



## City of New Bedford Commission for Citizens with Disabilities

### Minutes

**Commission for Citizens with Disabilities Meeting  
Buttonwood Senior Center  
August 11, 2022  
6:00 PM**

#### Present

Pam Cole  
Marsha Fernandes  
Linda Haskins  
John Lobo  
George Smith

#### Excused

Esperanza Alejandro-Berube  
Kim Bettencourt  
Den DeMarinis, Jr.  
Audra DePina

#### Others in Attendance

Councillor Brian Gomes  
BG Shanklin, Architect  
Cynthia Wallquist, Exec. Director

### **Welcome & Introductions**

Vice Chair George Smith called the meeting called to order at 6:03 PM and offered a Moment of Silence in memory of Louis "Jimmy" Carlesi.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion made to approve the June minutes by John Lobo; seconded by Linda Haskins. Motion passed 5-0.

### **Guest**

Councillor-at-Large Brian Gomes discussed the Council Committee meeting where Melville Towers and Tripp Towers residents voiced their concerns about issues at their respective buildings and the follow-up letter he sent to Congressman Keating (copy attached). George and Linda pointed out that the language was confusing and wanted to make certain that people of all ages who had a disability would not be discriminated against under the ADA/federal law. Councillor Gomes assured the group that that was not his intent, but that he was supportive of residents with safety concerns and the lack of security – especially at Tripp Towers. The Commission agreed that the property management office should be staffed and that a guard should be stationed there. George asked that the Commission be included in a follow-up meeting that Councillor Gomes is scheduling with property management from both buildings.

## Old Business

- **Brock Avenue sidewalk complaint.** Larry Sylvia filed a follow-up complaint to the one he had submitted (spring), because the issue had not been resolved and no date was given for it. His complaint (with photos of the curb and his broken wheelchair) was forwarded to the Mass. Office on Disability.
- **Hillman St. Exterior ADA Issues/Report on Follow-up Meeting with DFFM.** Despite repeated requests to DFFM for a follow-up to the March 31 meeting, those requests have been ignored. Acting Director Viera was invited and unable to attend the August Commission meeting, so she will be invited to September's. BG Shanklin had received a drawing (today) of a new request to MAAB from DFFM's architect which did not appear to address the ongoing concerns about Entrance 1. George said he would try and reach out to DFFM again to go on record that the Commission continues to be left out of decision-making discussions. BG hadn't seen the civil engineer's report that DFFM was scheduling to see if the ramp option he prepared would be ok. He said there needs to at least be exterior temporary signage directing clients to accessible door(s).

John made a motion for the CCWD members that were supposed to meet with Jen, Mark, etc. to send a follow-up letter to DFFM about their frustration; Marsha seconded. Motion approved 5-0.

- **Team George Events.** Pam Cole reported on the Team George fundraising activity at AHA and 50's Nights. So far, the group raised \$1860, minus the \$400 charge for the shirts. Better Image did give the group a huge discount, so Pam said she will bring them a photo of George in the shirt to display in the lobby. She is also writing to Senator Montigny and Rep. Cabral asking for funding. Cynthia said that she asked the Mayor's office if ARPA money might be available to replace the slide, but hasn't heard back.
- **Wheelchair Flags.** John Lobo said that he will be going to Tripp Towers, Melville Towers, Taber Mills, the New Bedford Hotel and Bedford Towers to install flags and lights.

## Executive Director's Report

- **Clear Path.** Due to less funding and crew, the program will be capped @ 20 and be restricted to the priority categories of: Dialysis, chemotherapy, adult day health program participation and/or documented daily/overnight caregiver shifts. All 2021-22 Clear Path participants will be notified next month so those not eligible will have time to make other arrangements.
- **FY23 Budget.** Due to the funding issue, only Clear Path and architectural review services will be contracted. By reducing the Sunset Social Program to 30, the

General Fund Senior Program line will cover special needs exercise @ Buttonwood that the CCWD has paid for in the past.

### **Architect's Report**

- **Family Dollar Store (Purchase St).** BG made a second visit and said the exterior entrance has a 3% grade, so it is not legally bound to lower it (5% is the trigger).
- **Kilburn Mills.** BG is waiting to hear back from Danny about the concerns he voiced at the May meeting.
- **Lund's Corner Congregational Church.** Pam spoke to someone at the church who needs BG's drawings and options, so he'll follow up.
- **New Bedford Credit Union downtown.** BG will check on the entrance door access/weight.
- **Transition Plan/ Meeting with DFFM.** BG has been trying unsuccessfully to get a meeting since January. In order to prepare an update for the state, he will have to go out and revisit all the sites in the original Transition Plan to see what has been corrected. The money spent on that will reduce the number of hours available for other site visits and reviews.
- **Transition Plan/Schools.** BG is waiting for times from Al Oliveira.
- **Downtown Obstacles.** BG made a follow-up visit to the downtown streets that have planters and other obstacles interfering with path of travel by persons with visual and/or mobility limitations. He will prepare a report to share with DPI at the next meeting.
- **Polling Sites.** Manny asked BG to review 2 substation locations (KDC and Care One). He said both are fine, but each needs signage directing voters to the entrance(s) to be used for polling.
- **Dough Company.** MAAB approved the Dough Company variance request that the Commission had supported, with the condition that no private events be held on the mezzanine.
- **West Beach.** The grant application supported by the Commission was approved and included all design elements that had been discussed.

Linda asked BG to go by the Elm St. Garage office door and check on the door and customer service area, as well as the door(s) accessed by security cards.

Motion to accept Architect's report made by Marsha; seconded by Linda. Motion passed 5-0.

### **New Business**

- Pam reported that Larry Sylvia has had issues with SRTA's On Demand service and that his employer, SCIL, had filed a complaint on his behalf. He also expressed interest in resurrecting the social club he had "hosted" pre-COVID.

### **Other Business**

- Due to the unresolved ADA and lighting issues at Hillman Street, George asked that all future meetings be held at Buttonwood or City Hall.

### **Announcements**

- Next Meeting: Sept. 15 @ Buttonwood.

**Motion to Adjourn** at 7:26 was made by John; seconded by Pam. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pamela J. Cole". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a stylized "C".

Pamela J. Cole  
Acting Clerk