

Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities

**Special Meeting
February 24th 5pm- 6pm
Virtual
Meeting Minutes**

Attendees:

City Staff: Adrienne Pomeroy, ADA Coordinator and SCPD Staff Liaison

Commissioners:

Deborah Haber
Michael Shaps
Laurie Brandt
Helen Coorigan
Sheila Tracy
Holly Simione
Nick Altschuller
Ingrid Schieder
Harriotte Ranvig
Pauline Downing

Associate Commissioners:

Frank Lee

Guests:

Mary – resident
Ann Camera - resident
Meghan Smith – resident
Anne Stephens Ryan – MASS Senior Action

Not Attending:

Commissioners:

Murshid Buwembo

Associate Commissioners:

Nicole Cannon

Meeting to call to order at 5:07pm

Member Terms – Chair Holly Simone

Chair Simone recapped that at the February meeting that four members were up for reappointment and agreed to serve another 3 years. This was voted on. Nick Altschuller was not present at that meeting and Holly asked him to reconfirm his desire to serve on the SCPD.

Chair Simone called for a motion to accept Nick's request for consideration for another 3-year term.

Discussion:

Holly clarified the need for the vote and Harriotte reconfirmed that information for Pauline who was attending by phone.

Motion passed.

Disability Pride 2025 Events

Chair Simone put forth a motion to allocate \$16,000 of the Accessible Parking Fines Fund (APFF) for the Disability Pride Red Sox game on June 3rd.

Harriotte seconded.

No discussion.

Motion passed.

Lawsuit to Abolish 504 protections - Harriotte Ranvig and Frank Lee, 40 minutes

Holly introduced information around a lawsuit in 17 states (does not include Massachusetts) to abolish Section 504 of the rehabilitation act.

Harriotte introduced some historical context around the passing of the Section of 504 of the Rehabilitation Act including the former President Biden updated it to include transgender individuals. Frank and Harriotte created a letter outlining context around section 504 and the lawsuit from the 17 states that was filed. Frank read the letter to the group.

Harriotte gave context to the 17 states who filed the lawsuit.

Chair Simone gave context to why the discussion was brought up and Harriotte said the SCPD could ask the Council and the administration to support speaking out against the lawsuit. The SPS School Committee has drafted a related resolution.

The SCPD discussed questions around states in New England, Section 504, and the impact. They also discussed the scapegoat method of using trans people to eliminate Sections 504.

Deborah asked if the City could make a proclamation in the event this goes through. Chair Simone confirmed this was a good idea along with the resolution the school committee is working on.

Frank asked if the SCPD could sign onto the SPS resolution. Holly wants a City Council item on the subject.

Holly wants the City to put it on the SCPD website and to put it into the Somerville times. Some guests came to the meeting to discuss sidewalks and snow. Chair Simone encouraged them to reach out to her about meeting later in the month.

Commissioner Ranvig motioned for the SCPD to draft a letter to the Mayor's office and City Council regarding city support that Section 504 should not be repealed that may include a proclamation or resolution.

Holly Simone seconded.

Discussion:

Would going in person to City council be more effective than a letter?

Motion passes.

Chair Simone mentioned that members of the SCPD and any residents can go to the City Council to advocate for this issue. Chair Simone and Vice Chair Ranvig will represent the SCPD at City Council.

Chair Simone did clarify that City council would deliberate this.

Chair Simone motioned to ask for permission to represent the SCPD at SPS Committee Meeting later in the evening.

Ingrid Seconded

No discussion.

Motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 6:03pm