

BRAINTREE COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
Fletcher Hall Meeting Room, Town Hall
1 John F. Kennedy Memorial Drive, Braintree MA
Monday, January 7, 2019, 6:30 p.m.

IN ATTENDANCE: Meredith Lincoln, Chairman
Mary Russo, Member
Robin Torpey, Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Marybeth McGrath, Director of ML & I

Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 6:42 p.m.

Chairman Lincoln announced the agenda items would be taken out of order as Andrew Marron from the Mayor's office was present to provide an overview of possible listening systems for town hall meeting rooms.

Marybeth McGrath stated one of the action items is an audio system that the Mayor's office wanted the Commission to consider for Cahill Auditorium. In her discussions with Andrew Marron she raised the possibility that the other two town hall meeting rooms, Fletcher Hall and Johnson Chambers, be considered as well.

Andrew Marron provided the Commission members with written materials. He stated Pro Sound Service, whose owner is Charles Tappa, has vast experience and has installed many systems around New England. The systems he installs are portable and include belt packs, headphones, devices that can be worn around the neck, as well as transceivers. In Cahill Auditorium, the existing PA system can be used. In the other meeting rooms, the equipment would use its own integrated PA system.

Ms. Torpey asked if there could be closed captioning included for the hearing impaired. Mr. Marron stated that closed captioning is an entirely different system. He stated they have used CART services for the hearing impaired in the past, which is provided through a third party and available upon request, with at least a two week notice.

Mr. Marron stated this FM system is portable and does not require hardwiring, ripping up walls and floors, as other systems would, costing thousands of dollars. He stated if a meeting had to be moved to another facility, such as the library, this system can be brought there, plugged in, and would be fully operational. The system comes with five belt packs, but can accommodate unlimited additional packs if needed, for a cost of approximately \$150 each. The system can also be used in all three meeting rooms simultaneously using different FM frequencies.

Chair Lincoln asked if this purchase comes with troubleshooting and maintenance.

Mr. Marron stated there is a one year warranty and training will be provided.

Ms. McGrath asked if the estimate provided is for all three meeting rooms.

Mr. Marron stated it is for all three meeting rooms and the estimated cost is just under \$5000.00. He stated Pro Sound does all the sound equipment for BCAM and are very responsive.

Ms. McGrath advised that if the Commission is interested in this system that they consider using funds from the handicapped parking fees in the amount of \$4,546.92.

Chairman Lincoln stated the Commission has had previous discussions about this being a good use of their funds. She stated she likes that this is a local company, they can use some of their existing equipment, and it is versatile.

Motion By: Meredith Lincoln to recommend approval to utilize handicapped parking fines for expenditure of sound amplification system.

Second By: Robin Torpey
The motion passed by a 3-0-0 vote.

Ms. McGrath stated at a previous meeting on November 5, 2018, the Commission spoke about painting or wrapping a utility box in South Braintree Square. She stated this is a town signaling utility box and there is a process in order to do this. They would have to go through the Department of Public Works, the Traffic Advisory Committee, and then onto the Mayor. She stated Andrew Marron is a member of the Traffic Advisory Committee and attended a meeting in December where this was discussed.

Mr. Marron stated the Traffic Advisory Committee discussed this, and it is legal, and other cities and towns do it. The committee recommends that this be artistic and visual in nature and not contain regulatory language, such as crosswalk ahead or stop ahead.

Chairman Lincoln asked if the wrapping or painting would make the box more distracting.

Ms. McGrath stated they would have to be careful with this because the more colorful it is, the more distracting it will be to drivers.

Mr. Marron stated this intersection is 30 or 40 years old and is scheduled to be redone soon.

Chairman Lincoln stated she believes Commission member Evans' concern pertained to visibility of persons in wheelchairs, but she is not sure.

Mr. Marron stated a draft of the proposed artwork should be submitted to the Traffic Advisory Committee for consideration, and the Mayor can approve or deny it.

Chairman Lincoln stated this was going to be opened up to high school students to do the art work, so they would have to consult with Dr. Hackett.

Ms. McGrath stated the Mayor would have to decide whether this would move forward to the school department.

Ms. Russo stated she thought the purpose of painting the box was so drivers could see pedestrians and pedestrians could see the cars.

Ms. McGrath stated she did not get a clear answer as to the purpose.

Ms. Torpey stated she does not feel this will make it safer.

Chairman Lincoln stated that there are other safety issues more pressing at this time and recommended tabling discussion of this matter.

Motion By: Meredith Lincoln to table discussion of painting/wrapping utility box in South Braintree Square.

Second By: Mary Russo.
The motion passed by a 3-0-0 vote.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of June 4, 2018 and November 5, 2018 were reviewed.

Chairman Lincoln stated the June minutes were tabled at a previous meeting due to lack of quorum.

Ms. McGrath informed the Commission that members can still vote on minutes, even if they were not present at that meeting, as they are voting as to legal form.

Motion By: Meredith Lincoln to approve the meeting minutes of June 4, 2018.

Second By: Robin Torpey.
The motion passed by a 3-0-0 vote.

Ms. McGrath stated that the November 5, 2018 minutes do not include the executive session. She will bring those minutes for approval at future meeting.

Motion By: Meredith Lincoln to approve the meeting minutes of November 5, 2018.

Second By: Mary Russo.
The motion passed by a 3-0-0 vote.

Update on the Status of Vacant ADA Coordinator Position:

Marybeth McGrath stated there were two applicants for the vacant ADA Coordinator position. Neither applicant was 100% qualified, but they each had experience in different areas. One applicant is a teacher with experience working with special needs individuals.

The second applicant has a background in construction, but withdrew his application after accepting another position. There is an interview scheduled with the available applicant for January 8, 2019.

Chairman Lincoln asked if the position is still advertised.

Ms. McGrath stated she believes the job is closed until after this round of interviews.

Review Action Items from November Meeting:

1. Charge on BELD bill regarding access cable: This matter has been closed, as it was determined that this is a regulatory fee and has nothing to do with access, as the Commission defines it.
2. Inquire with Municipal Finance regarding ADA Coordinator salary once documentation is sent to the Treasurer:
-Ms. McGrath stated this is in progress, as she has not been able to connect with the Finance Director.
3. Purchase wheelchair carriers for BFD/BPD:
-Ms. McGrath stated the Fire Department is definitely interested in obtaining this equipment for their vehicles, and they would like three. She spoke with the Police Chief, who did not express interest at this time, as they have cruisers and would have no place to put the equipment. Ms. McGrath expressed confusion as to the purpose of this equipment. She stated there are liability concerns for the town if they transport an individual's personal equipment. She also asked what happens to the wheelchair once the patient goes to the hospital. It was decided that Ms. Evans could provide further information at a future meeting.
4. Benches in South Braintree Square: Ms. McGrath stated she, along with the Building Inspector, Russ Forsberg, met with the DPW. There are three sets of benches. There are two benches near Southside Tavern, one across the street at a bus stop near the McDonalds parking lot, and two near Tiger Home Inspections which are not accessible. They are now working with DPW to install new benches, which will be made of composite material. They are also talking about an accessible picnic table near Southside Tavern and the Yogurt Bar. She is hoping this will be done by spring 2019.
5. Arrange meeting with Bob James and BEMA members regarding Portlight Emergency Preparedness training: Ms. McGrath stated she contacted Bob James, who was not very familiar with this training. He looked into it and found that this is a nonprofit organization that provides water, nonperishable food, infant and child items, replacement for lost or damaged durable medical equipment, assistive devices and accessibility aids, such as ramps and railings for disabled individuals in times of disaster. She stated Mr. James would probably not be involved in the training as he is not familiar with this.

Chairman Lincoln suggested they ask Mr. James if he is familiar with any similar training through other organizations.

6. BCAM closed captioning: BCAM has responded and stated closed captioning is cost prohibitive.
 - Ms. Torpey stated that she pays for cable and her husband is hard of hearing and cannot watch because there is no captioning.
 - Chairman Lincoln asked if BCAM could provide further information about their plans for the future. She stated perhaps there are technologies available that they are not aware of. She would like BCAM to know that this is not off the table as far as the Commission is concerned.
7. Accessibility photo campaign:
 - Chairman Lincoln stated it is winter, so it is not a good time to take photographs.
 - Ms. McGrath stated the Commission had discussed putting together a narrative to get approval from the Mayor.
 - Chairman Lincoln stated she would prefer to work on this together and put forth information as a group. She recommended discussing this at a future meeting.
8. Evaluate BEMA space for possible access issues and improvements:
 - Ms. McGrath stated the town is looking into possibly moving BEMA to another building in town which is accessible, the Daughraty Gym. She is unsure as to the timeline.
9. Special education busses being passed while stop sign active and lights flashing:
 - Ms. McGrath stated she set up a meeting with the police chief and the school superintendent, but it was cancelled due to an emergency, so she is trying to reschedule it.
10. Sound amplification system for public meeting rooms:
 - A presentation was held at this meeting and the Commission voted to purchase a system.
 - Ms. Torpey asked that the Commission continue to look into providing some type of captioning for meetings, in addition to the sound system.
11. Paint utility boxes in South Braintree Square:
 - Discussion was held at this meeting and vote was taken to table discussion.
12. COD narrative for BPS regarding safety concerns for Braintree school busses: ---
 - Chairman Lincoln stated there is a lack of information and understanding and they would like the community as a whole to understand the safety issues for school busses.
 - Ms. McGrath asked if they are looking for a community-wide campaign for school bus safety.
 - Chairman Lincoln agreed.

-Ms. McGrath stated she would start with the police chief and school superintendent to discuss this, as this is a similar topic to the special education bus discussion.

Announcements/Information:

Ms. McGrath stated she has provided a monthly meeting date schedule for 2019 for the Commission, with meetings held on the first Monday of the month, except in the case of a Monday holiday, when the meeting would be on the second Monday. The majority of the meetings will be held in the Fletcher Meeting Room. She stated they may want to discuss not having a December meeting because of the holidays.

-Chairman Lincoln recommended addressing this as the meeting date gets closer, as they have done in the past for summer meetings.

Ms. McGrath confirmed with members that they are all receiving their emails. She asked that they confirm receipt of emails, so she knows they are receiving them. She stated unless she hears from members, she will assume everyone can attend a schedule meeting and that there will be a meeting. If she hears from members and there will not be a quorum, she can reschedule the meeting. If members do not hear from her stating otherwise, the meeting will be held as scheduled.

Ms. McGrath reminded members that the Commission meetings are open to the public and start at 6:30 p.m. and requested they be present at the start of the meeting.

Ms. Torpey asked if it would be possible to hold their meetings earlier than 6:30 p.m.

Chair Lincoln stated a vote would have to be taken, and asked that this be included on the next meeting agenda.

Motion By: Meredith Lincoln to adjourn the Commission on Disabilities meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Second By: Robin Torpey.
Unanimously voted.