

Date and Time: 06/03/21 6:02 PM
 Location: Webinar
 Members Present: Kay Bell, Doug Frey, Pat Guthy, Chairperson, Randi Korn, Lisa Kouchakdjian, Caroline Santangelo (arrived 6:24 PM)
 Members Absent: Jane Kline
 Also Present: David West, ADA Information Specialist & Accessibility Surveyor for the Institute for Human Centered Design, Meghan Dufresne, Architectural Designer for the Institute for Human Centered Design, Peg Espinola (Liaison from the Council on Aging), Linda Faust, Jennifer Roberts (Liaison from Select Board),

A recording of the meeting may be viewed at Sudbury TV. <https://sudbury.vod.castus.tv/vod/?nav=recent>

1. Open Meeting and Confirm Meeting Recorder: The regular meeting of the Sudbury Commission on Disability (COD) was called to order by Pat Guthy at 6:02 PM. Ms. Guthy took attendance by roll call and a quorum (at least a majority of 4 of 7) was present. Kay Bell was assigned to record minutes.

2. Discussion with the consultants from the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD) based on COD questions regarding the Self-Evaluation Study Document

COD members had submitted questions on the topics of the built environment, accessible communication, the regional high school, and the Transition Plan. Mr. West and Ms. Dufresne responded and discussed details of the topics below.

- Loring Elementary School playgrounds are on two different levels due to the topography of the site. The existing stairs will remain in place to be used only by emergency personnel and not at all to provide access between the upper and lower playgrounds. A new accessible route from the front of the school (the far end away from the playgrounds) will be installed to the lower playground and the entire route around the building will be brought into compliance for slope and cross slope. IHCD was told by the town that there is a plan to install basketball court at the lower level (basketball now only exists on the upper level), though IHCD has not seen such a plan on paper.
- Packed stone dust is considered firm, stable and slip resistant surface along with concrete and asphalt paving for accessible routes. Stone dust requires maintenance to remain firm, stable, and slip resistant. There is also a form of stabilized soil that may qualify, but it seems to deteriorate more easily. There is no official list of ADA approved materials, just the requirements of firm, stable, and slip resistant. Impact attenuated materials such as poured-in-place rubber is required under playground equipment and **MAAB requires an accessible route all the way around a playground**. Accessible routes are required at athletic fields from entry to location of activity and to spectator area where accessible seating is required.
- **To avoid completing new or renovation projects that are not compliant IHCD recommends that the town develop an accessibility checkoff procedure before the construction starts.** Sometimes even extremely prominent architecture firms have people who don't know the accessibility laws as well as they should. Sometimes in construction,

the people who do the work, make changes that result and things being out of compliance. There should be an initial review that could include the commission but certainly would include someone who knows the ADA and MAAB codes and knows how to read plans. There also should be a standard procedure of evaluating the completed work before the town accepts or makes final payment for the project, so if the construction crew or whoever you would determine is at fault is, you know, significantly out of compliance, that you can try to address that.

- Camp Sewataro was the most challenging site in the town. IHCD involved everybody in the New England ADA Center to seek the best way to address the steep terrain and the many different programs. They recommend relocating programs because of the amount of work needed to survey this site, and it may turn out that it is not even technically feasible. The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation has properties that cannot be made accessible, too, and they have developed full lists of comparable experiences available at accessible locations. On the other hand, it could be possible to go area by area and make more elements accessible over time, starting with accessible parking and accessible route to those elements closest to the parking lots. There was discussion of whether separate programming elsewhere would provide equity, particularly programs like musical events held in the large pavilion, as the experience would be so different. Looking at programming in town in its entirety vs. separate programming that is not equitable was discussed. **It is an option for the town to conduct further, more technical study of the site to determine if it is technically feasible to make the site accessible without undue burden.**
- To make programming accessible, whether at Sewataro, an alternate location, or any event, service, or program of the Town, effective communication is required. The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation's Universal Access Program is a model for that, with compliant website and full descriptions of all aspects of programs and accommodations and adaptations available.
- Town has an obligation to have an accessible website. Using current software (E.g., MS Word) it is convenient to use their features to make simple documents accessible. Structuring a website for accessible navigation is more of a project. There are professionals available to implement making a website like the Town's accessible and it is a requirement. Aside from the technical aspects effective communication includes informing the public that accommodations are available as needed for any event, program, of service and who to contact and how to request. The town may suggest making such a request with a lead time of some days, but the town may not require any particular lead time.
- **A high school must be in ADA and MAAB compliance. The IHCD has never before encountered a self evaluation where the high school was specifically excluded from the survey.** The fact that the site is under the aegis of a regional school district does not shield it from requirements like a self evaluation and transition plan. It seems that it is the responsibility of both Sudbury and Lincoln to get those done. As a very rough estimate, it would take two teams up to two days to conduct the survey. Then the report would be drafted, reviewed, and finalized.

- If the town uses the high school (or any other location) it has an obligation for program accessibility and includes locations that the town does not own, but rents. For example, if Sudbury held voting (or Town Meeting) at a location, you would be responsible to be sure that was an accessible facility.
- About what remedies are easy, inexpensive, or quick: It can be deceptive. Lever door handles may seem so, but they can be close to \$500 each to purchase and install. A door that is too heavy to pull may be adjusted to the right pounds of force as routine maintenance and would not even cost much labor at all. Removing items placed or stored in the way of accessible route or clearance under a sink costs next to nothing.
- About safety: **Tactile signage and egress routes are most important.** They likely cost about \$230 installed, but they provide that needed safe route in an emergency. If safety issues are not remedied it puts the town at risk in terms of liability, too.
- **A way to determine how to have the biggest impact for improving accessibility is to look for the most frequently used facility or program.** Highly trafficked locations would be candidates to be sure there is an accessible entrance, and that there are accessible toilet rooms. If those things are not there or are not adequate and then you make them accessible, that can be a tremendous impact. Another high impact step would be training of staff, elected officials, and civic volunteers particularly on effective communication.
- If the Fairbank Community Center is to be replaced, but it will not be completed for two years or more, it would be foolish not to look at things that relate to accessible route and safety. There are also unique programs there, for example the pool and the locker rooms. It is a tough discussion, and the details of usage and timing of replacement would need to be considered. When the facility is in use safety must be prioritized.
- Sudbury has the Town Manager as one of the ADA Coordinators. Should a grievance be made that was then being appealed, the Town Manager would be the next person to appeal to. If the grievance original was made to the Town Manager, then there would not be another place to appeal within the Town. That is not a typical arrangement. There are towns that have two ADA Coordinators, usually one for employee matters and the other for issues from members of the public. Three coordinators is not typical, but that's not to say it's noncompliant. What we look for is that there is a grievance procedure. We can send examples of grievance procedures that can be a basis for drafting your own.
- The Self Evaluation and Transition Plan document is just about complete.

3. Public Comment

Linda Faust, Boston Post Road: About the senior center, you know, they really need to have accessible restrooms in the new one for wheelchair people, big time. And I don't know exactly who to reach out to but there's plenty of websites that I deal with, for instance, how to make a website accessible for people that use screen readers, and there is such a thing as describing images. Also, the Senior Center Newsletter is not readable by JAWS, a screen reader.

4. Discussion of Transition Planning process and COD role in moving forward with this process (with inclusion of Park & Rec./Housing/COA/Schools -LS and SPS). Review of the finding of working group reviewing the Self-Evaluation document

Lisa Kouchakdjian, Randi Korn, and Kay Bell have met twice, divided the many reports to study, (town buildings, parks and outdoor spaces, schools) and are still working on understanding the information in the reports. The Excel file with all reports in it is editable, and can be sorted and filtered by factors like cost, type of issue, location, town priority, priority for barrier removal, etc. Frequency of use is not in the IHCD reports but may be an important factor in prioritizing for remedy.

5. Approval Review and approval of minutes of the May 6th COD meeting.

Minor corrections were suggested by members.

MSV Ms. Kouchakdjian moved and Mr. Frey seconded: That we approve the minutes of the May 6, 2021 meeting as amended. The motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

6. Update on the Town Meeting, Board of Health and Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, first monthly update meeting with Town Manager

- Mr. Frey reported that Town Meeting preparation was very good. Attendance was low, but logistics were well set up. There will be a follow up meeting to debrief on execution of plans.
- Ms. Bell reported that the Board of Health (BOH) agrees with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on fully reopening schools with less distancing and continued masking. The BOH will recommend removing the local state of emergency.
- Ms. Kouchakdjian reported that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission (DEI) has had its first meeting. They are working on goals and objectives. Jennifer Roberts, Select Board member and liaison to the COD, stated that persons with disabilities are within the scope of the work that DEI will do, suggesting some form of collaboration.

7. Update on Transportation and brief review of Chart of Transportation options

- Ms. Bell reported that three subsidized transportation options are now operating for illegible Sudbury residents. She designed a chart of the basic details that vary for each program, and it has been well-received as a helpful overview. Ms. Bell will try to make an accessible version.
- Mr. Frey, the COD member on the Transportation Committee (TC), reported that, with finite funding, they are watching the cash flow carefully. A user requiring wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) for medical appointment could not fit into the limited hours a WAV taxi is available. The TC is looking into paratransit options of the Metro West Regional Transportation Authority (MWRTA) and Ms. Guthy suggested connecting with an individual in Framingham with much experience with MWRTA.

8. Discussion and plan to move forward with discussion of “Brain Based” accommodations needed to understand the needs of those individuals living with these disabilities. Invitation to Valeria Fletcher (IHCD consultant) to present at a future meeting

Valerie Fletcher, Executive Director of the IHCD, was put in contact with Ms. Bell and has expressed interest in either meeting with the COD or providing a broader presentation on the topic of brain-based conditions and the ADA. Members favored the idea of a presentation to benefit the broader community to be held in September or October when people are back from summer.

MSV Ms. Bell moved and Ms. Guthy seconded: that the Commission gather a group of three people to plan, arrange, and promote a visit from Valerie Fletcher, to the town of Sudbury to present of the topic of disabilities. The motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Ms. Guthy, Mr. Frey, and Ms. Bell will serve on this group.

9. Membership on Commission on Disability

Ms. Guthy's three-year term is expiring. She will submit an application to be reappointed. Ms. Bell submitted to the members a letter expressing appreciation for the leadership and service Ms. Guthy has given the COD and the community and endorsing her request for reappointment.

MSV Ms. Kouchakdjian moved and Ms. Santangelo seconded: that the COD submit to the Town Manager and copy the Select Board the letter drafted by Ms. Bell. The motion carried by a majority roll call vote. Ms. Kouchakdjian, aye. Ms. Santangelo, aye. Ms. Korn, aye. Mr. Frey, aye. Ms. Bell, aye. Ms. Guthy, abstained.

Adjourn

MSV Ms. Kouchakdjian moved and Ms. Korn seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:14 PM

A true copy attest: Kathleen (Kay) F. Bell
Meeting Recorder

July 8, 2021