



**City of New Bedford Commission for Citizens with Disabilities**

**Minutes  
Commission for Citizens with Disabilities  
September 26, 2017**

**Members Present**

Jaunna Adesso  
Josh Amaral  
Melissa Branco  
Martha Bouchard  
Linda Carreiro  
Dennis Demarinis, Jr.  
Sonny Eddleston  
Marsha Fernandes

**Others in Attendance**

Chris Hendricks, Atty.  
Deb Lee, ADA Coordinator, COA Director  
Mary Rapoza, Dir. Parks, Recreation, Beaches  
BG Shanklin, Architect  
Cynthia Wallquist, Exec. Dir.  
Residents from Roosevelt Apartments

**Absent**

Pam Cole

Dennis DeMarinis, Chair, called the meeting to order @ 6:32 PM.

Mr. DeMarinis introduced new Commission member Melissa Branco, who was recently appointed and sworn in. Members of the Commission introduced themselves.

**Minutes**

Martha Bouchard moved to accept the June 28, 2017 meeting minutes; seconded by Linda Carreiro. Motion carried.

**New Business**

Mr. DeMarinis reintroduced the approval of the Commission’s slate of officers. The slate was unanimously approved at the June meeting; however, Mr. Amaral had not been sworn in for his new term at the time of the vote. To ensure the slate would be considered valid, Mr. DeMarinis sought a new vote to re-affirm the slate as follows:

- Den DeMarinis, Jr, Chairperson
- Joshua Amaral, Clerk
- Marsha Fernandes, Treasurer

Linda Carreiro moved to instruct the Clerk to cast one vote in favor of the proposed slate; seconded by Ms. Adesso. Motion carried; the nominated slate of officers was reaffirmed.

Mary Rapoza (Parks & Rec.) came to seek guidance and input on setting up a new park space for use by community members of all ages and abilities with Community Preservation Act funds. She outlined one possible placement at the corner of Buttonwood Park (Rte 6/Brownell Avenue) in existing greenspace north of the pond. Ms. Adesso recommended such a space be created next to an area with accessible parking, perhaps on the Rte. Six side near the Warming House.

Mr. DeMarinis recommended the Parks Department consider the model used by similar spaces in Providence that feature signs with enlarged print and suitable surfaces that do not use woodchips. Ms. Adesso concurred, adding that the surface should provide some cushion, especially for elders who may be more prone to falls while trying to exercise. Mr. Amaral agreed that the Buttonwood site would be good, but suggested Hazelwood as a potential location as it would tie in with the CCWD's existing effort to seek a Massachusetts Office on Disability grant to improve the Senior Center there. Buttonwood and Hazelwood would be preferable to Brooklawn Park and other locations across the city.

Mr. Amaral provided an update on the Regional Commissions Meeting held August 22 in Barnstable. Commissions for Citizens with Disabilities across the region met to discuss current issues and hear the latest guidance from Massachusetts Office on Disability's (MOD) Jeff Dougan. Some issues discussed were how Commissions encourage parking violation enforcement, how they plan to create or update their transition plans and navigate MOD's grant process for transition planning and project work. Mr. Amaral was able to network with the Chair of the Dennis Commission, who shared insight into the Dennis Braille Trail, a similar project to the one pitched to our Commission last year.

### **Architect's Report**

Mr. Shanklin began his report by outlining the process and latest developments in applying for a Transition Planning Grant and Project Grant. The Commission is seeking \$30,000 for a grant to update the city's existing transition plan. Deb Lee will be the listed applicant as the ADA Coordinator. The Council on Aging Board and the Commission for Citizens with Disabilities are required to vote to submit the grant officially. At the request of Commission members, Mr. Shanklin had reviewed the Hazelwood Senior Center's past capital needs assessments to determine its suitability as a candidate to receive a Project Grant. The center likely requires a new kitchen, new bathrooms and other work, such as an existing handicapped ramp ending in a depressed area of pavement prone to puddles and ice patches. He will follow up with Mary Rapoza about how the Commission's grant could integrate with existing plans to improve the parking lot and other aspects of the facility. Mr. Shanklin estimated it would take approximately \$90,000-\$110,000 to complete the work. He suggested the Commission hold a Grant Working Group meeting to discuss next steps. In order to apply for this site, the Commission must have a fully developed estimate of cost for the project, and though he has some records and some estimates, they are not suitable for submission.

Ms. Adesso made a motion to designate the Hazelwood Senior Center site as the Commission's choice for the Project Grant application, seconded by Mr. Amaral. On the question, Mr. Amaral mentioned his discussion with City CFO Ari Sky to keep him informed of our progress toward applying for the grant, as he ultimately oversees capital improvements to the city. Mr. Amaral said Mr. Sky suggested the Buttonwood Park project already in the works, but understood the Commission's desire to use new grant funds for a new project rather than one that is already scheduled. He felt Hazelwood would be an appropriate project. The motion carried.

Mr. Shanklin described a site visit to the Greasy Luck Brewpub - 791 Purchase Street. They have sought a variance with the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB). Greasy Luck has an elevator which can be used to reach public events held on the second floor, but the elevator is not accessible at the ground floor; rather, it is located on an intermediate floor that requires traversing stairs or using a stair chair lift to access. Mr. Shanklin said that despite that barrier, the entry is fairly spacious and accommodating.

Marsha Fernandes asked about the accessibility of bathrooms, as she personally experienced difficulty at a previous visit. There are bathrooms on both floors but it is unclear whether or not the intermediate floor, which holds a ballroom for events, has its own. Mr. Shanklin will review. Mr. Amaral made a motion to accept the Architect's Report as presented; seconded by Ms. Adesso. Motion carried.

### **Old Business**

Ms. Wallquist provided an update on Clear Path Program funding. There will be 30 slots in the snow removal program covered jointly by the CCWD and COA. An ad ran in the newspaper seeking applicants for those slots. Those undergoing daily medical treatments (dialysis/chemotherapy) will get first priority. Ms. Wallquist is seeking \$4,000 in Commission funding and needs Commission approval to contract for the program. Mr. Amaral made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Bouchard.

Mr. DeMarinis recounted a recent conversation with Manny DeBrito, the city's new Election Commissioner, about the accessibility of Fire Station #5 polling place in Ward 1. Mr. DeBrito is reviewing the history of polling places concerns. As a voter in that precinct, Ms. Adesso provided her suggestions to Mr. DeBrito. Mr. DeBrito did not think any changes could occur before the upcoming 2017 municipal elections, but was hopeful we could find a solution before subsequent elections.

Mr. DeMarinis raised the matter of Handicapped Parking Violation Fees and thanked Mr. Amaral for his work addressing the Traffic Commission to get their approval for a fee increase. Mr. Amaral informed the Commission of the process to change the fees, noting that New Bedford was at the legal minimum fee of \$100. The Traffic Commission recently approved an increase to \$200 at the request of the Commission. The Traffic Commission will likely have to advertise the change and print new tickets before the change will officially take effect. Mr. Amaral advised that once it does, the Commission would be wise to use any increased revenues generated by the new fee to explore enforcement options, such as hiring a detail officer or partnering with the Police Department or Traffic Commission to increase what is currently lax enforcement.

Mr. DeMarinis introduced Herbert "Sonny" Eddleston, a new Commission member, who lives at the Roosevelt Apartments -- a recent area of interest for the Commission. The north elevator of the building has been out of service for seven weeks. The south elevator was out of service for several weeks but put back into service recently after a light was repaired. Mr. Eddleston said building management has been evasive and has not been communicating with residents about the repair process. Tenants are having difficulties getting groceries in, trash out, and face other logistical challenges. Residents have canceled their doctors' appointments. They have been unable to do laundry. Several other tenants from Roosevelt Apartments were in attendance and wished to speak. Mr. Amaral explained that despite not being on the formal agenda, the tenants concerns would be heard and forwarded to the Legal Services attorney who has been working with the Commission and tenants on a resolution at Roosevelt -- as well as MOD.

Residents in attendance noted the following:

- Building management has been totally unresponsive to any requests for help with medicines, groceries, or other necessities as they promised in a letter to tenants.
- One tenant is scheduled to move on October 15<sup>th</sup> and cannot do so if the elevator is not operational.
- One tenant recently had her unit inspected as part of a housing voucher program through HUD and the unit failed for a variety of reasons.

- Building management and maintenance staff live on the south side of the building where the elevator was restored to working order much more quickly than on the north side.
- There is a lack of hot water in the laundry room, among a litany of other health related concerns.

Mr. Amaral asked for names, addresses, and phone numbers from those in attendance to forward to Legal Services and document their testimony to the Commission:

<b>Roosevelt Tenants @ Public Comment</b>		
<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Address</u></b>	<b><u>Phone</u></b>
Pat Crowley	415 County St. Apt. 415	774-992-4726
Maria Mercet(?) & Angel Polanco	415 County St Apt. 207	774-488=8358
Matias	?	?
Sherry Choquette	415 County St Apt 203	508-207-0891
Lyla Barros	415 County St Apt 311	508-617-3376
Pat Travers	415 County St Apt 505	508-999-1910
Sonja Crawford Shirley Crawford	415 County St Apt 407	508-496-5384 305-205-8390
Toshiko Moniz Charles Moniz	415 County St Apt 411	508-977-0514
Joseph Patricia Branco	415 County St Apt 501	508-995-43681(?)
Francis Anderson	415 County St Apt 108	617-639-4121

**Other Business**

Ms. Wallquist outlined a schedule of upcoming trainings related to the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Retention, and Robert’s Rules of Order that will take place at Normandin. Commission members are responsible for signing a form that they will comply with related regulations. This initiative is inclusive of all city boards and attendance is mandatory.

Ms. Wallquist also mentioned that the customized brick purchased in memory of former Commission member John Tyson has come in. Mr. Tyson’s wife, Theresa, and others will gather at a date in the future to celebrate his life and see his brick when installed.

**Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Bouchard and seconded by Ms. Adesso. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Clerk