

Dearborn Commission on Disability Concerns
November 17, 2005
Minutes

Commissioners Present

Cathy McAdam
Cheryl Kreger
Dale Swanson
Gary Filiak
Nancy Bower
Mona Ramouni
Sonya Tisher
John McFarlin
Bill Tennant
Cyndi Parrelly, excused
Mary Hodak, excused
Susan Fitzmaurice, ADA Coordinator

Committee Members Present

SohbiBerri
Ndieh Aun
Marsha Luetjen

Guests Present

Carolyn Buell
Marsha Hurley
Helen Fisher
Tameka Citchen
Naji El Samman

1. Call to Order: 3:09 PM
2. Roll Call (Mary & Cyndi excused)
3. No additions or changes to agenda
4. September Minutes approved. Motion by Commissioner Tennant, seconded by Commissioner Bower, unanimous approval.
5. Update Michigan Ave. Project Michigan Avenue Project. The current project has been closed. A new project to correct the slope irregularities is going to begin this spring and it is estimated to take 6 months to complete. (From ADA report)

There was a brief discussion with assurances by Chair McAdam that the

process seems to be moving along in the right direction , but that she and the ADA Coordinator will continue to monitor the process.

6. Update West Village Housing Project. The planned townhouses meet ADA guidelines. Only the one-level ground floor units in townhouses must meet ADA requirements and the floor plan blue prints were reviewed by the ADA coordinator, and they clearly do.

The other part of the development is a high-rise apartment complex. The blueprints for those have yet to be completed. At this meeting it was clear that it was understood that all of those units would have to be ADA compliant as they were all reachable via elevator.

What is still a problem is a proposed crosswalk across the train tracks from the residential units to the parking structures and shopping. The slope in that area is very high. There is no way to make the sidewalk ADA compliant without it being very very long and very zigzagy. It simply does not seem reasonable to ask a person to walk 6 - 8 times more to walk on level ground. There appears to be 3 solutions:

1. Create the zigzag path anyway.
2. Create a straight non ADA path
3. Create no path.

Solution 1 or 2 still depends on the railroad giving permission for the tracks to be crossed with a path - which to date they have not done. (From ADA report)

There was an extensive discussion weighing the outcome of various choices. ADA compliance requirements were reviewed. It was agreed that in this specific situation a variance of ADA compliance makes sense given that the distance to walk a compliant sidewalk and the ordinary walk around the complex would be similar and the unlikelihood that the zigzag sidewalk would be used. It was also noted that the railroad may not allow the sidewalk in any event.

MOTION: We accept a variance of ADA compliance for a sidewalk crossing the railroad tracks near the Jacobson's Condominium Project, if the railroad grants the easement across the tracks. Motion made by Commissioner Tennat, seconded by Commissioner Swanson, unanimously agreed to.

There was further discussion about the second condo complex - a high rise - and the accessible units in the existing planned condos. The one thing that it was agreed we would ask of the condo developer would be to advertise the accessible units as such in hopes that people with disabilities would have an increased opportunity to avail themselves of the opportunity to purchase these

particular units.

7. Executive Update: Susan Fitzmaurice

Bailey's. There is experimentally being tried some grates around the trees that would give just enough legal space for ADA compliant sidewalk adjacent to the sidewalk cafe. (from ADA report)

Marsha Luetjen and Tameka Citchen volunteered to visit Bailey's to help the commission to understand how and if these new grates accomplish an accessible path of travel.

GRANTS (from ADA report)

ADA Compliant Training Room. The room has now been cleared and it can now be used as a training room once the equipment is bid on, purchased, and installed.

It is time to apply for grants again - and this can be tried for again with some minor revisions to what was written and submitted last year.

Close Captioning. The close captioning equipment has been purchased, installed, and is in use. This was purchased with grant money.

Commissioner McFarlin will make an attempt to review the close captioning and get back to the commission about its effectiveness.

Audible pedestrian signals. The engineering department has materials gathered on various audible signals. The ADA coordinator noted one stands out as much better than the others because in addition to the audible indicator it has a count-down display. If the cross walk allows you 10 seconds to cross - you see 10-9-8-7 displayed so you know how much time is left to help you (especially seniors) decide whether to cross the street or not. Whichever signals are decided upon will also be purchased for the new Warren Ave work. This was decided upon based on safety concerns and knowing that these will be required at busy intersections in the very near future. It is better to install them as the new work is done with the Warren funding than to do it a year or two later and have to look for new funding. Two audible signals, plus 1 with senior funds will be installed along Michigan Avenue.

Commissioner Tennat was asked to look further into which signals have been the best receiving looking toward writing grants for other signals.

Braille Transcription. With DAD over, we should have some time to assess with equipment and get this project underway.

NEW grant proposals must be submitted by December 19th. We need to decide what next must be done in the city. Do we want to buy new doors for Snow library? Do we want to fund a task force on visitability in Dearborn? Do we want to purchase materials and staffing to get new signs up around the city? Do we want to purchase some computer equipment for the library? Do we want to purchase voting machines?

After some discussion of various possibilities, it was decided that the Education committee would look into what would be needed to create accessible computer stations in the library, the Communication committee what is needed to help the Sign Shop to more quickly make signs, and the access committee would look into voting machines and recreation equipment.

TTYs. called all of the city TTYs in early November and received answers to only 2 of them. spoke with Melinda about this and she suggested that the new telephone system installed on the last weekend of October probably reset all of the phones in such a way that the TTYs all need to be reset. I have called some of the offices to talk them thru resetting their TTYs but not all of them. I asked them if they felt they needed a refresher course on TTYs and got a mixed response. (From ADA report)

8. Chair Report: McAdam

1. Pathway to Possibilities: Great job everyone! Later on in the agenda I'll ask us to evaluate the logistics/goals of next year's project, but first congratulations to all on a job very well done! (From chair report.)

2. Disability Mentoring day was October 19, and once again Jim Opferman of Vocational Services worked with Dearborn HS students to set up job shadow activities. This year high school students went to Ford Tel to shadow auto mechanics, Century 21, for real estate, UM Dearborn re: UM environmental preserve and worked with WSI, re web design. (From chair report.)

3. Reminder: Please update your strategic plan by looking at short term goals and bring your committee's recommendations to our next commission meeting January 19, 6-9PM; (From chair report)

It was noted by Chair McAdam that we may need to revisit the schedule of our meetings as they are problematic for Commissioner Parrelly because of a schedule of meetings she has responsibility to prepare for.

4. I'll be rotating off the PR committee and will stay on the access committee. I will be joining the visitability committee.(From chair report)

5. Transportation: Livonia voted to opt out of SMART transportation services and states they will be arranging service for disabled citizens within Livonia. Once a city opts out they are no longer eligible for para-transit services that crosses city boundaries and provides essential transportation to link with work, medical appointments and leisure activities. We are fortunate that our Mayor continues to embrace full transportation for seniors and people with disabilities, and that Peg Watson serves on the SMART advisory board, but we must remain watchful to protect these essential services. (From chair report.)

9. Vice-Chair Report: Kreger

Workshop and Town Hall sessions at DAD went well even though not well attended. The fire and police did a wonderful job on their presentation on emergency preparedness. Everyone got to take home brochures, tip sheets, and a video.

Dearborn HS and Edsel Ford both have had parking lots complaints. Parking lots cannot simply be changed as the schools must answer to a higher authority relative to safety concerns about which entrances are open to the public and when. 9/11 has caused schools to be more careful about the security of students and staff during the day and after hours for staff who is working in isolation.

Edsel Ford's lots were recently reviewed and changes have been made or are going to be made in response to that review. Some of the entrances are not open to the public because of concerns for safety.

Dearborn HS lot has confusing signage. Commissioner Filiak checked this out and confirmed that the signage says staff only and yet it includes the accessible parking. The staff at DHS said the people with disabilities were still supposed to park there and ignore the signs.

Further discussion about Edsel Ford asked the question why the door closest to accessible parking could not be monitored when likely to be used to ease the use by people with disabilities. This was going to be investigated further by the

Education committee and Commissioner Kreger would also keep the commission updated on what more discussion took place.

10. Public Comment

Chair McAdam thanked guests for coming. Marsha Luetjen spoke up as a committee member and mentioned that today's paper carried a story about DAD. Tameka Citchen noted that she had volunteered at DAD, was a HFCC student and wanted to be a motivational speaker and get involved.

11. DDAD/awards/ Town hall evaluations/All

Ford Workshop. About 200 attended, few stayed on. Excellent speaker. Response seemed to indicate that people felt very positively about speaker and thought it was very worthwhile.

Town Hall Meeting. A few dozen attended. Mostly they were not Dearborn residents. Good information, but we need to revisit if and when it makes the most sense to have a Town Hall meeting. It was thought it should be tried again in April as that was the most successful one so far.

John Kemp had about 80 in the audience. Vendors for the most part did not attend. He was very well-received. Attendance was better when in Dome room during vender fair, but sound quality was so poor this doesn't seem to bear repeating.

Award ceremony needs to be thought-through. Which awards to include or work harder to find appropriate nominees. Photographer was not present, but CDTV was. Dale will be getting copies of the video tape CDTV took and commissioners can get copies if they like.

The vendors appreciated the networking opportunity. About 350 attendees were estimated - not including those who attended the Ford workshop. Commissioner Filiak noted how important the volunteers were and thanked them. Commissioner Swanson will send out follow-up thank-yous.

12. Election update Tishler (see report at end)

Commissioner Tishler created extensive documentation about each of the polling sites. Commission Tishler and the ADA Coordinator will meet with Lola Isiminger, Deputy City Clerk to discuss what was found. The commission recommends that the commission become involved in the yearly poll training. It is also recommended that the poll manual created by the city of Dearborn be amended to include information about polling site accessibility.

13. Committee reports - all ready covered in previous reports.

14. Commissioner reports

Commissioner Ramouni - Will be sending out an announcement for an Arabic meeting as there are now 3 active Arabic speaking members. All will be welcome to attend. (Later decided: December 9th- 5PM)

Commissioner Bower is a new Grandma.

Commissioner McAdam discussed computer access and the work she has been accomplishing.

Commissioner Filiak mentioned a curb cut being recut wrongly at the park that he was instrumental in getting corrected before it was completed incorrectly.

Commissioner McFarlin discussed how his hearing was reacted to when he was doing the polling site evaluations. He noted he is interacted with differently when he wears them .

Commissioner Tennant spoke about the 1 year anniversary of a mental health report and about the confusing new medicare legislation.

Commissioner Tishler continued the discussion about Medicare and how confusing the material she has received has been.

Commissioner McAdam asked Commissioner Tennant if he could make a presentation to the commission about the Mental Health community and local issues sometime soon, and he agreed.

Adjournment: 5:59PM. Motion by Commissioner Tennant, seconded by Commissioner Swanson, unanimous approval.

Reports Below

ACCESS COMMITTEE REPORT

The one main goal of the Access Committee at this time was to recheck all of the polling sites for compliance regarding accessibility for the disabled (I might add elderly as well). I cannot thank the committee members enough for their work on this. We had 50 sites to check and I am happy to say, all 50 were checked. Thanks to Gary, John, Marsha, Patti and Adrenne.

I have assembled each individual report in a binder for anyone to view if you wish for more detailed information on the sites. But to make it a little simpler for this meeting I will try to be a little briefer. The information will be turned over to the City Clerk's office for use in monitoring the sites.

One of the most obvious problems with most of the polling sites is the lack of the poll workers being informed of the fact that someone should not have to ask for a tool to use to vote, ie. accessible booth, magnifier, ruler, or Braille print. These are to be in place and ready to use during the voting hours and this is one point all of the committee members were, hopefully, successful in informing the workers of. Most workers were genuinely interested and cooperative. We did, however, run into the few who were on the offensive but we feel quite assured that we did get the information to them so that they will carry that with them when they work the polls next time. We heard comments like, "well, only one wheelchair came in last time", as well as, "we have had two wheelchairs this time so we will be ready from now on", some workers did not know how to set up the disabled voting booth so some of us did assist them so that it would be ready. These are all things that they should have been shown prior to election day or helped with the morning of. Even at City Hall, they did have the table set up but the light did not work...because there was no outlet where they had it sitting. At Salina, they did not even have a table to set up the accessible booth, so the city clerk's office was called to have one brought in. Noted at Sisson that people in wheelchairs waiting in line, and with so many disabled one additional accessible booth is recommended.

It would be too lengthy to try to go into every detail at this time so I just want to emphasize that we have found discrepancies as serious as, the closest handicapped parking spots to an entrance at some sites, the doors were locked forcing the disabled voter to go around the building to enter at another place which is not acceptable. The encouraging part of this entire survey is that some of the sites we reviewed in August were this time in total compliance which makes it very obvious that we can and do make a difference. The Access Committee will continue to work with the City Clerk on these issues and hopefully there will be no issues in the future.

ADA Report September, 2005 Susan Fitzmaurice

1. Michigan Avenue Project. There was an additional meeting where all the possible solutions to the problems in the current condition of Michigan Avenue were discussed. There was some consensus about some specific situations, but differences remain.

There will need to be another meeting where the feasibility and cost of preferences will be presented again and a final solution hopefully determined. This project will close out, and the changes required will be part of new project. The one exception to that will be one issue of uncontravertible nonADA compliance. The other problems are as a result of design flaw and will be part of a new project.

2. Garrison Parking Lots. After so many problems with these lots, the city has decided to sell them to a private concern. They will be turned into two or three level parking structures.

3. Sidewalks. Alan Loebach and Susan Fitzmaurice/ADA Coordinator attended at rights of way conference where they learned of new changes to the law regarding public rights of way. (Sidewalks, streets, traffic signals) Truncated domes are now being required at street crossings & sidealk ramps. Truncated domes are underfoot indicators of a change in pedestrian traffic pattern.

4. Bailey's. This situation has been evaluated and absolute ADA compliance is impossible. A rubber tree grate has been found that puts the sidewalk within 2 inches of compliance. Since this is a short diatance of the sidewalk length - this near noncompliance for a short disatance is considered acceptable. The next step is to problem solve who pays for the city sidewalk parking grate - when it is only needed because of a private commercial concern.

5. Pedestrian Crossing across Rail Tracks. Between the new condos and the retail shopping of Michigan Avenue is a train track. The plan calls for pedestrian crossing. The existing site cannot be made into an accessible path. Right of way is required from the train company. If they do not provide it the choice will be to abandon the pedestrian path or to build an overhead bridge.

6. ADA Compliant Training Room. DPW Director Kurt Giberson is looking into the city budget for carpeting, table, and chairs. The rest of the project will be financed (contingent upon approval) by the city's funds for ADA compliance projects.

7. Novi Expo went exceptionally well. Many people came seeking us out. Next year we need to think about doing something more interactive.

8. Disability film Festival. The Ford Center at Greenfield Village doubled its initial quote, so the festival is back at the PAC. Greg Smith of On A Roll is likely to be there to speak and do a book signing between the afternoon and evening films.

Chair Report - Cathy McAdam
7/14/05

1. Welcome new commissioners: Ideas for orientation
2. Calendar for 2005/2006 to consider more evening times
3. Committees: request to meet quarterly with written reports and to actively recruit new members. Final announcement re: committee chairs will be made in September.
4. Block grant follow-up: We will want to work closely with the ADA coordinator to implement these grants both through individual consultation and committee input. It will be very important to look at ways to publicize and educate Dearborn citizens about improved access.