that we certainly won't give it a try, but on top of trying to finish the work on this grant.

But I am asking DPW and capital projects if there's anything coming down the pipeline for fiscal year 25, that that money could help with.

Because the more specific you can get, that would be helpful.

As soon as I have an update on that consultant I certainly will share that information out.

So that is a nice segue into the ADA transition plan task force, which is my next item.

So, back at the beginning of the year, we sent out an obligation to recruit six additional constituents to serve alongside city staff, and this commission, overseen by me in my role for the ADA transition plan task force.

The current city's ADA transition plan is quite dated and quite dense and long.

It is in dire need of a revision.

And so we wanted to recruit these folks to get a different perspective.

And have them assist in this work.

We are getting close to figuring out who those folks are.

And in the spirit of equity, the Department of racial and social justice does pay its task force members because we believe your time is valuable, and they should be paid and so when it was -- talked about, I of course brought up the participation of this commission.

And, so right now you all are in your capacity as commissioners volunteers.

By way of conflict of interest you are considered whether known by us as special municipal employees.

So first we have to ask if you want to serve on the task force.

Because it is outside of your responsibility to be a commissioner.

There will be an additional two meetings a month, varying in times from 60-90 minutes with other people and myself and the rest of the staff at RSJ and the mayor's office felt very strongly that if anybody on the commission wanted to participate and have the capacity to participate that they should also be compensated.

I am happy to tell you that that is possible.

Our chief of staff and our legal team are working on that.

What that will take is probably some paperwork, and a checkoff, and sign off from city Council to approve that.

So what I need, not only from you all in his room, but from the folks at home joining us-- and you don't have to tell me now would probably in the next week or two, if you're interested in serving and being compensated and how the capacity, I need to know that.

We need to start gathering names and information to get that processed with city Council going.

And again you are not obligated.

If you feel you want to participate and not get paid, that of course is up to you.

But that is your decision.

Yes Harriet?

>> HARRIOTTE: You said to meeting for the next year?

>> ADRIENNE: Next six months.

>> HARRIOTTE: Two hour meetings?

>> ADRIENNE: Maximum is 90 minutes were capacity issues are most likely they will be hybrid meetings.

We would aim to try to get most folks in person if that is comfortable.

If it is not accessible we will make accommodations for them to be hybrid.

The conversations like this are going to be really detailed, and a lot of things review.

We hope folks can attend in person.

If not of course we will make that accessible as best as possible.

>> FRANK: Would this be considered a public body?

>> ADRIENNE: No the task force is not considered a public body.

You would not be voting on anything, it is a working group working on recommendations that essentially go to RSJ and the mayor's office and be reported out and it is a unique opportunity to work with city staff, myself-- this is sort of one of the biggest projects that I was told about when I was hired.

Sort of calling it my "baby," I don't know if that is appropriate but that is what we will do.

And six other constituents who are very interested in this as well.

That is what I have there.

Please meditate and think about that.

>> Six total members?

>> ADRIENNE: Six additional constituents not members of the commission and are not city staff, and not me.

>> Are there reserve numbers of commissioners?

>> ADRIENNE: No.

If all 12 plus or to associate want to serve we will take all 14.

But in a way I want to get people the option because I don't know what people's work schedules are in I don't know what people's incomes are.

I don't know what people's personal lives are because it is above and beyond what is required of you is a commissioner.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Have you (indiscernible)?

>> ADRIENNE: So I'm going to try to find a happy medium, probably hopefully.

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afternoon ish.

I'm going to try my best not to do evenings.

Because I think brainpower is a little better during the day.

But again that depends on work schedules.

So we will try to find a happy medium.

The other thing is that there's sort of a minimum requirement for attendance.

So we know that there could be a max of 12 meetings over a six month period.

We will certainly not require all 12, because things happen.

You know, family things, all that.

More come all that.

But we did want to especially let the commission know they will be compensated if you choose to participate.

We of course would love your participation.

>> Isn't this group called-- unwieldy.

So many people on this committee.

Or task force?

>> ADRIENNE: Task force.

The idea is that it would have all 14 and then we have the six, that's 20 folks.

I teach second grade.

I am not worried about unwieldy.

And then we have city staff being in, and being subject to subject matter experts on certain things as you go over the plan.

Not going to be too big.

It is going to be bigger than the other taskforces, that is for sure.

But when the city did this the first time, I think the total number of staff plus volunteers was near the 40 mark.

It was quite a large group.

And we are being cognizant that we have people who are willing to do this work.

And then it is also being cognizant of staff time as well to use them efficiently.

And not you know take up too much time.

But use that time efficiently and really have some fruitful conversations about making this plan really more accessible and more digestible.

And key components can be reported out every year or two years about progress.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Harriotte you had your hand raised.

>> If this commission taking any involvement in the transition plan? Or is that a separate assignment for this task force?

>> ADRIENNE: This is the opportunity where the commission would participate in that.

>> So the six members of the community, are they looking for people that have some kind of expertise? Or involvement? Or are they just general community volunteers?

>> ADRIENNE: That recruitment period closed in February.

We were just looking for folks who have the time, who had an interest in accessibility and disability.

I think as you know, we had at least 6000 or more folks in the city that identify as people with disabilities.

This is a good opportunity to get some other folks who maybe have not done board and commission work.

Or maybe do other work that really sort of has an interest in this work.

Yes Harriotte?

>> HARRIOTTE: I wanted to say that another thing for everyone's consideration.

I started to read the transition plan.

I believe it was penned in 2013.

200 pages I think.

>> ADRIENNE: 400 pages.

>> HARRIOTTE: So it is almost as if before the body met, or before we decided to do it, it would be important to have an overview of it for us individually or collectively.

And take on a little bit of the idea of what is in there.

The only thing that troubles me about this task force is I would really like to have universal design expert in there, so we can have really up-to-date information on obviously we cannot do everything all at once, but just to start looking at the bigger, long-term future.

Which I think is what eventually we are looking at.

Transition is a very fuzzy kind of a concept.

So I started reading it.

And was not terribly impressed.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Forgive me going to have to cut us off.

We started at 7:25, and then will come back to this.

Can you see if Meghan is online or on the phone?

>> ADRIENNE: She is not.

If you don't mind chair, I can save disability pride until the end.

But I would like to talk about the open meeting law briefly.

This is sort of the point of education for all of us.

And then sort of things to keep in mind now that you all are commissioners.

So, one of the things that the chair looks forward when we are starting the meeting is to make sure we have a quorum.

Which is a set number of members that have to be present in order for the meeting to start, in order to do business.

So the body is currently 12 people.

And so we decide on quorum.

In the quorum is half plus 1, seven people.

That means the meeting can start, and business can be conducted.

And you can vote on various pieces of business as they come up.

With that said, while it is assumed that this is reserved for, you know, business of the commission, you do all need to keep in mind that as members of the commission you need to be mindful about your conversations with each other outside of these public meetings.

That you are not discussing business that has been or will be discussed within a public meeting setting.

Because those are public meetings and therefore, for the public.

And that being very mindful -- Being mindful of just basically seven of you not gathering on a street corner to discuss things that have already been discussed in the meeting or future.

Obviously seems very common sense.

But you do as commissioners to take it very seriously.

With that said, I've been sort of talking with Mattie in the clerk's office about what that looks like for the social engagement that you all have been planning.

And so you all have the Red Sox game coming up in May.

And that is an instance where it is fine for all of you to attend.

Because it is a social event.

And the only thing you would have to keep in mind is that you would not be discussing any business at that gathering.

Because it is a social event.

Not a meeting.

Does that make sense?

>> Yes.

>> ADRIENNE: Okay.

So I will save disability pride for the end of the meeting.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Meg? Hi, I'm Hollie.

This is everybody.

Maddie, do you want to say anything else? We are very happy to have you here Maddie.

I wanted to double check.

>> ADRIENNE: I think Maddie is just observing tonight.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Meg? You have the floor.

Do you want to introduce yourself? And this advocative opportunity that you brought to Adrienne and me? We have the bill, as well as the information.

About.

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how the trails work now.

>> MEG: thank you.

I'm happy to be here tonight.

I'm here to talk about.

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>> Just a minute.

>> The volume was too high.

>> ADRIENNE: Go ahead Meg.

Sorry.

>> MEG: S dot 446 and H dot -- (indiscernible), an act to expand trails for people of all abilities.

What we are talking about is expanding trails to people who have disabling conditions, people who need access for things like strollers.

And for our older residents of the state who may have some mobility limitations.

But really that just means trails that everybody can use right now in the state, we actually don't really have very many trails that everybody can use.

And when you group all of those three groups together, it is a significant portion of our population, 33-40% other population but most of the outdoor recreation has been exclusive, not inclusive, to a lot of the residents in the state.

So we have about 4000 miles of unpaved recreational trails in our state parks.

Only seven and a half miles are accessible.

What accessible trails look like is really just a wide trail that allows mobility devices to use comfortably.

Allows people to pass each other, if they are both using a mobility aid.

Or if one person is, another person isn't.

Or somebody is using a service dog for navigation.

Or any other reasons.

They can have their service dog next to them comfortably.

The slope and angle of the trails, so how much goes up or down hill, what it's like side-to-side, those things are all regulated when we are looking at building accessible trails.

And accessible trails are usually also more sustainable.

They are built in a way that makes them more thoughtful and lasts longer.

So with proper attention, they remain useful for everybody for a long time.

Which is not the case for non-accessible trails.

They are usually just put in, and not much thought is given to the state of them and how they age over time.

So in Massachusetts, we haven't done a great job of building these trails.

We also haven't done a great job of making information about existing trails available in an easy way to find.

We also haven't done a good job of looking at our system as a whole and recognizing that for a long time we've been ignoring the needs of everybody when it comes to being able to access nature.

And we know that accessing nature helps with our health, and our overall well-being.

And our sense of wellness.

And for people with disabling conditions, it is really important for us because we are far more likely to develop stress-related illnesses and have just a lot more stressors in our lives.

So being able to access nature is actually uniquely important for those of us who have disabling conditions.

So, what this bill would do is bring together a group of folks as a working group from all across the state.

And most importantly, it would include folks who have disabling conditions which has never happened before.

We would look at the trail system as a whole and come up with recommendations on how it can be improved.

The bill has some time limits, basically within three years we would want to see more trails and more money going to accessible trails in a measurable way.

Which isn't something that we've done before.

So, my group is just a group of volunteers.

People who all have disabling conditions or recognize the importance of why we need to be inclusive with our trails and we are trying to raise awareness.

And most importantly get support for this bill.

We've gone through one hearing already with the joint committee on environment and natural resources.

They have just given us a favorable report.

And we believe that it is going to go to a second committee for review.

In that second committee, in the next couple of months, is where the bill is either going to get another favorable report and go to the full legislation for a vote.

Or it would die basically.

In this second committee.

So in the next few months, support for this bill is really critical.

Happy to answer any questions that anybody has, and talk about what supporting this bill looks like for your commission, and what does it look like for other commissions.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Anyone in the room have a question you want to start with or a comment? Go ahead.

>> Thank you so much.

My name is -- I am a wheelchair user.

I am so happy.

I was trying to put across the same concept about the trails.

However, haven't been to other countries, I have seen trails that have made evenly flat.

I used to follow trails like around Jamaica Plain.

For the (indiscernible).

>> Gulf garden.

>> Any other -- you reach some areas; the trail is not even.

Because of use and things like that.

So happy that this idea is put forward.

Looking forward to (indiscernible), I am not going to let you down.

I personally have a stake in it.

And if there is a way to contribute to the designs, I will be available.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: So you are interested in testifying?

>> Yes.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Writing a letter?

>> Yes.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: That is great.

Any other questions before we open it up? Go ahead like.

>> MIKE: I completely apologize Meg.

Sometimes my mind wanes.

This is great.

How can we support you? Did you say what you were looking for?

>> MEG: Not yet no.

That is a great question.

So letters of support from the commission, from individuals, those are all fantastic things.

Some towns, the commissions have gone to their city legislature.

Whether it is the select board, or however your city or town government itself, and of gotten resolutions from the municipal government which are really powerful.

And basically contacted your local representative or senator and asked them to support your bill if they don't already.

And thanking them for supporting it if they do already.

That is the stage we're at right now.

There won't be another hearing because we had a hearing with the first committee.

The second committee, which is probably going to be ways and means, doesn't have to have a hearing.

So contacting them with your personal stories, with a letter of support, that is going to be really important.

>> HARRIOTTE: Hi, this is Harriotte.

No, go on.

I will formulate it better.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Brian?

>> BRIAN: Commissioner and Director of the city's engineering division.

I have two questions for you Meg.

One is, what -- and I haven't read the actual text of it, but I did not see it here.

What is it that you are looking for specifically in trails to make them accessible? An example of an answer would be to meet the guidelines for sidewalks and walkways.

Or maybe there is a lesser standard that you're looking for.

Maybe there is a greater standard you are looking for.

That is question one.

Question two.

Do you have a percentage or proportion of state trails that you are looking for this to apply to? And I guess third, is I am saying this, are you looking to revise or update AMAD guidelines and regulations, so it applies to all public facilities? Or just to Mass State property?

>> MEG: Those are great questions.

The first one, U.

S.

Forest Service guidelines is a prevailing standard for building accessible nature trails.

That is different from AMAD guidelines.

And there is a difference in those guidelines because things like sidewalks are considered access routes.

They have very strict guidelines.

The U.

S.

Forest Service guidelines and AMAB and just in general AAEB guidelines generally don't cover trails unless there are access restrictions, bathrooms, or an inaccessible campground.

U.

S.

Forest Service guidelines is what dictates kind of the other nature trails that don't fall under access routes.

The problem is that is not a law.

Those are guidelines that are voluntary to adopt.

And they are in US forest spaces.

They are the guidelines that they have to use when they are building new trails.

There are exceptions for things that can't fit into the guidelines.

But everything else outside of the US Forest property is just voluntary.

So really what this bill would do is form the access working group with the goal of increasing access.

And one of the things that that working group would do, would look at the guidelines, the prevailing guidelines.

Look at how we are adopting them.

Can we do better? And personally, I would love to see Massachusetts come up with their own guidelines.

Because I think the U.

S.

Forest Service guidelines are about a decade old.

And they definitely need improvement.

And they definitely need some adjustments because we have a lot more knowledge now that we did when they were first read.

And they were never meant to become the national standard.

Really what we need to do is to form a working group that would tackle specific questions.

I am sorry, what was your third question? I got to two.

>> BRIAN: The second one was, is there a proportion of trails that you are looking to, that you believe should meet some future guideline?

The third question was, does this only apply to state property? Or all publicly accessible recreational trails?

>> MEG: This would only basically dictate the two state-level agencies that build trails right now which is the DCR and fish and wildlife.

But what that has is a knock-on effect when it comes to funding.

Most principalities get their funding from the state source.

So if the state prioritizes accessibility, and really looks at how it can help support municipalities, we would get a lot more state and local spaces that are accessible.

The proportion of trails that I think should be accessible-- I mean there is nothing specific in the bill.

Because the bill is really looking to form a working group.

But I would like us to see us approach recreation in a way that is representative of our population.

And about a third to a half of the population has an access need.

Other properties that accessible trails will not work on? Maybe not entire properties but certain areas.

Do I think there is a lot of misunderstanding and a lot of room for education and rose about how accessible trails don't always have to be on a flat property to be flat enough to be accessible? Yes.

I think there are great examples of trails that are not just in a low flat area that are very, very accessible.

But we don't have enough of them for them to be widely known yet.

So I think more areas can be accessible than people often realize.

So that will be my take on it.

I just want us to do things in a more representative way.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Can I summarize that? Let me know if I am correct.

The goal is to have more.

Not a specific percentage.

Not a specific location.

It is to create a working group, a committee of people that will talk about what do we have now, and then present it.

And from there look for a working plan.

How do we integrate this? So it is not we are going to change something in the next six months.

It is going to be a multiyear process, which you and I know what that looks like to get a bill passed.

Would that be accurate?

>> MEG: That is very accurate.

There are thankfully some time limits built into the bill right now.

It will be a certain amount of time for the working group to get up and running.

Within a year.

To make some recommendations that the DCR would have to answer to.

And so making some of those formal recommendations that the DCR would have to answer is important.

And within three years showing that we are starting to increase accessible trails and funding for accessible trails.

Yes.

You summarized it perfectly.

The goal is more.

The goal is to really find out where we have huge gaps in our system.

Or likely to see that there are huge areas where there are no trails with access and that is okay.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: So this also means that (indiscernible) would lead the working group or task force?

>> MEG: So the task force will be made up of real people who have disabling conditions.

Trail professionals.

People who are working
in adaptive recreation.

People working in the disability rights industry are actors.

It will come from people within the DCR, and also representative of the entire state.

Places that have DCR properties, urban and rural locations; we really want a cross-section of Massachusetts to be represented in that working group.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I see your hand raised.

Would like to ask a question?

>> HELEN: I would like to ask, there was a bill before the legislature? Is that correct? Can you give us the bill number and the name of the people who introduced the bill?

>> MEG: Yes.

The bill number is S.

446.

And H.

769.

There's a version in the Senate and a version in the House.

They are exactly the same right now.

The two presenters are Senator Joe Commonford (phonetic) for the Senate version and representative Michelle (indiscernible) for the House person and there are a lot of cosponsors.

I think since the presentation was made; we've added three cosponsors.

And I cannot remember all their names off the top of my head.

But there are many cosponsors.

And there is a trail Caucus within the legislature and the trail caucus is also supportive of this bill.

>> Thank you.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Also there is disability commissions in the state providing support.

>> MEG: I believe we have a few more that have signed on still.

In the unpaved trails for all dor org website we update the list more frequently than this presentation so everybody who is supporting it is on the website.

Because it is easier, and quicker to update the website more frequently than the presentation.

But also, we are looking for all sorts of groups.

We are trying to get councils on aging, public health, we have recreation groups and land trust that are supporting them already.

And we would like to get more.

We think the key to getting it passed and go for a boat is just having a broad cross-section.

So the Appalachian working group.

Lot of groups that have helped in this across the state.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: (indiscernible)

>> HARRIOTTE: Quick question to keep in mind.

You probably could solicit any of us for beta testing of any trails.

I know that is way down the road.

But also my experience is, the only people that decide whether a trail or any route works are people who people need to use it that way.

And I have lived in at least a dozen cities, and also gone through parks.

It is difficult! That is all.

Would love to participate in some way.

Thank you.

>> MEG: Yes thank you and that is absolutely why we really want to have people, have to have people in the working group that are living that experience.

Because we would have our experience.

We know the areas to look for.

And that is definitely-- you are right-- that has been a missing piece so far for sure.

>> HARRIOTTE: Last question.

The group is already established meeting times and stuff like that?

>> MEG: We don't have regular meetings, but we do have an email list.

And in a few weeks we will have an informational meeting about this next stage of the bill.

So I will be happy for any of you to come to that meeting.

You can send me an email.

I can give you the details.

We are happy for all help and support.

We are all volunteers.

We are all just trying to get this more accessible for all of us.

>> HARRIOTTE: Oh yes!

>> So we create a committee Harriotte.

Thank you so much.

We appreciate you taking the time and talking with us about this.

You have lots of claps online, and here in the room.

I will make sure that everyone gets the documents again that you provided us.

And also specifically the link if you would like to subscribe to updates on this.

And Meg we wish you all the best of luck and if things move forward and you need to speak to us again, please reach out to Adrienne or me.

>> MEG: Thank you so much for having me.

I am happy to answer questions.

Feel free to reach out.

Thank you.

>> HARRIOTTE: We will!

>> Thank you.

>> MEG: Bye-bye.

>> HARRIOTTE: You can keep me to five minutes.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: You up are up now my friend.

>> HARRIOTTE: Is been a busy period last month and this month to say the least and the best thing is that we have a weekly updating and conversation and discussion meeting with Adrienne and -- who is our PIO.

Did I get that right? Public information officer.

And anyone else who would care to join us.

But anyway we are discussing the topics -- the topics are communication, collaboration, and accessibility.

And so just to work on communication, briefly to say that we are starting to form research and work on how to make our webpage very clear, very understandable.

And who we are, what we do, and get ourselves rolling on the invitation to city events.

The upcoming ADA event in May.

Which is coming up past.

Working on that and Nick will be working on that research, and it's just wonderful we can get together and hear what is going on.

And get more information happening.

And one of the things that of course we wanted to have in the city, which will save us a bundle of money among other things, and make it easier, and less pressure, we have a new boss in the city.

I meant Adrienne to ask you later, did you happened have information on the model number?

>> ADRIENNE: Not yet Harriotte.

>> HARRIOTTE: We think it is a 120-- I forget the company name-- and we are happy if it is such an item.

Isn't very big.

It is potentially, I get these dimensions (indiscernible), 20 inches.

With the height be.

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at or about 25.

Fortunately, it is not an enormous tool.

And there seems to be some sort of pickup between its placement and where it is now.

Physically no idea.

We are working on it.

And I have spoken to one person in the library and Adrienne you and I can speak to Kathy and see what is going on over there.

In reality, it really would be important to station there.

And there is some concern about its noisiness, one of the things that we can do is we can get a cabinet to cover it.

I have seen this before in the Boston Public Library.

So we are really looking forward to getting updates on that.

And communicating further about this.

Because every page that we have (indiscernible) it's \$9.

I don't know if anybody is aware, but the last one was around 50 pages.

>> At least that.

The other thing too, excuse me it is Pauline, when I was working at the commission for the blind we had a cabinet the machine was placed into, called the "quietizer", plugged into the cabinet.

It would reduce noise a lot.

>> HARRIOTTE: Yeah.

I imagine the newer models have found ways to also do the impact that it would have to do when you are making cuneiform and braille, to make it even within the structure itself, can be a quieter machine.

We are working on it.

I wish I could say more about it.

But apparently there is some kind of-- not sure why we don't have any more information-- but we will get more information and I found the people at Perkins to be very cooperative and helpful.

Because we have found some of the formatting to be (indiscernible) paper as well.

We don't spend a page and a half on the web information with, I don't know who would type in accurately a URL.

We do the cut-and-paste on the machine.

Anyway I think that is all I am going to share.

>> Can I ask a question about that? This is Sheila for clarification.

The city has the embosser?

>> HARRIOTTE: That is correct it was purchased over a year.

>> ADRIENNE: We have not had it for a full year.

Correcting that information.

The original was purchased in June and delivered in June.

And Chief of Staff is working on finding the best place for it.

Probably will be the library.

Or Somerville high school.

So she is talking with the schools, the Chief of Staff, and talking with the library about the best place for it.

And then once it is given its permanent location, folks such as me and some of the staff and members of this commission will be trained on it.

And then we will sort of share out certain procedures about how someone would ask for embossing, timelines around that.

Which does include if something is a much larger document or a pamphlet or booklet.

That is something that probably would still have to be sent to Perkins.

Because we have to make sure from an equity perspective that we are delivering what we can with quality for the internal embosser.

And then if something requires a higher level of expertise for formatting, we would still utilize Perkins in these situations.

>> Is there a timeframe?

>> ADRIENNE: I am not sure.

It is really the Chief of Staff the one who has to figure out, especially if it ends up at the high school.

That is a collaboration.

And the hope is that the high school will present also an opportunity to students who work within the printshop programs to learn as well.

And have that skill set.

So that is personally what I am hoping for.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: You have another vote for that.

That is dual-purpose.

And certainly there must be students at the high school, our future teachers, who could use materials embossed.

>> HARRIOTTE: When you say Chief of Staff, you mean Hannah?

>> ADRIENNE: Nikki Spencer.

>> Who is the Chief of Staff?

>> ADRIENNE: Her name is Nikki Spencer.

>> HARRIOTTE: I would like to make a suggestion.

Could Nikki come to our next meeting? For communication access?

>> ADRIENNE: I will double check.

Nikki is often double, and triple booked for her days.

I will check.

I cannot check for tomorrow, not enough time, but maybe next week it will open the invitation to her.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Any questions?

>> PAULINE: Is there room in the budget-- and I don't know whether this would be appropriate for proofreader?

>> ADRIENNE: You mean a staff person to proofread?

>> PAULINE: Yeah or a person who is qualified to proofread braille.

>> ADRIENNE: I can certainly.

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That is something definitely to talk to either RSJ or Nikki about.

That would have to be-- that would depend on I think where the embosser would live for one.

Because the staff person-- if it lived at the school, it would have to be someone hired through the school system.

If it were at the library it could be hired to the city.

And then.

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>> PAULINE: I was going to say you have a proofreader over here.

>> Reasonable.

Part-time.

>> What does that person do? Proof to make sure that it is accurate?

>> PAULINE: To make sure the spelling and grammar and all contractions necessary in the braille code are correct.

Because I was a professional proofreader for quite a few years.

I will tell you what.

I ran into some pretty interesting things.

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Iterations of braille.

That I still see a lot when I read some things from other people.

They write to me, or something like that.

That is very hard for a blind person who is not proficient in braille, if he or she gets a document to read adequately because they don't know the contractions aren't correct.

The formatting is not correct.

There's a lot that goes into it.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: We've done a lot of format changes to the list that -- the (indiscernible) also, Frank has his physical embosser and his software.

And he can take a document, and look at certain styles, like a colon or semi colon.

>> PAULINE: Jimmy and I also have an embosser.

We have had it for years.

We are trying to find out now whether or not (indiscernible) has software that we could use to connect it to our Apple machine.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Cool.

Maybe we can talk about that outside of the meeting.

We can talk about that.

Another side I want to add is not just the physical embosser and where it is located and how it works, but also working more holistically with the city and how we approach materials and things like the plain language in simple language.

Unless you are embossing something, you would never know how much it changes.

The messaging should not change.

But the manner in which we communicate, written as well as things like screen readers and websites, we have to figure out how we're going to emboss.

But we also need to work really fast at materials being designed for.

>> I wanted to ask something.

I will like to ask how far you have thought about a collaboration with for example (indiscernible).

Do you know Easter Seals?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: How do you envision a collaboration?

>> They have materials, and some of the items they need.

If we work together with them, there could be a way to get the equipment we need on the south side.

And providing us with the most advanced technology that we need.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I know what you're talking about now.

They provide a lot of technology for all different types of communication.

And education.

Sort of as loaners.

But maybe there are other things?

>> Also the (indiscernible) for people to walk with, so if there is a way to let them know what we are doing, I think we can add something.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I think that is a great suggestion.

Harriotte, anything else?

>> HARRIOTTE: I think that's it.

Thank you for adding that we really do have one language.

Somebody asked if the language was formatted to make ourselves in the city accessible.

With not even getting into.

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correction and how that is written in braille.

We will get this far.

We will keep working.

Okay? But yeah, there's a lot of area of communication, and I have confidence that we will continue to advance ourselves in that area.

That is it for me.

And again Holly if you could bring me back.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Moving on to item six.

I have three items.

I want to take them out of order.

Meeting minutes.

Excuse me which I'm going to table what we have on the agenda for November 14 and for September.

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the other month.

September 14 and November 4.

Only because I did not have a chance to look at the transcripts to compare the details.

A transcription, captioning, those are not legal documents that represent meeting minutes.

However we can look at them if we want to check who was taking the minutes or someone like us who would go back and review improvements.

Strangely enough when I spoke with Kirk Wells (phonetic) he told me that all of our members who are not members can vote to approve minutes even if they were not a member of the time.

They don't have to.

They can abstain.

But it is within the open meeting laws.

That all of our settings in person here can review the minutes.

I want to throw that out there.

Because everyone here can review and vote on minute approvals.

Even though you are not here.

And we do have a bit of a backlog.

Another thing that (indiscernible) shared with me-- and I see a few times it's been (indiscernible) meetings, they would have a list of 10 different meeting minutes and approve this is a whole yes/no.

And what happens is they receive the minutes, and they are told that if they have any edits and once those are all combined they are put to a vote.

And so I think that is a process we should try to follow, to get through a big chunk of these.

Whether that be five month, whether 10, it's going to take a lot of heavy lifting.

Because I'm going to have to line up the document and get them embossed and have them in time for everyone to be able to access them.

>> BRIAN: So I can work on putting together the minutes? Do you want to manage the Distributing to the members?

>> PAULINE: Wasn't always part of the meeting agenda to read and approve the minutes?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Yes.

It should be.

>> PAULINE: Previous minutes.

Maybe I am off my rocker.

>> BRIAN: Usually you don't read the minutes of the previous meeting at the meeting you are reading them.

Each member is responsible for reviewing the minutes outside of the meeting.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I did not hear that part.

Thank you for explaining that.

Typically if possible you review them ahead of the meeting.

And you vote.

Oftentimes we have read through them, so it is accessible for all of us at the time.

>> BRIAN: I'm not saying you can't, but there is no requirement.

>> Some people have been doing it that way.

(indiscernible) like where I come from, most of the commissions, councils, and authorities -- (indiscernible) people would do this and after would pass it and (indiscernible).

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: We are going to have a way to get on track with all of that.

I just wanted to hear out as it relates to may be minutes, the information they chair shared and the clerk shared and how we are going to move forward with these groups and materials.

Next I have...

the bylaws.

So, I know is your favorite.

Isn't it?

>> ADRIENNE: (laughter)

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Were going to go back and review our bylaws again and verify with the minutes all the things that we did to get that document updated so we could have the last version.

Validated.

And part of that, which you -- it is very timely in retiring your position as secretary-- is that we also have an officer role for treasurer.

And I would like to make a motion.

Can I also nominate as part of the motion?

>> Sure.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I would like to nominate Sheila, to see if she is interested in the role of treasurer.

Because clearly you have the relationship and the expertise with the municipal alliance.

And the role of the treasurer is to manage all of our reporting, finances and all the pieces and parts and I would love for someone else to take on.

You have been doing such a great job with all that.

But I of course would like to open the floor up to anyone else who would be interested in being the treasurer.

And if people would like more...

What does the treasurer do? I do have the official text.

>> HARRIOTTE: May I second first?

>> BRIAN: You do not need a second to nominate someone for a position.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: You are so quiet tonight.

>> BRIAN: You can nominate yourself or somebody else if you want to.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Thank you but I will not be nominating myself.

Or you.

>> (indiscernible).

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Cool.

I think Helen had her hand up.

>> HELEN: was going to second the nomination but I see it already has been done.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Were going to vote by roll call.

>> HARRIOTTE: Yes.

>> BRIAN: Before we vote, the nominee has to accept the nomination.

>> HARRIOTTE: I thought we had done that.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: There is the official pen.

Pass the paper and whatever else you would like.

Brian?

>> BRIAN: Yes.

>> DEBORAH: Yes.

>> PAULINE: Yes.

>> MIKE: yes.

>> HELEN: Yes.

>> INGRID: Yes.

>> RASHID: Yes.

>> (Applause)

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: And I appreciate your staying on for another meeting, another month or two.

And the process of how to review and nominate another secretary.

>> BRIAN: I did not want to drop this on you.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Should I open up the floor for anyone interested in becoming the secretary? Great job.

>> ADRIENNE: I saw a lot of "no's".

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: We can think about that.

>> (laughter)

>> HARRIOTTE: I would do it, but I just don't think I can competently do it.

I can type like mad.

But I don't believe I can really do it.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I wonder.

For associate commissioners, Frank has done the minutes quite a bit when we needed the assistance.

We could amend the bylaws so that an associate could do this.

Not sure.

>> ADRIENNE: I think what you will run into though is that Frank can't vote.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Could not vote in minutes, but he could take the minutes?

>> ADRIENNE: That is a question for the clerk.

So what I am observing is that nobody is jumping to nominate themselves right now.

And you have the privilege of some time.

So perhaps the chair should table the discussion vote until April.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Absolutely.

>> HARRIOTTE: May I speak? I feel since I know this is it task which for most of us feels quite intense.

I have a suggestion, which is a bit strange.

If people would consider taking a quarter year assignment, it might be a little less overwhelming.

Because I think we really, if we are in the commission, we are kind of here to do this.

Know what I mean? We are here to meet; we are here to take notes too.

So collaborate.

Two people could collaborate on the secretary to make sure there is always a secretary here.

And also to share the weight of the process.

Those are my suggestions.

Perhaps quarterly.

Or perhaps two people working together as a secretary.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: We have that in the minutes? The suggestion in the minutes?

>> BRIAN: Was going to acknowledge that other committees do what is called "floating Secretary.

" That is generally accepted.

I don't know what the clerk's opinion is on the floating secretaries.

The workaround for that is you have one secretary that manages a group of floating secretaries.

And that person just makes sure to assign somebody to do the minutes, to make sure it is done.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: We also talked in the past about it is difficult for people with disabilities who are participating in the commission to also be taking those minutes.

And the need, the request is to have a scribe provided.

Or a person who did that role.

Unless anyone wants to up my bid to two pens, and think about it for next month, maybe talk about it, I don't know...

>> ADRIENNE: Be careful with bribery.

>> (laughter)

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Showing up at their door and dropping off a bag of oranges.

Anybody can give me a bag of oranges all good.

And if you want a potluck, we can talk about that.

>> (laughter)

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Okay so I will get some information and report back.

Bylaws.

Minutes.

Funds.

So, you have been doing a lot of research and work and effort.

I am speaking to Sheila.

Yes.

Do you want to update us on things you have been doing? Further down, since we are on that now, that will be great.

>> SHEILA: of course the first issue is disability pride event.

We have 68 tickets, May 12.

So we are working on now providing transportation and refreshments.

As you know we voted a total of \$5000 for the event.

Tickets were \$2380.

So the rest is for other items.

I met with the finance director and assistant auditor and talked about the process to streamline the process, and making sure we have a lot of this approach, so we don't run into some of the problems we've run into in the past.

We kicked around some ideas for transportation.

If anybody has anything else, please share.

One of the problems is that until we actually have advertised the tickets and people buy the tickets we will know what the transportation needs are.

We came up with about five items that we think would be used if needed.

They are (indiscernible), rental of bus or van, parking, taxi vouchers, and the program from the Council on aging vouchers with green cab.

It is more complicated about green cab I guess has been good to deal with in that.

But they perform the service.

They bring you in, bring you out bill the city.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: The goal is we would have a list of who is using (indiscernible) public transportation, (indiscernible) and we would set those up.

>> And there is also the ride share option.

And they did in the audit department expressed that the taxi voucher seemed to work better than the rideshare.

But it depends on the individual.

So those are options and if anybody can come up with any others.

Harriotte?

>> HARRIOTTE: Would be in MBTA ride? Also there is the ride that provides lift passes who people are enrolled in the ride.

The first couple of months I only got two.

Now I get 10 three dollar right passes per month.

>> And if someone is in the right (correction) ride program.

>> HARRIOTTE: They are already enrolled in the ride and already also in the lift program.

Because the lift program is so phenomenal.

You don't have to give advance notice.

For that program.

Also the person who works with the taxi vouchers is Pauline, that is why she goes to Spalding on a daily basis to see her partner Jimmy.

Who has been in rehab there for some time.

>> She gets the vouchers through the (indiscernible)?

Holly we are going to follow up and try to set up that same system but again there could be other options needed depending on the needs of the people.

We won't know until we are at that point.

But those of the things we have in mind now.

Somebody may come up with something else.

>> Also looking at the ride.

Approaching the ride as a provider for the transport.

And would resolve maybe five or more rides, which maybe we can deploy for our needs.

>> As a van?

>> For a van.

If we approach them in time maybe we should need five or three accessible vans.

Ride has those round vans.

They could also have (indiscernible)...

so we could approach them in time.

And have maybe they will provide us with three or four, according to the (indiscernible).

We could allocate maybe in a given zone...

Maybe three or four cars.

>> Are you familiar with the (indiscernible) Fenway Park? They come to (indiscernible)?

>> Maybe four or more cars.

They will pick up people that you meet there.

This would be (indiscernible), well-trained drivers.

Maybe there are six cars.

And people in a certain area, maybe that can pick you up and take you back.

>> The one thing we can... we did here through finance answer the Council on aging is they did rave about the cab company and another acronym.

Not sure what it was the does the van.

>> SCM? That the Council on aging used?

>> SCM?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Use something that exists.

And be able to get a single invoice.

>> The finance director.

I believe the Council managing this is using them.

We will follow up. Once we now, and of course really talked last time about possibly getting a van rental, and something wheelchair accessible.

Until we know who is going and what the needs are, we can make those decisions.

I think Pauline can work with the Red Sox to figure out a way that works for everybody in the refreshments.

And if the Garden thinks it is problematic.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Red Sox, last year all the guests got these wonderful disability pride event hats.

They had braille.

On the lid.

I know you are very happy when you got your hat.

But there was an issue with individual (indiscernible), they wanted a secure place to collect the money.

This year they will deliver 68 classes that again.

Not reaching out to (indiscernible).

Already reaching out to the which service company? Is it Aramark? That does the food.

Because we are not sitting in the VIP seats where you have the menu, but they will see if they can make it kind of like a boxed lunch where we might have two options.

Would you like a hot dog or chicken fingers or if you are vegan? And we can pay ahead of time.

So we are working with creative ways to make sure we can provide food or snacks and transportation.

And it is all about to begin again.

>> (indiscernible)

>> BRIAN: Need the seed numbers (indiscernible).

>> SHEILA: We can take this, the second line.

>> ADRIENNE: Ms.

Brian?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Also if it is helpful the gentleman who was on that receipt, I know him and I can ask him to get us-- we had an issue-- but we will make sure there are seats.

If you don't get a ticket, you can have my hat.

Or you can have Pauline's hat.

(correction) hat.

And then also we disability people chaperone from the gate-- ambassadors thank you.

>> They are really great about that at Fenway.

>> PAULINE: We were not able to go again because it costs so much we couldn't.

They were wonderful to us.

Getting us to and from.

>> Last time I had a problem at Fenway.

The guy made me move all the way around.

Almost by the entrance, but to make me go round and round.

>> Oh wow.

>> ADRIENNE: Hopefully with the transportation, we won't be trying to meet people at three different gates at the exact, same time.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Also we can talk about -- But we do have that time.

Very proactive, making sure about all that and also back to another update.

Nick participated in our last meeting, talking about communication.

I know that Frank and Harriotte were looking at our website as far as communication, and the accessibility of that.

And Nick was working as far as the editor in drafting the documents and that piece.

Do you want to add any other information Nick?

>> NICK: Now I mean essentially the goal is to clean it up, so the links work and nonessential information is included so the site is easier to use and has more useful information feature prominently.

>> Great!

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Also drafting the simple invitation about the events.

>> Yeah I copied the format that is there now so hopefully it works better.

Talking about plagiarism.

>> So we are also talking about bribery.

>> HARRIOTTE: One last thing.

Frank and I guess the two of us primarily but you to Holly, we have been communicating back in August with Daniel (indiscernible) who is the web administrator?

>> Web content, director of (indiscernible).

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: He is a lovely person.

>> FRANK: I forget his exact position.

Something like web content administrator or director.

>> HARRIOTTE: Yeah and the difficulty is that once you go to the website it is excruciating to make it accessible.

And so there is no easy fixes.

And, but it definitely wrote a very thoughtful email to me and us about some progress that has been made.

And there is a working group that is going to get together to work on this further.

And appreciating that and said at some point I think it will be more than useful-- did not say that-- I think it will be very helpful and it would improve those working so hard to make our site accessible for all to have beta testers or people who are experts in the ways they need to be communicated with.

So I put that out there.

And we will see what happens.

Because again and again, whether it is Apple or Word -- I mean Microsoft-- if we don't have enough beta testers who use the material, who use the vehicle, then it doesn't work so well.

So let's see if we can be a shiny example, the City of Somerville.

Wouldn't it be cool?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Thank you for that.

Going to move onto my favorite topic.

It is my favorite topic.

I did not even say the topic.

I actually don't know what this is.

31 days in July of celebratory events.

Isn't it 30 days?

>> Yeah starting Monday.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: One of the first items was a flag raising which I think is a lovely opportunity for us along with the mayor and other leaders and members of the commission to celebrate and honor the month of July.

Adrienne you are looking at a couple of flags.

I don't know if they were ordered or processed.

But I know that we wanted to get that started, where it is March now and by 4 July.

We want to get more feedback about other events from the people in the commission who would like to see happen.

We talked about other events of the library that are educational.

We talked about having books for children, for adults, students that celebrate the diversity and inclusion.

And stories written by people with disabilities or have people with abilities.

And have events around those books and possibly we buy books for some of these events and given to people coming to the event, if we decided to host.

It came to me.

Why not 4 July parade? Do we still have the Fourth of July parade in the city? No?

>> Used to be Memorial day.

>> ADRIENNE: We did fireworks.

>> BRIAN: That is what it is.

Veterans Day.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: So the parade does not work.

We could have something outdoors.

>> BRIAN: So the city does do the fireworks on the Thursday before 4 July.

>> ADRIENNE: Which would be like the thirtieth.

>> BRIAN: Might be the week before.

4 July is a Thursday this year.

>> ADRIENNE: Yes and we don't do our celebration on July 4, because I think Boston gets that privilege.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: So there's going to be some back-and-forth.

I'm going to send it out to the members.

Give us some ideas.

We will make sure that Adrienne and myself and others are working on collaborating, and figuring out what is possible.

And hopefully in what was it, in April we will be able to share more updates.

Would like to add to this conversation?

>> ADRIENNE: I would like to do so we're not going to do an event every single day for 31 days.

No one has that time.

So July 26 will be the 34th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mike, I do see your hand.

I will get to you in one second.

So, the city as far as I know has never done anything around ADA day.

Boston does a huge ADA day celebration before they do it now in the brand-new City Hall Plaza.

Which is supposedly fully accessible.

I've never been.

Mostly because it's always been really hot the data do it when you go downtown.

That is something that is information you can certainly reach out to the city of Boston and their commission to see if you can have a table or organize in some way.

I think they would welcome that.

I will leave that to Holly to carry on that conversation.

There was an author event.

Laura Beretzky (phonetics) is a local author in Centerville. She hosted an event in February on a panel in which Holly and Harriotte were part of, and she would like to do a follow-up in July in the West branch library.

And they want to do the event on a Monday or Wednesday night.

So there are several dates open for that.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I would like for someone who would like to take my spot and be part of that moderation.

And participate.

And we could have two people from our commission who would like to be part of that panel and answer questions.

I think it should be someone different.

>> ADRIENNE: Yes so that is somebody you want to talk about, and you should settle on a date soon so she should let the library know.

That is one thing that could be done.

The second thing that could be done is, (indiscernible) And purchase a disability pride flag, and we could have it raised in the City Hall concourse and plaques in the month of July.

Better to do flag raising at the beginning of the month, that way the flag goes up and you can be there the majority of the month.

I usually will run into-- will have to do it after July 4 because we will have the pride flag that will be up to the end of June.

So we can't compete with that.

So thinking about that there, you can really turn flag raisings into pre-high-quality, even though they are short events, you could have a guest speaker.

Holly could speak.

You could invite the mayor to speak.

And invite folks to gather -- yeah I see Mike's hand -- and do that.

So again something to talk about in May or in April, and potentially select the date so we get the mayor on board and the flag ordered and things like that.

Mike?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Would you like to join the conversation?

>> MIKE: Two questions.

What was it that you might be looking for somebody what was that?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: This resident wrote a book about, personal memoir, on how she struggle with discrimination in employment.

She asked us to participate, Harriotte and I.

We shared stories about how we have experienced discrimination in employment and other things.

She signed books and answered questions.

It will be similar to that.

I don't know if it'll be a different location.

>> ADRIENNE: West branch.

>> PAULINE: Which is where?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: In Davis.

>> I would definitely be interested if nobody is interested in doing that.

So here is-- so Somerville does the summer we fast in July.

I would like to see about maybe doing Inside Out.

To kind of promote the whole idea of disabilities.

And even have maybe a speaker quickly before hand to say a few words.

Is that something-- how do I...

Do I need to get permission? Maybe we can take a day or something? I am happy to be in charge of that.

Whatever.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Oh, you said my favorite thing.

"I am happy to be in charge." I am happy to support you in any way you would like.

>> MIKE: Okay.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: We will definitely follow up with that idea.

Because that is fabulous.

>> PAULINE: I have an idea and I don't know how this would float.

But there is a (indiscernible) in acting I believe.

They are doing live accessible theater with folks who are disabled and nondisabled.

Maybe we could have someone from that group come and share their expertise with us.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: And all of these ideas, I am hoping will give us more, they don't have to be in July.

They can be done...

They can be part of what we are going to work towards regardless.

We don't have to say we can only do two.

We can do to a three in that month, but which is to look at other ideas like yours and the others to make sure we can move those through.

But I love that idea.

>> PAULINE: That is on seeing news in the morning and have shown clips in the drama group, that the theater group and it is called...

oh...

Open Door.

That is what it is.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Adrienne can you queue up the picture of...

Marshall Street Park (phonetic).

>> ADRIENNE: I don't have a picture of Marshall Street Park.

I don't have the pictures though.

I am sorry.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Imagine a park.

It is in Marshall Street.

It has five swings.

And I love that Brian, thank you.

With the help of Adrienne and with the help of Ben Walter and also we have to thank...

>> ADRIENNE: Nicole.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Yes.

>> ADRIENNE: did you let her know?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Who made it happen and the research about the swings and the funding we had.

We had a meeting.

Two days later we walked over to Marshall Street Park and the following day a swing was installed.

>> ADRIENNE: To give more context because this is madness for the city government, so DPW then happened to have a couple of...

What do they call them...

spare accessible swings that did not have homes.

A spot was identified.

And I was even surprised, but within the week he put them up.

Three days.

It is a miracle.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: The following day met me at the park.

>> ADRIENNE: And they put it up.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I drove by.

I literally screeched.

I parked in the bicycle lane.

Walk across the street without looking.

Walk over and saw blue swing and took pictures.

You think I am kidding.

The little girl Carlene, who lives in the same street was at the point where she can't use regular strength anymore and she comes home from Florida she is going to have a swing.

And we're going to move forward.

There are three paths along the swing process.

One is the -- identifying other...

>> ADRIENNE: Apparently the magic path to get it up in three days.

>> BRIAN: It took people...

>> PAULINE: To achieve it in three.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: That is a huge victory! So we are working on a list so we can see all the other parks so we can simply swap out an existing swing for an accessible swing, which any child can use.

And then we will be looking at how do we integrate accessible play or add additional accessible swings in designing new parks.

And the big walker swing is the one with a large platform that you roll on in your chair.

And it has some automated-- you literally swing in your chair.

That one will require a bit of engineering.

>> ADRIENNE: Magic! Magic!

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Significant project beyond swapping out the hooks.

We are going to have three (indiscernible), handing a new one, where we will add an existing one, and how many walker swings can we put out there?

>> ADRIENNE: You have two days Brian.

(laughter)

>> PAULINE: I think Perkins has a couple of those.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: They have some amazing things.

So I had this little moment where I thought that may be part of that ADA celebration, disability pride, would be that we hung a swing in every park.

Only 12 may be, not 50.

But if we can celebrate the fact that as a municipality between now and the end of May, this is where we are at, we are able to share the fact that as the city from the mayor-- definitely should come from her-- that says we are hanging accessible swings in all the parks.

This is our plan.

This is how many we have.

How cool would that be? Adrienne you are smiling but you have a sideways look.

What's up? You don't have a poker face.

>> ADRIENNE: I don't.

It is our goal.

>> BRIAN: Thinking one in every park might be unrealistic.

I think you should aim for that.

But if you get one in a every ward, that alone...

>> ADRIENNE: That alone is more equitable.

There is the goal.

Seven wards.

And you already did one.

You can count Marshall.

>> PAULINE: What ward is that?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: My ward.

Along those lines of access...

>> HELEN: can I interrupt, we should have around of applause for the chair.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: You know it is Carly's swing.

>> ADRIENNE: I will like one in every ward.

That is only six more.

>> PAULINE: How old is that little one though?

>> Three.

>> HARRIOTTE: Here is my thing.

We can have a vision as big as we would like.

How quickly and how well we can execute is another matter.

But having the vision that there are swings in every park is certainly-- as a person who has been disabled since she was 14--that is something I think we as a commission can certainly pull regardless of what is feasible or immediately executable.

There is nothing wrong with a bigger version.

Because there may be less, maybe more possibilities than we are aware of.

We did not know we were getting this passed.

>> ADRIENNE: Nobody is watching the vision.

I think, from Sheila's point, one in every ward is a good start and it is something that could be feasibly done by the end of July.

>> Woo-hoo! We will do it.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: It is okay to talk about it in July that we have done X.

And this is our plan to do a lot more.

>> Exactly.

It is a goal.

>> We know how many (indiscernible) we have?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Working on the list of parks.

>> BRIAN: (indiscernible).

>> ADRIENNE: Excuse me, Ingrid has her hand up.

>> Were talking about the swings which is very exciting.

You were saying that, I have a question, to the swings have to already have something they hook onto? Does there have to be an existing swing set there?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: The quick solution for now was to take existing parks, with existing swings hung on the big eye hook and drop them in.

>> Technically the parks in Somerville almost count as traffic circles.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Top of Broadway...

Smaller than a table.

Does not have room for a swing.

Not accessible.

In the ADA transition plan as an inaccessible park.

>> I am wondering something really, really public or we could put one, and people could see it from their cars and people could walk by it all the time and see it.

What is that? And get...

and play I don't know.

Just trying to think of where the...

Yes in every ward of course.

But also can one be a functional art piece in the way that is accessible? Out of curiosity.

I don't know.

Conversation.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: As if I promised you a pen, thank you for the Segway.

As the chair with 12 amazing people, staff and everyone who comes to public meetings, we have 14 12 sets of hands now.

We have been working on projects.

So, Helen, and look at what was there and figure out who is who, and which ones are there.

You and I are talked about the asking trick earlier in the week.

Ingrid you and I sat and talked about different things that have to do with kids and parks and education and libraries.

Mike you and I talked about the category of kids, and how that is very broad.

Because to different people in our group, the needs of children are the things we could add to, or understand or provide, or educate for kids is different.

And so I think gathering notes and putting names in boxes, because again we cannot talk about something as a body of six.

We should not have six people working on swings, maybe three would be better.

So I've been moving people and reaching out and getting feedback.

Were going to have a couple of people who are going to help with swings, a couple with communication, a couple who want to place as treatment everywhere.

>> What is this ice cream deal?

>> HARRIOTTE: It is one minute tonight, so we have to decide, we were going to talk about projects.

Can we go over it?

>> ADRIENNE: They do have to close the building up.

We do have to adjourn.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Let's be quiet.

So, I want to thank everyone who has made some time to chat with me.

I will send out some emails, so you can have some more feedback.

And I haven't spoken with each of you, but I will.

The last and final thing is, how do we do a potluck?

>> PAULINE: Oh wow.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Do we need to do it before the meeting? We need to do it separately? We can talk about it later.

Maybe in person.

Boy, wouldn't it be nice to get to meet each other in a social setting?

>> ADRIENNE: Let's talk about that tomorrow let me check.

>> PAULINE: I have an idea.

How about something to do with music?

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: What about the murals around the city?
All right, less chance.

Anybody? Deborah? Anyone?

>> I thought it would be nice based on the presentation we had from unpaved Trailways today to vote on actually becoming a supporter as a commission.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Okay.

I believe that was a motion.

>> I second it.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: We have multiple seconds.

All in favor of supporting acceptable trails, unpaved trails? What we are voting to do is to say we as a commission support the work. We support. We sign on.

Do you have the list? Supporting organizations and municipalities.

That we would be included in the list as a supporting organization and municipality.

What that does is it gives people a link to the various commission webpages where they can find is also.

Brian, are we aboveboard?

>> BRIAN: I think the only thing we need is someone to write the letter.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Anybody have a pen besides me? I will get the letter out.

And We have to do a roll call vote.

>> Ingrid moved it.

Who seconded it?

>> Mike seconded it.

>> BRIAN: Deborah did.

My apologies.

>> PAULINE: She made the motion.

>> BRIAN: Yeah.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE:.

Now we are going to vote on that

>> HARRIOTTE: Yes.

>> BRIAN: Yes.

>> Deborah?

>> Yes.

>> PAULINE: Yes.

>> MIKE: Yes.

>> HELEN:

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Are you in favor of the letter? You can give me a thumbs up.

>> Yes.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Thank you.

Sheila?

>> Yes.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: Ingrid?

>> Yes.

>> Rashid?

>> Yes.

>> CHAIR SIMIONE: I am also yes.

The motion passes.

I will draft a letter and I will make sure everyone gets a copy.

Unless there is anything else I will take a motion to adjourn.

>> Second?

>> All in favor?

Motion passes.

>> Good night.