



## **City of New Bedford Commission for Citizens with Disabilities**

### **Minutes Commission for Citizens with Disabilities June 19, 2018**

#### **Members Present**

Jaunna Adesso  
Josh Amaral  
Martha Bouchard  
Melissa Branco  
Linda Carreiro  
Rev. Pam Cole  
Dennis DeMarinis, Jr.  
Sonny Eddleston  
Marsha Fernandes

#### **Others in Attendance**

Josh Crary, Associate Director, Center for Access  
and Success at UMass Dartmouth  
Manuel DeBrito, Election Commissioner  
Donald Gaudette, Election Commission  
BG Shanklin, Architect  
Cynthia Wallquist, Exec. Dir.

**Dennis DeMarinis**, Chair, called the meeting to order @ 6:35 PM.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Martha Bouchard moved to accept the May 15, 2018 meeting minutes; seconded by Rev. Pam Cole. The motion carried.

#### **Guest Presentation**

Guest Josh Crary, Associate Director of the Center for Access and Success at UMass Dartmouth, introduced himself. He discussed his interest in advocacy for students and faculty on campus as well as in the community. Commission members introduced themselves in return.

#### **Old Business**

- **Polling Places**

Mr. DeMarinis provided a summary of the Commission's efforts on polling place accessibility. The Commission had not received a response from the Election Commissioner, Manuel DeBrito, by May 8<sup>th</sup> as requested. Mr. DeMarinis wrote another letter on behalf of the Commission on May 18<sup>th</sup>, which garnered a response from Mr. DeBrito on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Mr. DeBrito shared that he attended a conference related to accessibility, and was seeking out improvements to the Elections Office website and training processes to mitigate polling place issues. He shared that customer service and handicapped parking were something he planned to focus on addressing. Mr. DeMarinis shared his appreciation for the limited progress, with ongoing frustrations with the lack of communication and lack of meaningful change to address the issues brought forward.

At this point, Commissioners DeBrito and Donald Gaudette entered the meeting. Mr. DeMarinis invited Mr. DeBrito to update the Commission and share his perspective. Mr. DeBrito reiterated much of what was already shared in the May 21<sup>st</sup> email; i.e. a focus on customer service, handicapped parking, website resources, and a training video for staff. Additionally, he discussed plans to relocate the problematic Station #5 polling place in Ward 1 to Bedford Gardens. Mr. DeBrito expressed that about eight polling places were recommended for replacement by the Commission for Citizens with Disabilities, and that would not be feasible immediately, in part due to costs associated with a requirement to notify all residents in the ward of a change to even one precinct. He noted that increasing the number of schools used as polling places might be a solution. Architect BG Shanklin advised that additional planning must happen at schools to ensure there is a dedicated entry unobstructed by buses and other school-related activity, which has been a problem at the Normandin Middle School polling place.

- SRTA Garage Elevator

Cynthia Wallquist detailed correspondence shared with her and Mr. DeMarinis requiring the elevator to be operational by May 31<sup>st</sup> and for notification of completion to be provided to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) by June 18<sup>th</sup>. The project does not appear to be completed, and all that is known is that the old elevator was removed. The Commission took no further action as the matter is in MAAB's hands for compliance and potential fines.

### **Chairperson's Report**

In the interest of time, Mr. DeMarinis deferred his report to the next meeting.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Ms. Wallquist shared she is waiting on the city budget to be adopted in order to report on CCWD programs and will give a more thorough update in July.

### **Architect's Report**

- Sidewalk Complaint

Mr. Shanklin outlines a complaint received about the new sidewalks at Union & 6<sup>th</sup> Streets. The curb cuts are angled in a way that directs individuals in wheelchairs into the street. The Massachusetts Architectural Access Board has no authority to change this.

- Transition Plan Update

Mr. Shanklin shared he will not be able to complete the Transition Plan update until September due to the amount of time and effort it has taken to date, anticipating a 500-600 page report by the end. He has taken over 3000 photographs which require his review, descriptions, and proposed interventions.

- Variances/Misc. Reviews

Mr. Shanklin provided an update on two requests for variances from the New Bedford Housing Authority regarding homes with inaccessible kitchen areas. The residents of these homes are limited and all cooking and kitchen tasks are performed by staff, eliminating the need to lower the cabinets to make accessible for residents. Mr. Shanklin recommends letting the MAAB make a decision on the merits.

- 22 Centre Street

Mr. Shanklin updated the Commission on the variance at 22 Centre Street. The MAAB has not granted a variance in this case because they want to first verify the actual costs of renovation.

- 95 West Rodney French Blvd

Mr. Shanklin reviewed the third floor of the “Kilburn Mills,” where a Whaling Museum exhibit is to be hosted this summer. Because work is under way and not yet completed, it was not possible to assess and not applicable to MAAB. The building owner intends to install an elevator, new bathrooms, and an improved ramp.

- Age Friendly City

Mr. Shanklin announced the Mayor and City of New Bedford announced the city’s designation as an Age Friendly City, which will help in applying for grants. Mr. Amaral moved to accept the Architect’s Report, seconded by Ms. Bouchard. Motion carried.

## **New Business**

The FY19 Meeting Schedule was presented for review.

## **Election of Officers**

A slate of candidates for the Commission for Citizens with Disabilities officer positions was proposed as follows:

- Chair: Dennis DeMarinis, Jr.
- Vice-chair: Joshua Amaral
- Secretary: Jaunna Adesso
- Treasurer: Marsha Fernandes

Rev. Cole made motion instructing the Secretary to cast one vote in favor of the slate of officers as proposed, seconded by Ms. Bouchard. The motion carried.

Outgoing Vice-Chair Martha Bouchard announced she is resigning from the Commission July 1, 2018 as she is moving to Dartmouth. Mr. DeMarinis shared that she is scheduled to be honored the next Special City Council Celebration meeting.

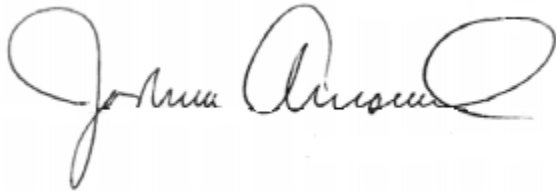
## **Other Business**

Rev. Cole suggested the Commission review the renovations to Trinity Church that appeared in the June 9, 2018 edition of The Standard Times newspaper.

**Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Bouchard and seconded by Mr. Amaral. The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joshua Amaral". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joshua" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Amaral".

Secretary