



## City of New Bedford Commission for Citizens with Disabilities

**Commission for Citizens with Disabilities Meeting  
Buttonwood Senior Center  
December 9, 2021  
6:00 PM**

### **Present**

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

### **Present remotely**

Pam Cole

### **Excused**

Audra DePina  
Marsha Fernandes

### **Others in Attendance**

BG Shanklin, Architect  
Cynthia Wallquist, Exec. Director

### **Welcome**

Dennis DeMarinis, Jr., Chair, called the meeting to order @ 6:18 PM

### **Roll Call Attendance**

### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve minutes of November meeting: Motion made by Linda Haskins, seconded by George Smith. Roll call vote carried 7:0.

### **Old Business**

- Polling Places  
Manny DeBrito did respond during last month's meeting to the email Dennis sent during it. He was receptive, but stated he did not get the complaints the Commission received and asked that as we get complaints in the future to forward to him immediately so he can address as they come in. BG noted that there is no law about requiring "Vote Here" signage at each polling location. There are recommendations for good signage but no law.
- Buttonwood men's room  
George explained to COA this morning there are infractions he has noted at the warming house. He also reported that he called the Mayor's Office before Thanksgiving, left a message and received no response, so he sent a letter to the Director of Facilities. As of today, he has heard nothing in response to his call or letter regarding his observations of infractions. He asked that the Commission invite

the (Interim) Director to attend the January or February meeting discuss this and other issues. According to BG, the bathrooms are easily corrected, but nothing has been done since the last meeting.

- COA Board letter re: Hillman St.  
George shared copies of the letter that was sent by the Director of COA on behalf of the COA Board regarding Hillman St. accessibility. The letter indicates that Mark Champagne wanted to install a lift rather than a ramp to access the front entrance. The Commission is trying to get the Hillman St. decision re-opened. Once we hear back from MAAB re: review of decision, we will act accordingly. The request in their variance request does not take into account that the current plan for the ramp is not feasible. George was told today at a COA Board meeting that a lift is being installed but they have not received approval to do so and the Commission does not support that alternative based on George and BG's objections.

### **Chairperson's Report**

Nothing to report

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

Should funds for special needs exercise program at Buttonwood should be put on hold since the bathroom project is still not completed? Motion was made by George Smith to restrict Commission funds for activities at buildings that are not handicapped accessible; seconded by John Lobo. Roll call vote carried 7-0.

Clear Path. The program originally budgeted for 35 with 32 enrolled and 3 kept for emergencies. However, due to an increase in the number of requests from dialysis patients, there are 36 fully enrolled at this time.

Motion to accept Executive Director's Report made by Kim; seconded by Esperanza. Roll call vote passed 7-0.

### **Architect's Report**

- Buttonwood Senior Center: Items that need to be corrected in both Men's and Women's room were reviewed. BG has been in touch with Facilities with less-complicated suggestions.
- Carney Academy public meeting complaint; BG emailed Al Oliveira re: making sure that the speakers are not be in the way of the ramp at meetings. No response as of this date.
- City Hall ADA entrance signage – street level: There is an old, brass sign on a City Hall front step halfway up City Hall indicating a handicapped entrance on Sixth Street but it is not readable and does not meet ADA requirements.
- City Hall Parking: No response from City Councillor Lima who was invited to tonight's meeting.
- DOT Variance Request for Curb cuts/Sidewalks: Variance for sidewalk off 140 at Braley Rd. Add painting and textured mats at intersections was discussed.

BG recommended that the Commission support this variance since this is a definite improvement. BG will write to MAAB in support of this variance and notify the petitioner.

- First (Lund's Corner) Congregational Church/2195 Acushnet Ave: BG is working up a design change and price to include a lift in the back. It is conditional upon approval from Jireh Swift School for variance to access the back for lift because it would have to go through the school parking lot to access the back/lift. Should consider new bathrooms and elevator where existing bathrooms are rather than access through school lot. BG will also investigate the ramp option but not as ideal. Pam concerned with maintenance and inspection costs long term.
- Hillman St. MAAB & Buildings 3 (exterior) & 9 (interior and exterior): BG prepared a report with detailed information. Copies were provided to all members.
- Market Basket: George had asked how many handicapped parking spaces are required there. They need 12 and have 14, so it's a non-issue. No further action needed.
- NBHS bathrooms and Gym exit ramp installation: no update
- PAACA building accessibility: no update
- Parks & Rec Oneida St. Improvements: BG asked Mary to be sure her grant request included a ramp improvement (slope) and add concrete to porch in back for another accessible doorway and nice porch for events.
- Temple Landing: BG provided an addendum to the initial proposal to consider appropriate curb cuts, increasing size of sidewalks, signage and handicapped parking spots. Settling in sidewalk has created a gap which is dangerous. Improper spacing around lights needs to be corrected as well. Those recommendations were sent to the Planning Department.
- Transition Plan Updates: no updates
- Public Bathroom access: The state's Restroom Access Guide has information regarding persons with specific related disabilities regarding access to bathrooms at all restraints and other public locations. Flyer previously shared with members. It was suggested that State Rep. Cabral be invited to a meeting to discuss the regulations and enforcement.  
Motion to accept Architect's report made by John Lobo; seconded by George Smith.  
Roll call vote approved 7-0.

### **New Business**

No new business

### **Other Business**

- Vax grant update re: vaccines for persons with disabilities: Pam emailed great photos to all members with update.

### **Announcements**

- Next Meeting: January 13

**Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn made by Linda Haskins at 7:20 PM; seconded by Kim. Roll call vote approved 7-0.

Respectfully submitted

*Kimberli A. Bettencourt*

Kimberli Bettencourt  
Clerk

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*In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if any accommodations are needed, please contact **Cynthia Wallquist** ([Cynthia.wallquist@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:Cynthia.wallquist@newbedford-ma.gov)), **508.997.4893** or **MassRelay 711**. Requests should be made as soon as possible, but at least **48 hours** prior to the scheduled meeting.*