

Meeting called to order @ 6:38 p.m. by Nichole.

This meeting held via Zoom in accordance with the orders from Governor Baker.

This Meeting was recorded.

- 1. Roll Call of Committee Members:** Maria Luise, Nichole Mossalam, Marilyn Andrews, Amanda Belles, Frank Cina, Chukwuka Ezewuzie, Ralph Long, and Tovah Miller were present.

Tovah Miller has been confirmed by the City Council. Once she is sworn in, Tovah will be able to vote as a Commissioner. Ralph Long's appointment letter went out this week and his nomination is due to go before City Council.

- 2. Approval of Minutes from the October 14, 2021 and November 29, 2021 meetings.**

Maria made a Motion to table the approval of the 10/14/21 Minutes as amended and Frank seconded. All were in favor.

Frank made a Motion to accept the 11/29/2021 Meeting Minutes and Amanda seconded. All were in favor.

- 3. Election of new Commission officers**

Nichole explained the responsibilities of the offices which are in the current By-Laws. Nichole announced she is stepping down as the Chairperson.

For each office, nominations were made and then a vote was taken.

The first Motion was made by Chukwuka to close the floor for nominations for Chairperson. This Motion was seconded by Frank. All were in favor.

The second Motion was made by Marilyn and seconded by Maria to close the floor for Vice Chairperson. All were in favor.

The third Motion was made by Chukwuka and seconded by Frank to close the floor for nominations for Clerk.

The following officers were voted in.

Chair: Marilyn

Vice Chair: Amanda

Clerk: Nichole

- 4. Reading and discussion of By-Laws for review and updates (tabled from last meeting)** A Motion was made by Frank and seconded by Amanda to have this discussion tabled until the February meeting since there are two new Commissioners, Ralph Long and Tovah Miller. All were in favor of this Motion. At the February meeting, suggested changes to the By-Laws will be discussed. Maria will send out a copy of the By-Laws to the Commissioners.

5. Any updates or action items that need to be addressed from previous meeting:

- **Sub-committee reports and updates:**

Policy Sub-committee needs a new Chair since Lauren Schipper had stepped down. There was a discussion about expanding membership for each sub-committee. Tovah checked the Disability Commission website and ADA Self-Evaluation recommendations are on this website.

Public Facilities: Frank reported that the grant will cover the bathroom facilities at the Senior Center. Maria commended the work of Frank and Eric Rubin. They applied for a \$45,000 grant to upgrade the bathrooms for push buttons entries and openers, the auditorium railing needs to be brought up to Code. The Mayor signed for the work. They're just waiting for Eric Rubin to take the next steps. The work should be able to start right away since it is indoor work.

Amanda asked re: the Disability Commission website: Is there a news section to post the links for the Press Releases and projects the Commission is working on. Maria will follow up with Ron Cochran.

Nichole suggested that at the February Commission meeting our priority is to improve communication with the public, having more of a social media presence. The goal is how to get more community members to come forward with ideas, and to have collaboration with the public. Community partnerships are needed. Amanda suggested that Disability Commission agendas be posted on the Facebook Malden pages. Maria said that since the Commission is part of the Boards and Commissions for the City, we cannot have our own Facebook page, but we can post. Chair should submit a social media request to Ron Cochran and whoever may be taking this position for the City.

Amanda suggested she can design a blurb for social media ex) upcoming meetings. Nichole would like to encourage the community to look at the ADA Self-Evaluation recommendations and to request community partners to get things done. We are looking for community partners to help us get things done. A Social Media policy for the Disability Commission will be an agenda item for the February meeting. There are guidelines with references on social media. Maria reminded the Commissioners that anything from the Disability Commission has to be voted on. Marilyn suggested that members of the Commission check with Maria, Amanda or Marilyn for anything about the Disability Commission. There is the concern that something posted could be misunderstood. Nichole also suggested that there should be a social media policy for any Commission postings. Amanda suggested that maybe Ron Cochran can come to a meeting to offer his ideas. Maria reminded all that anything that is posted has to be voted on first by the Commission.

Maria said that sharing the ADA Self-Evaluation is a public document and can be shared. Marilyn also reminded all the Commissioners about the Open Meeting Law and that discussion outside the Commission meeting cannot be allowed. All agenda items can be sent to the Chair so the item can be included on the agenda. Nichole reminded Tovah and Ralph that their input is important, but until they are sworn in they cannot vote as a Commission member.

School sub-committee: Marilyn gave an update. Maria and Marilyn have discussed the CDBG to apply for to be used at the ELC. Also a punch list has been created for items that can be fixed in-house.

Neighborhood Sub-Committee: Amanda provided information about a Bill in the Senate that will be up for a vote. The bill is to allow for voting by mail and early voting to be permanent. It has been passed by the Senate and needs to go through the House. The neighboring Disability Commission representatives are asking for each Commission to discuss this with their members. They would like to have a letter to the State Election Commission for early voting and mail-in voting to help those with differing abilities who are not able to vote due to COVID. The suggestion is to draft a letter and all Commissioners sign the letter. Amanda will draft a letter and email it to all the Commissioners to review. Next meeting all the edits will be discussed and then Amanda will encourage the neighboring Disability Commissions to write a letter. Tovah recommends that the House Chair of Elections and the House Chair of Ways and Means should receive this letter, and to put the Bill number in this letter. Amanda reached out to Representative Steve Ultrino. Nichole suggested that the letter include language that states the differing abilities community is very vulnerable and would like options to participate in the voting and to expand voting rights to make sure everyone has access to voting. Nichole suggested that Amanda draft a letter and reach out to any member of the Commission. Amanda will then email the draft to the Commissioners for discussion at the February meeting and have a vote at the February meeting. Amanda will send a draft to all Commissioners for discussion at the February Commission meeting. Nichole suggested in the draft of the letter is voted on, then it can go out officially to other officials outside of the Malden Commission. Tovah suggested that it is best to have separate letters from each Commission. Nichole recapped the discussion that Amanda will draft a letter on behalf of the Malden Disability Commission which she will present at the next meeting for a vote. She will encourage the Collaborative Neighborhood groups to do the same.

6. New Business

- **Discussion of any new business**

Commissioners discussed a way to thank Commissioners once their term is completed. Chukwuka suggested a plaque for each member using some of the words from the letter that Marilyn read. Kathleen Manning-Hall can help with plaques and would know the vendors. Letters to thank Commissioners will be voted at the February meeting.

Amanda: Wellington group had another meeting on 01/05/22 and they are going through the process to present ways to look at the rotary and intersections as well as the sidewalk areas and grass areas. Amanda encouraged the Commissioners to also attend these meetings. Amanda will keep the members in the loop. They are talking about having another public meeting in the spring. Maria made a suggestion to invite City Councilor at Large Steve Winslow to an upcoming Commission meeting to discuss CDBG money with regard to City intersections that can be upgraded.

Nichole shared that there have been ongoing issues with bullying in the public schools and multiple families have spoken with Nichole about this. Some families include special needs and the response has been to include the Police Department. Some are not aware of their rights. Nichole has also spoken with Capt. Cronin. Nichole wants to know if there is a City Commission that can address this. Maria suggested that we reach out to the School Committee and school personnel.

Chukwuka asked Maria for an update on the constituent with concern about Dunkin' Donuts on Eastern Ave. Maria has not received a response from Jeff Dougan of the Mass Commission on Disability. Maria has been researching to try to find the regulation. Chukwuka wants to know if the Policy sub-committee can get this information? Maria checked with the City of Malden Building Commissioner and there was no specific answer. It was also suggested that the new Policy chair can start a guide for Malden businesses to be friendly to the differing abilities community.

Amanda suggested that she reach out to Jeff Dougan of MOD (Mass Office on Disability) to learn about how funds are allocated for local infrastructure improvement in conjunction for persons with differing disabilities. She has not heard back from Jeff Dougan. Amanda assumes he does not have any information.

Public Comment: There was no Public Comment.

7. **Scheduling of next meeting and adjournment.** Next Commission Meeting will take place on Thursday, February 10, 2022 @ 6:30 via Zoom.
8. **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn was made by Marilyn and seconded by Chukwuka. All were in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marilyn R. Andrews, Clerk