

Planning & Sustainability • City of Northampton

resilience | regeneration | design | conservation | placemaking | mobility | accessibility | community development | historic | zoning | GIS | agriculture

Keith Benoit, Community Development Planner • KBenoit@NorthamptonMA.gov • 413-587-1288

Disability Commission Minutes Tuesday December 8, 2020 4:00 PM

Zoom Meeting

Members

Jeremy Macomber-Dubs, Chair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marianne LaBarge <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Keith Benoit, Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Emma Cornwell, Vice Chair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gene Page <input type="checkbox"/>	Doug Renick, Scribe <input type="checkbox"/>
Linda Kakos <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clare Marilyn <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kathy Murri <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rodney Kunath <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Michael Morton <input type="checkbox"/>	

1. Introductions, public comment. No public comments.
2. The Commission approved the minutes from December 8, 2020 unanimously upon motion by Marianne LaBarge and seconded by Linda Kakos.
3. Keith Benoit gave on the two grants that the City just received: \$15,000 grant, from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, to help us figure out the best way to handicap accessibility to a newly formed beach at the Connecticut River Greenway. And another grant from MOD for assisted listening systems. It would help Council Chambers, Hearing Room, and Senior Center Great Room.
4. Keith Benoit also gave an update on the snow removal within the City. He called Northampton Neighbors, Senior Center staff, and members of a local snow shoveling group, who all said that shoveling snow posed difficulties. Members of the organization either themselves need snow shoveling, cannot physically do it, were concerned about liabilities, the group had no volunteers, or was affectively defunct. Liability was a major concern, especially when shoveling on property that was not their own.
5. Jeremy Macomber-Dubs likes the idea of getting a machine to plow. Marianne LaBarge suggested that we invite Director of Public Works to our next meeting. Emma Cornwell suggested that we talk with her soon because the snow is busiest in February. Councilor LaBarge said that financing can take a long time, so it may not happen right away. Benjamin Kalish said that he liked the idea of the social media posts encouraging people to shovel, invite people to shovel more than their fair share. Jeremy Macomber-Dubs said that he went with a journalist from the paper and took photos and saw a noticeable improvement in that years snow shoveling.



Marianne LaBarge suggested that the Disability Commission write a letter to the editor, put something on Channel 15, or Northampton Neighbors. Jeremy Macomber-Dubs will write a draft and bring it to the next meeting.

6. Keith Benoit gave an update on the Plastic Reduction Ordinance. It went for the first reading at City Council last week and after two hours of public comment, the sponsor pulled it from the meeting. Keith Benoit did not make a public comment, because he wanted to have a dialogue with the City Councilors regarding the ordinance. The second reading will be at the next City Council meeting. All the language that the Commission wanted, was not in there. Kathy Murri said that the version she saw, that the plastic straws 'could' be available, but not 'must' be available. They are not agreeing to the plastic bags. Kathy Murri said that people might be very wedded to the idea of banning plastic bags.
7. Emma Cornwell asked if the discussion was pushed off completely or next meeting. Keith Benoit said it was just pushed off till next meeting. Questions arose if Rodney Kunath could see the Otter closed captioning service or not. The Commission tried to message him.
8. Marilyn Clare said that she is concerned that people are abusing the ADA to not have to wear masks. People can claim a disability to not wear masks and harm people. They don't understand that they can be asymptomatic and still carry COVID-19. She is wondering what the Disability Commission can do. Benjamin Kalish gave an update on this issue, like some people who are creating documents or businesses that are taking precautions. He has many resources for people who would like to know more.
9. Rodney Kunath was concerned that there was no walking lights at Finn St. and King St. intersection. Councilor LaBarge said that this is well known.
10. Next meeting: Feb. 9, 2021 - The Commission decided to discuss the snow removal letter, invite someone from the DPW. Keith Benoit will invite Donna LaScalia to the meeting.
11. Adjourned at 4:50 PM unanimously upon motion by Jeremy Macomber-Dubs and second by Emma Cornwell.