



City of New Bedford Commission for Citizens with Disabilities

Minutes

**Commission for Citizens with Disabilities Meeting
Buttonwood Senior Center
January 13, 2022
6:00 PM REMOTE**

Present Remotely

Esperanza Alejandro-Berube
Kim Bettencourt
Den DeMarinis, Jr.
Linda Haskins
John Lobo
George Smith
Pam Cole
Marsha Fernandes

Excused

Audra DePina

Others in Attendance

BG Shanklin, Architect
Cynthia Wallquist, Exec. Director
Sarah Nechamen, Outreach and Training
Specialist - Disabled Persons Protection
Commission
State Rep. Tony Cabral
Al Medeiros, Rep. Cabral's office

Welcome

Dennis DeMarinis, Jr., Chair, called the meeting to order @ 6:10 PM.

Roll Call Attendance

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve minutes of December 9, 2021 meeting: Motion made by George Smith, seconded by Kim Bettencourt. Roll call vote carried 8:0.

Guests

• **State Rep. Tony Cabral**

- State law re: restroom public access. Rep Cabral discussed the State law regarding public access of restrooms. Discussion around how this can be facilitated better in New Bedford. George Smith requested legislative considerations of Rep Cabral and there will be more discussion on this issue to make sure business know their obligations relative to allowing bathroom access to the public.
- MA Office on Disability & MA Architectural Access Board (jurisdiction and enforcement): BG Shanklin gave an overview of the Hillman St. project and the issues with the ramp proposal. Rep Cabral requested that the Commission send a letter to his office with the information so he can review.

- **Sarah Nechamen, Outreach and Training Specialist**
Disabled Persons Protection Commission: Sarah provided a presentation about what the DPPC provides in regard to support and protection. She shared the reporting line information for ages 18-59. The hotline is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year: **1-800-426-9009**.

Old Business

- Buttonwood men's room/Hillman St.
 BG has a meeting later in January with Jennifer Vieira, DFFM regarding the work on the men's room as well as Hillman St. project.
- South Sixth St. Parking
 BG reported the need for crosswalk and pedestrian light signal for crossing. There may be a need for a stop light at the corner of William St. If this stop light is added, the 2 existing handicapped parking spots are fine but if not, the spots need to move to the South side of City Hall parking lot. BG's 2 options/recommendations will be shared with Christina Connelly for review.
- Tripp Towers 1st Floor Bathrooms
 Cynthia provided the NBHA 2nd response letter to all members.

Chairperson's Report

Nothing to report

Executive Director's Report

- Melville Tower elevator issues as well as several other issues at Melville Tower were brought to Councillor Gomes by tenants. He will be bringing all issues to the Council at tonight (1/13/22) meeting. Tripp Towers issues were also on the agenda so Cynthia provided Councillor Gomes with the NBHA response to the first floor bathrooms there.
- There are enough *Commission* funds for 19 Clear Path homes to be completed. The handicapped exercise program at a site where the bathrooms do not meet ADA requirements is a moot point this month since Warming House is closed. No funding will be provided at this time.

Motion to accept Executive Director's Report made by George; seconded by John Lobo. Roll call vote passed 8-0.

Architect's Report

- Lund's Corner Church: no update
- Hillman St: discussed previously in agenda
- PAACA: no update
- Transition Plan: no update
- Al Oliveira/NBPS regarding Carney Academy: no response from Al
- Public Bathroom Access: discussed previous in agenda

- New curb cuts: discussed previously

Motion to accept Architect's report made by George; seconded by Kim Bettencourt. Roll call vote approved 8-0.

New Business

- International Wheelchair Day (March 1) - Spring "Team George Wheelchair Challenge" to raise money for ALS or other activity. Can announce on 3/1 and hold activities in the Spring. Due to the length of this meeting, will be revisited next month.

Other Business

- Vax grant update re: vaccines for persons with disabilities: Pam updated the members about the lack of clinics in the North End of the City since many in that area are already vaccinated. St. Mary's will hold an upcoming clinic. Pam was able to secure an insurance certificate for each clinic. The Federal government created a blanket insurance certificate for all vaccine clinics to use as needed. A clinic was scheduled for the fishing community but has been postponed until sometime in February.

Announcements

- Next Meeting: February 10, 2022

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by John Lobo at 7:24 PM; seconded by George Smith. Roll call vote approved 8-0.

Respectfully submitted

Kimberli A. Bettencourt

Kimberli Bettencourt
Clerk