



Commission for Citizens with Disabilities

February 2, 2016 – 6:30 – 7:45 PM – **Minutes**
133 William Street, City Hall, Ashley Room

Members Present:

Jaunna Adesso
Josh Amaral
Kim Bettencourt
Martha Bouchard
Rev. Pam Cole
Dennis DeMarinis
Brooke Miller

Members Excused:

Marsha Fernandes
John Tyson

Others in Attendance:

Atty. Eric Cohen
Dennis Houghtman, MCB
Linda Holtzman, Regional Director, MCB
Cynthia Wallquist, Exec. Director
BG Shanklin, Architect
Phil Zukas

Kim Bettencourt, Chair, called the meeting of the Commission for Citizens with Disabilities to order @ 6:30PM.

Minutes

Martha Bouchard moved to accept the November 17, 2015 minutes; seconded by Dennis DeMarinis. Motion carried.

Guest Presentation

Linda Holtzman, Regional Director, Mass. Commission for the Blind

Ms. Holtzman explained what services the Mass. Commission for the Blind (MCB) provides.

- The SE Mass. regional office covers Seekonk – Provincetown and includes 74 municipalities. They only have 3 social workers, 3 vocational counselors and 1 technologist to serve the region.
- MCB serves all age groups, including children; 85% of whom have multiple disabilities. They provide respite care and camperships. At age 14, students are assigned a vocational counselor to work on future goals (the vocational piece is federally funded and serves all ages)
- They provide \$14,000 for college tuition and readers' services

- There is a deaf/blind unit that works with the developmentally-delayed through DDS
- The MCB provides technology training and homemaker services
- There are 27,000 registered legally blind individuals (vision 20/200) in the state of Mass
- The MCB receives 50 – 65 new referrals per month
- The MCB pays for support groups for the elderly visually impaired
- MCB does not offer volunteer opportunities at this time, due to budget cuts; however they are always seeking volunteers to read to consumers 1-1

Ms. Holtzman distributed a number of materials put out by the MCB.

Chairperson's Report

The Chicopee Commission reached out to discuss our Flag & Light Program; John Lobo already provided him with a copy of the City's Ordinance and info. on the flags and lights.

Architect's Report

BG Shanklin reported that:

- he revisited all the playgrounds that he surveyed when he first came to the Commission and they are all in worse shape than what was initially viewed. He will provide Mary Rapoza with an updated list.
- he made several house visits to assist residents with accessibility questions
- he is working on ADA designs for Pilgrim UCC and the Braz-Bean Center aka PAACA
- he assisted Deb Lee with her plans for an Adult Social Day Program @ Hillman St.
- he is working to update the Transition Plan for the approx. 150 City buildings/facilities. Due to contractual budget constraints, the School Dept. will have to cover the cost of updating buildings and facilities under their jurisdiction to comply with the requisite Transition Plan annual reviews.
- Nothing new to report on NBHS's ADA issues. Brooke Miller reported that she was told she would be moved to another school (from the high school) because they are not making the accommodations she requested.
- Review of Playgrounds & Senior Centers. There has been no word from the principal @ Congdon about plans to proceed with the playground there. Gomes School will soon have a new playground but a ramp is needed to access the site.
- There are issues with the ramp to the sea wall at West Beach

Josh Amaral moved to accept the architect's report; seconded by Dennis DeMarinis. Motion carried.

New Business

There was discussion with Atty. Cohen about the planned sober house and the number of residents that BG Shanklin said could be supported there.

Executive Director's Report

- Cynthia reported that 67 are enrolled in the Clear Path Program
- The special needs exercise (Monday) program @ Buttonwood averages 10-12 Work Inc. clients

Martha Boucard moved to accept the Executive Director's report; seconded by Brooke Miller. Motion carried.

Old Business

Due to time constraints, other business was tabled.

Announcements

- The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 1.
- Condolences from the Commission to Pam Cole on the loss of her sister

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Josh Amaral and seconded by Martha Bouchard. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis DeMarinis, Jr.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dennis DeMarinis, Jr.
Secretary