

Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Meeting
March 18th 7pm- 9pm
Virtual
Meeting Minutes

Staff:

Adrienne Pomeroy, ADA Coordinator
Elijah Booker, RSJ Project Specialist

Commissioners:

Holly Simione, Chair
Harriotte Ranvig, Vice Chair
Sheila Tracy, Treasurer
Pauline Downing
Helen Corrigan
Murshid Buwembo
Mike Shaps
Ingrid Schneider
Deborah Haber
Nick Altschuller
Niki Aurora

Associate Commissioners:

Frank Lee
Nicole Cannon

Not Present:

Ginny Alverson (Associate Commissioner)

Guests:

Elyse Best, HRC

CART Provider:

Patty Parker, Partners Interpreting

Meeting to call to order at: 7:27pm

Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomes Niki to the commission.

Elections

Chair Simone asked if anyone had any questions on the process for Elections. A member can nominate themselves, or another commissioner. We are not going to do ballots; we are going to do roll calls. Roll nominations will be closed before elections

For the position of Chair, Harriet has nominated Holly for reelection of the role. There were not any additional nominations. Roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor to reelect the Chair Holly Simone.

For the position of Vice Chair, Harriet has nominated herself for reelection. There were no additional nominations. All members were in favor of the nominee, besides Harriet who abstained.

For the position of Treasurer, Deborah nominated Sheila for the role. There were no additional nominations, and all members were in favor of the nominee.

For the position of Secretary, there was a clarification that one cannot be Treasurer and Secretary. There was then a question about what the role of the secretary will be if not in a notetaking capacity. The commission has opted to outsource note taking to a professional. In this role the secretary would be a corresponding secretary who will assist with sending out correspondence for the commissions

Murshid nominated Michael and Helen was also nominated by a commissioner. Both parties accepted their nominations.

Secretary - Vote

Pauline - Helen
Harriet - Helen
Nick- Helen
Sheila - Helen
Michael - Michael
Murshid- Michael
Ingrid- Michael
Niki- Abstain
Deborah - Michael
Helen - Helen
Holly- Abstain

Swings

The commission voted in January, a contingent vote on the notion the group was to receive an invoice and information about swings recommendation and cost involved. There was a plan to have a further conversation on the matter and form a decision of what is next.

A conversation with Luisa would follow. When we received additional information on the matter it was an update. The Chair highlighted that a larger conversation was held regarding the swings. The swings did not have the two safety standards it should have. There should be two different types of swings, one that has more support and one with a locking mechanism.

The Chair and vice-chair were asked to bring this information back to the group on what swings the commission would like, and steps they would like to take moving forward.

Discussion - 10 mins

Nick asked if the swings mentioned were the big seat and dual swings? There was a survey sent out that would have two swings and a red and longer swing with the straps that hold you tight.

There's about four and there is one that is made in the U.S and the National safety standards, any swing that you add netting to it becomes a choking hazard if anyone is unsupervised. It is difficult to understand because it can keep people safe, but also poses a threat of a choking hazard for children if unsupervised

Sheila asked if we want to propose with one particularly style or different style swings. Do we prefer one specific chair, or do we want different chairs? Are we voting for or talking about preference of the two styles?

The Chair responded that they don't think there is a one size fits all, different swings are suitable for different children. If we are able to provide both, families could their children go to the one that fits/serves them best

Nicole thanks the commission for the members staying committed to this issue. Nicole thinks it's important for kids to have access to these swings that might not have access to other things on our city playgrounds. Since two swings were presented in the survey, it makes sense to have both swings included.

The Chair mentioned there was a committee meeting on public safety, a letter written by Luisa was in response to ask for an update on the swings, and a universal plan for the Kennedy School. They believe the letter was great and feel that parks need to be beyond ADA compliant for kids to sufficiently play in the playgrounds. The letter also mentioned city design and accessible parks. The Chair in their testimony highlights the fault isn't that of a city department but rather maintenance of the parks

The Chair asked City Councilor support for making sure the building at the Kennedy and other parks for specific amounts of funds for park maintenance. Maintenance needs a city response. The Chairs heard they the commission needs to bring the information they found about the swings to Luisa and her team, to help with their recommendation of two mix swings

Several other people who spoke at the subcommittee meeting and we actually had one woman volunteer her daughter who is a physical therapist who would like to help us to understand what would fit children of different abilities especially in things like Kennedy and other areas of the state.

The Chair is going to send this info and copy everyone, and we will send that back to Lusia to look at and see what they decide.

Update - from Shu

On a business meeting

RSJ Collaboration

Holly The commission was asked about an update regarding the swings In attendance, Holly, Sheila, and Harrit, Amanda RSJ, Louisa and Adrienne. There are meetings that happen in small groups that have different purposes. We felt the meeting was very uncomfortable, and we felt we needed to bring it to this meeting.

The Chair felt in the meeting they were told that they were told that they were not honest, don't share all of the information back with the members
And that felt very uncomfortable

The conversation also mentioned that our members were very inappropriate at the meeting when Meg and Dawn presented. There was a situation in October with a guest, and the Chair feels that there was not a conversation on the matter until February. The Chair expressed they never want guests to be upset when attending our meetings, and that they apologized for this and have not been able to contact said person. A lot transpired in that meeting, and the Chair felt that the meeting was not set up properly. The Chair stated they usually like to prep with guests, and in this situation, they were not able to.

The Chair said all communications to the members go through the chair and there's not to be conversation outside of meetings, without going through the chair. There was frustration about phone calls, invoices and speaking with City staff protocol. Agendas are made by the Chair; they are set by the Chair. Everyone in this room has a voice. The Chair values all of it. All inputs are welcome.

The Chair finishes with the commission will not be mischaracterized, will apologize when needed, but the group will not be bullied.

Meeting stopped.

Meeting Ended - 8:18pm