

Meeting called to order @ 6:35 p.m. by Nichole Mossalam.

At 6:40, Nichole read the COVID Statement from Governor Baker.

- 1. Roll Call of Committee Members:** Maria Luise, Nichole Mossalam, Kerlyne Pacombe, Marilyn Andrews and Frank Cina were present.
- 2. Approval of Minutes from March 11, 2021 meeting:** Maria made a motion to accept the Minutes and Frank seconded the Minutes. All were in favor.
- 3. Any updates or action items that need to be addressed from the previous meeting:**

- **Update on interview process and next steps for new Commission members. Introductions**

Nichole welcomed and thanked all the new Commission members to the Disability Commission. She also thanked Kathleen Manning-Hall and Kerlyne for their involvement and help in this process. The newly appointed Commissioners need to be confirmed by the City Council. Their names are:

Amanda Belles  
Shanti Chilkuri  
Chukwuka Ezewuzie  
Lauren Schipper

Each of the new appointed Commissioners shared their backgrounds and their hopes for the Commission. The current Commissioners shared their backgrounds too.

- **Update on ADA Self-Evaluation: Maria**

The updated report was filed with Maria. It will be organized and shared with the Commissioners. This report includes: Audit, Report, Recommendations and Plan. Nichole offered to organize this and suggested that it be discussed at the May Commission meeting so the Commission can start to create an Action Plan with steps. Nichole shared that the new Commissioners can have input on this process.

- **Update on AAC Boards for K-8 playgrounds: Marilyn**

Maria, Imene Bouzaine-Saidi and Marilyn visited all the school playgrounds in the City to look at where an AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication Board) would be added to each playground. In some of the larger play areas, such as the Linden School, there will be two AAC Boards. Maria is working with Toni Mertz, Business Manager for the City. Imene has secured a company to provide the template for the boards and a printer. Boards are laminated and graffiti-proof and include a logo and the printed

word. These are consistent with what is used in the schools. These boards will be added to help those individuals who are non-verbal and need assistance in communication. The purpose of these boards at each of the playgrounds is to provide access. The boards will be placed near the park benches in each playground.

- **Update on Invitation to Captain Cronin and MOD (Mass Office on Disability) representative**

Captain Cronin will be on the agenda sometime in the future. Kevin Duffy, Strategy and Business Development Officer for the Mayor, will possibly be attending the June Commission meeting. Nichole will be looking to Lauren Schipper for help with this.

Amanda suggested that the Commission work with Captain Cronin to create a "Town Hall" or a panel type of discussion to educate the public on Emergency Preparedness. Nichole suggested that this could be a separate event and the May meeting would be a good time to start to brainstorm on this.

The ADA Consultant is working with Captain Cronin on updates for those with differing abilities in Malden. Capt. Cronin has reached out to the MOD for guidance. Capt. Cronin is already making changes under the guidance of another agency. They are planning to invite the public to speak about Emergency Preparedness. Capt. Cronin has also suggested that each participant be given an Emergency Preparedness Kit. He has also suggested a webinar to inform the public. Maria shared that the person from the State can come for a separate event.

Capt. Cronin will be invited to the May Commission meeting to provide an update. Next step can be to organize a separate panel with Capt. Cronin and someone from the State. Frank will call Capt. Cronin to invite him to the May meeting. Amanda has volunteered to help with the panel.

Nichole also brought up the topic of the City possibly using some of the fines collected from tickets for those illegally parking in handicapped spaces to be used for programs for the differing abilities in Malden. Amanda suggested that the consumer be educated for the first offense with a pamphlet. Chukwuka agreed that this is a great idea since it helps the City find other ways to generate revenue.

#### **4. New Business**

- **Annual Report**

Nichole reviewed the Annual Report, since it is due soon. The Commission discussed the "Challenges" and "Goals" sections of the Annual Report.

Chukwuka shared that any relief or protocols that the City can come up with can be hard for those with differing abilities. For example, signs that read, "Do not touch," are hard for someone who is blind since they need to touch to understand. What will relieve the hardship so one can access COVID protocols that not all are able to access? Chukwuka suggested we look at City programs and policies.

Nichole said that we need to have the Commission use social media to advertise what the Disability Commission is doing. Maria suggested that Ron Cochran is contacted for social media.

Nichole reminded the Commissioners that due to the Open Meeting regulations, Commissioners are not allowed to discuss Disability Commission business outside of the Commission meetings, unless there is a Quorum. The Quorum is 4-5 people. Any agenda requests should be sent to Nichole.

Frank made a Motion to approve the Annual Report as reviewed in the April 8, 2021 Disability Commission meeting. Kerlyne seconded the Motion. All were in favor.

- **Discussion of any new business.**

Maria gave an update on the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant). The Mayor is creating a budget to include public service, projects in the City, and capital improvements. City Councilor at Large, Steve Winslow, is collating a list of upgrades for intersections to make the City more accessible. There is \$150,000 allotted for this. The whole budget will go before the City Council. Then it goes to the Finance Committee and back to the City Council for a vote. Public Comment will be allowed at the City Council before they vote on the budget. Any of the Commissioners is welcome to make a Public Comment to advocate. The vote will be at the next City Council meeting. On Tuesday, April 13, 2021, there is a Finance Meeting to discuss this budget and there will not be an opportunity for Public Comment at the Finance Meeting.

Amanda asked how can the Commission get public input and Marilyn asked for public input on specific intersections that need updates for accessibility. Once the budget is approved, Maria suggested that City Councilor Steve Winslow be invited to a Commission meeting. She shared that the budget has to be approved by May 15, 2021.

Nichole suggested to write individual letters that the Clerk can read at the Council and/or attend City Council Public Comment. Amanda suggested that whoever speaks should bring the point home, "I can't access this." Maria will

keep an eye on when to sign up to speak. Nichole spoke to the diversity of culture and skill set for individuals with differing abilities.

Chukwuka asked about the new PAYT (Pay As You Throw) program, effective 04/12/2021. He asked how a person with differing abilities would get the wheeled barrel to the sidewalk and then bring it back to their residence once the trash and recycling has been picked up. He would like this to be put on the agenda for the May Commission meeting

Chukwuka asked can we ask residents that this affects to register with the City? Can we request the collector bring the barrel to the person's property? Maria responded that City workers cannot go onto private property. Maria said this is all by the contract and it is tough to enforce. Nichole and Maria will try to brainstorm and discuss at the May meeting. There was also discussion about the 5G Technology. There are health concerns coming from the 5G Towers with Verizon. Nichole will investigate. There is a public hearing coming up.

- **Public Comment:**

**Constituent #1:** This constituent reached out to the Mayor's office to discuss Autism Acceptance Month in April and how it is being represented in the community. City had good intentions for the month of April and Autism Awareness Month. The symbol of the puzzle piece shows a segment of support with the organization, Autism Speaks and their motto, "Light It Up Blue." The shift is to look at the lens of Neurodiversity and that a person with the diagnosis of Autism is only a part of who the person is, so that the community understands that the person is not the diagnosis. This constituent is asking all to embrace all, and "Center our voices and ask us to do this." The Mayor is looking to form a task-force in February 2022 to plan better for next year. This meeting will be a dedicated meeting centered around Autism Spectrum Disorder and to be more inclusive.

**5. Scheduling of Next Meeting:** The next Commission meeting will be held on May 13, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

**6. Adjournment:** Marilyn made a Motion to adjourn the Meeting. Frank seconded it. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Marilyn R. Andrews, Clerk**