

# Planning & Sustainability • City of Northampton

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

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## Disability Commission Minutes Tuesday April 12, 2022 4:00 PM

### Zoom Meeting

#### Members

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

1. Jeremy Macomber-Dubs, Chair, gave notice that the meeting was being recorded.
2. Keith Benoit, Staff, asked if the public comments and approval of previous minutes could be moved to the end of the meeting for time purposes. He suggested that someone else would need to motion it. It was motioned by Marianne LaBarge and seconded by Jeremy Macomber-Dubs, passed unanimously with a roll call vote.
3. City Solicitor Alan Seewald gave a presentation regarding conflict of interest for members of boards and commissions. He said that all of the boards need this introduction to serving on boards. Alan Seewald said a ground rule is that if you ever wonder about the ethics, you should contact him, so seek advice first. It is not just about voting, but about participating. There is no quid pro quo, no matter how trivial or how small the payment. No gifts worth \$50 or more. No self-dealing: no personal, family, or business that you participant in with a financial interest. Cannot hold a contract with the City. Get advice from City Solicitor or State Ethics Commission if you have any questions. Even the appearance, all you have to do is disclose it. Sunshine is the big disinfectant. Open meeting law, no serial conversations, and don't reply all when. Keith will send
4. The Disability Commission discussed the one (1) open membership position. Keith Benoit, staff, corrected the posted agenda that there was three positions and will update the Boards and Commission page on the City website.



5. Keith Benoit, Planning & Sustainability staff asked the Disability Commission if they know of any intersections that need audible signals (for people who are visually impaired. Members said that the intersections of Ryan Road and Florence Road, and Market Street and Main. Elm St and West St. Main St and State St. Main St / New South St.
6. He also gave updates on the soft surface Rocky Hill Accessible Trail that Planning & Sustainability is working to make more accessible. They ordered 400 docks to go over the wetlands to make a stream and some ecologically diverse areas more accessible. They will use very similar gravel treatment that was used in Leeds.
7. Input was asked by the Disability Commission regarding the design of the trails:
  - Should the City use a metal edge to the trail (such as The Community Builders has on their trail on Ford Crossing to their building at 140 Olander Drive, Village Hill) **OR** without a metal edge (such as we had in Leeds until we paved that trail)? A metal edge adds cost, and therefore the trail cannot be as long, but it provides a clear edge to the trail allowing a narrower trail and better tactile warnings for people with canes.
  - Do we make it four feet wide, with passing locations from time to time, **OR** five foot wide with no passing locations? Wider is nice and provides more of a buffer against vegetation coming in, but requires a shorter distance because of the cost.
  - General Comments: The wider the better, for passing and if you have someone with you, can walk with you. The grass could grow over the edge. No comments on the metals edge.
8. The Disability Commission discussed writing op-eds in the newspaper. Jeremy Macomber-Dubs said that Michael Morton had suggested writing op-eds for the newspaper. Michael Morton said that someone who knows more about it should be the one who writes it. Emma Cornwell, Councilor LaBarge suggested that the Disability Commission could use the website or put it on the agenda. Jeremy Macomber-Dubs said he would help, but could not write them all. Jeremy Macomber, Emma Cornwell passed unanimously to reach out to the Gazette and see about putting.
9. Public Comments
  - Meg Bandarra, Director of Friends of Northampton Trails, urge OPS to have a public meeting to discuss design. Concerns for public parking, length of trail, accessibility, COVID social distancing.

Stressing involving trail users, public engagement is important.

- Amy, echoes that width is important, walking with friends side by side, passing people, parking is another big question, important to have input from the community. Involving the community gets buy in from the community as well. Starts a relationship with trail users and trail. Amy says that op-ed is important.
- Ben Kalish, Forbes Library mentioned that there was some comments in the chat regarding the audible signals. Keith Benoit on staff said that he was able to copy those from that chat.

10. Business Not Anticipated: Lisa Downing, Forbes Library: The library is trying to add accessibility to the artwork by making the label with larger print and audible components. Grant will also photograph and digitize the art. Lisa Downing is asking for a letter of support to use with the grant application. Motion to support grant with a letter moved by Linda Kakos and seconded by Jeremy Macomber-Dubs, passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

11. Disability Commission approved the Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> 2022 minutes by a roll call vote with a motion by Jeremy Macomber-Dubs and seconded by Emma Cornwell and passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

12. Next Steps:

- Keith Benoit will check how to update website
- Write letter of support for Forbes Library grant for making
- Inform Planning & Sustainability of comments on public trails

13. Meeting was adjourned with motion by Councilor Marianne Labarge and seconded by Jeremy Macomber-Dubs by roll call vote at 5:03 PM