

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY

Minutes for Tuesday, July 15, 2014

COME TO ORDER at 4:05pm.

Committee Members Attending: Ralph Montefusco, Brad Stephenson, Michael Watson, Elaine Zimmerman, Mark Irish

Others Attending: Kesha Ram (committee staff), Miriam Stoll (community member), Cleary Buckley (community member), Ruby Smith (intern), Norah Senftleber (intern), Alicia Freese (Seven Days)

Ralph mentioned to Alicia that the press should focus on Henry's Diner, etc. Possibly a photo.

1. Public Comment: Brad mentioned Henry's Diner and showed what can happen if a business tries - old building, but they still made it possible. Henry's Diner will be closing and constructing a ramp. Cleary spoke about his son, and their request for him to attend Edmunds Elementary School. He found out that the school/playground are not accessible. He wishes to stick with Edmunds and wants to make improvements. He wants to be involved without being restricted. He knows that there have been many budget challenges lately, but should these improvements should still remain a priority.

2. Burlington School District Accessibility Discussion:

Mark Irish responded to Cleary after conversation segway by Ralph discussing: \$2 million bond, FY17: Elevator will be implemented, and they have plans on the budget. Cleary responds: wants to work towards a 2 year goal. He mentioned concern that improvements rely on a bond vote. Miriam responds stating personal connection with elevator (daughter broken ankle). She wants to know if members of this group could give a presentation to members/subgroup (ITC) of the board. Cleary responds: he would be interested in making that presentation. Cleary spoke with lawyer and middle school seems to be priority since there are only two middle schools in Burlington. Miriam responds: suggests a joint committee meeting with a presentation. This cause needs a "champion" to power it through. Ralph and Brad agree: Ralph suggests that Brad and Cleary present. Miriam mentions inclusion and that the board supports this - they just need a push. Brad mentions a consultant. Miriam responds: Joe McNeil - legal council (suggested by Kesha) Miriam mentions that maybe city could add funds as well. Schools are used for more than just schooling. They are city buildings. Kesha responds: ongoing dialogue/joint school board member needs to be revived. Miriam responds: mentions when mayor visited BHS. Ralph mentions that they may need to plan to advocate for a bond. Cleary discusses that a large portion of the cost with Edmunds Middle School elevator was due to electric set up at Edmunds. Ralph relates it to the Accessible Meeting

Checklist. Brad questions the order of the school boards elevator plans. Cleary mentions that both are important. Mark mentions plan hoping to make Edmunds Elementary School main office accessible. Cleary asks when meeting with ITC should occur. Miriam is going to speak with board and get back to people here. She brings up high accessibility of high school. Ralph mentions high school and the struggles there - others agree. Brad thanks Miriam for her time.

3. Announcements:

Elaine discusses working with visually impaired - Contact: VABVI. She mentions that the recent downtown construction has been awful for those who are visually impaired. She states that the audible signals don't always work - these should be an easy fix. She wants to initiate discussion/action about those with visual impairments. She mentions example of City Hall and poor lighting there. Kesha discusses who works with the lighting, etc and elaborates on a meeting with VABVI. Kesha then elaborates on sidewalk improvement and how, due to the process, it may get worse before it gets better. Elaine mentions that she wants education. Cleary mentions that input from blind/deaf community would be important seeing as those who have mobility impairments are visible to public. Michael mentions that he walked up Church Street and observed significant obstructions. Ralph mentions that some people stay home instead of going out because it really is an issue. Kesha states that the committee strives to support an open environment for those to bring new topics up.

4. Accessible Meeting Checklist Review:

Ralph thanks interns for changes. Kesha mentions work done by Norah and Ruby and thanks Cleary for his help as well. After final edits, Kesha hopes to distribute it throughout the whole city - particularly Parks and Rec. Ralph mentions that it should be posted on website as well. Ralph wonders how to make this document required. Cleary and Brad mention a few possible changes - unlocked doors, shovelled walkway, etc. Kesha brings up a few suggestions. Michael mentions an elevator that he used to have to use that would turn off at 6pm - a set up like this is not helpful. Elaine discusses poor acoustics in Contois Auditorium. Kesha plans to distribute the checklist. Ralph inquires as to how this checklist can be made mandatory. Cleary mentions that it is within peoples best interests to follow guidelines. City Council meeting on August 11th: Can provide this checklist. Final edits will be made and then the checklist will be forwarded along. Kesha and Ralph bring up annual report.

5. Annual Report Review:

Ralph asks if ADA information is posted anywhere. Kesha discusses how she is working on this. Ralph mentions that that information being posted is a legal requirement. Ralph brings up "No smoking zone." outside of City Hall so people can access building without

having to deal with smoke. Cleary asks about reduced size of committee - Reduced to 10, however only 5 committee members are present today (?) Ralph mentions his "rant" at a previous meeting. Cleary emphasizes that public (him) and others have mentioned the lack of commitment to this group. If Cleary were to become a member, which has been proposed, he would want to know that people were actually committed to these meetings. Kesha mentions that she will reach out to those who are not attending again, and then Elaine will contact them by phone as well. Brad proposes sending out another survey about meeting times. Kesha will be finalizing the annual report and plans to present it on **August 11th (City Council Meeting)**. Sam Handy (Scuffer Steak House) is involved with this and plans to be an active participant. Committee will be presenting to City Council on August 11th. Kesha mentions that if accommodation request is sent, their request should be honored - meaning they will be able to present earlier.

6. Next Steps:

Ralph asks if August meeting should/will be skipped? Ralph hopes to follow up with the reporter that was present for the first half of this meeting. Kesha discusses meeting in Waterbury related to ADA. Ralph attended last years meeting. Ralph mentioned Patrick, who is not being reappointed, and whether or not the group hopes to appoint another co-chair or vice-chair - Anybody interested? He mentions a consensus, vote? What would the method of appointment be? Ralph does wish to have a vice-chair - in his view it would be a good idea. Others agree and mention that they will consider it. Ralph hopes to get visually impaired representation at September meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:35pm.