

Planning & Sustainability - City of Northampton

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

Disability Commission Minutes Tuesday May 9, 2023 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 type="checkbox"/>	Amy Sugihara <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kathy Murri <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Linda Kakos <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marilyn Clare <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 and then took roll call.
2. Public comments were asked, no public comments were given.
3. April 11th, 2023 minutes were approved unanimously by a roll call vote, motioned by Michael Morton seconded by Jeremy Macomber-Dubs. Councilor Marianne LaBarge and Linda Kakos both abstained as they were not at the meeting.
4. Meg Bandarra from Unpaved Trails for All regarding the New Massachusetts Trail Access Bill. The bill would expand access to accessible trails and complete assessment of the trails. The working group has a time limit on its findings of the initial bill, with a goal to increase funding within three years' time. Within the City, there needs to be more education regarding unpaved accessible trails. Meg Bandarra asked for a letter of recommendation for the bill from the Disability Commission. Councilor Marianne LaBarge asked about funding, where it is coming from. Meg Bandarra said that the DCR will get more funding from this bill. The bill is still in process, so it is not set in stone. There are several committees and readings that it will have to go through before it gets to the governor's desk. Councilor Marianne LaBarge said that she could not vote for any bill until she reads it. Amy Sugihara asked how similar the language of the bill would be with the summary that was sent ahead of this meeting. Meg



Bandarra said that the summary was the most salient facts of the bill, without the flourish that legal documents have. Councilor Marianne LaBarge said gave plaudits to Meg Bandarra for moving this bill forward and fighting for her rights. Jeremy Macomber-Dubs said that he went on an accessible trail recently for the first time and it was life changing. Councilor Marianne LaBarge said that the Disability Commission could read the language of the bill and vote to approve a letter of

5. Keith Benoit relayed a letter from Carolyn Misch, Director of Planning & Sustainability regarding revolving funds: *“In lieu of being able to come to this meeting, I do want to respond regarding the question around the use of the revolving funds that have been established. These funds can be used on a variety of services including physical and spatial services that enhance mobility and access to public spaces, programs and services for those with disabilities. These activities specifically include: American Sign Language interpretation for City meetings, lending resource library, printed materials in large print and Braille, handicap signage, printing of "Access in Northampton" booklet, City website accessibility, purchase of ADA regulation books and materials, training costs, educational programs, consultants and publicity and informational materials such as brochures, posters or informational mailings related to the ADA. Additional expenditures may include design costs, architecture fees, plan, and studies to make City buildings, programs, and services accessible to people with disabilities and to further implementation of accessibility improvements consistent with the goals of the ADA Transition Plan, the Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan, and other City plans/ goals brochures, posters or informational mailings related to the ADA. Additional expenditures may include design costs. Though this pot of money is not used every year nor spent down every year, it is beneficial to maintain enough reserves to be able to leverage other funds for projects that cost significantly more such as sidewalk and curb ramp improvements and design services for building upgrades. Some grant programs require a local match to be provided and this reserve fund may be used toward that. This fund can also fill gaps in other funding for projects that directly enhance programs or space for people with disabilities. In addition to the revolving fund, there are also limited general funds within the Planning Office budget that are available on occasion and depending on the budget that are general departmental operational funds, which can be used to support efforts of the Committee on Disabilities as well as other committees staffed within our department. This could include training for Committee members related to serving on the committee, printing and mailing costs to distribute information to the public, advertising or other operational needs.”*

6. Councilor Marianne LaBarge asked if she could get a copy of the letter. Amy Sugihara said that she wanted to be clear with her request for inquiry into this she has no desire to spend down these funds, but how was this established, why was it established this way, and is there a way to revisit it because if the Mayor would like for the Disability Commission to put on a Disability Pride month parade annually, then where would these funds come from. There is something in the letter that was read that sounded like parade could be covered with these funds and the Disability Commission should figure that out. Keith Benoit said that the planning office looked at similar language from other revolving funds in the City and that language for the accessible parking funds is very similar. The checks on who is authorized to spend it, how much, and whether the funding is recurring. Marilyn Clare asked if there was personal mentioned in the letter, but it was not contained in the letter.

7. Jeremy Macomber-Dubs asked about the “Crip Camp” movie screening logistics. There I still setup to do, how to facilitate discussion after movie and getting the word out. Keith Benoit said that the Crip Camp movie can start at 1:30, which would give us an extra 30 minutes of time for discussion. Councilor Marianne LaBarge asked if Stavros was invited and Amy Sugihara asked if we could invite them, to which Keith Benoit said yes. Kathy Murri asked if we could send it out to other groups. There is a flyer subcommittee that is meeting on Wednesday that work on the images and poster. Final Draft for June meeting for approval. Councilor Marianne LaBarge said that the poster should be sent to the Human Rights Commission. Amy Sugihara asked if anyone else would be able to help with the facilitation of the meeting.

8. For Next Meeting:
 - Present the final poster for the Crip Camp movie

9. Meeting was adjourned unanimously with a motion by Councilor Marianne LaBarge and seconded by Jeremy Macomber-Dubs at 4:57 PM.