

**BRAINTREE COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES**  
**Meeting Held Via Zoom**  
**Monday, February 3, 2025, 6:30 p.m.**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Crystal Evans, Treasurer  
Robin Torpey, Member  
Mary Russo, Member  
Scott Lamphere, Member

**ALSO PRESENT:** Marybeth McGrath, Director of ML & I  
Kristina Ziniti, ADA Coordinator

**Call to Order:**

Crystal Evans served as Acting Chairperson for this meeting.

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by roll call vote: Crystal Evans-yes;  
Robin Torpey-yes; Mary Russo-yes; Scott Lamphere-yes

**Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes of January 6, 2025 were reviewed.

*Motion made by Robin Torpey to approve the meeting minutes of January 6, 2025.  
Motion seconded by Mary Russo. The motion passed by a roll call vote:  
Crystal Evans-yes; Mary Russo-yes; Robin Torpey-yes (Scott Lamphere-abstained)*

**Accessibility of Sidewalks/Snow Removal:**

Ms. McGrath stated they met with the Mayor and several department heads regarding snow removal. They reviewed snow removal priorities and paying close attention to squares, schools, and town hall. Ms. Evans asked if any changes were proposed. Ms. McGrath stated DPW is going to discuss with their employees prioritizing these areas and paying close attention to sidewalks and accessible pathways at town hall and the squares. She stated they sent letters out to all business owners through the Chamber of Commerce reminding them of snow removal requirements and stating they will be paying closer attention. Businesses have 24 hours to remove snow.

Ms. Evans stated when the town is clearing sidewalks with the sidewalk plows they are not accessible at all as they are not clearing the curb cuts. Certain businesses who have corner locations are also not clearing the curb cuts. She provided examples of businesses that are not completely removing the snow and areas where there are gaps in removal. She also referenced the definition of a retail business as outlined in the ordinance.

Ms. Evans stated if Messina Properties and other corporate businesses removed the snow abutting their buildings it would encompass a large amount of sidewalks in town. She

expressed concern that the bus stops are not cleared, making it impossible for busses to lower ramps for wheelchairs, forcing this to be done in the middle of the street. She stated she is making the Mayor's office aware of these instances as they occur so they can see them as they are happening. Ms. McGrath stated she has made note of these concerns and will bring this information back to the Mayor and the team.

Mr. Lamphere stated he is not in a wheelchair, but is not very mobile and when it snows he is essentially housebound. He stated recent storms have been milder and there should be resources available to follow-up after the initial cleanup to ensure everything is cleaned up and accessible. Ms. Torpey pointed out several parking lots that have poor snow removal and blocked handicapped parking spaces. Ms. Evans asked if the Commission could write a letter to the Mayor documenting their concerns and asking for real solutions. She stated this is an annual discussion and they need better policies and enforcement on these issues. Ms. McGrath stated the Commission could draft a letter if they choose to.

Ms. Russo stated as someone who provides school transportation she feels the DPW has done a good job. The schools have been plowed very well with total accessibility for wheelchair ramps and the stairs. Ms. Torpey asked if the school department or DPW does snow removal for the school properties. Ms. McGrath stated she believes the DPW does the plowing, however, school staff does a lot of the shoveling.

Ms. Evans stated she feels Mayor Joyce's administration is doing a good job and they are concerned about these issues. She feels the biggest issue is the town businesses are not properly adhering to the town ordinance. She reviewed the language in the ordinance which indicates not removing snow is a fineable offense, but asked who is enforcing this. She asked if the ordinance can be updated to incorporate all commercial properties, not just retail, and to raise the fines, as the ordinance is 29 years old.

### **Establish Pre-Construction Protocol:**

Ms. Ziniti stated she contacted her counterparts in other communities to see if they have protocols in place for accessibility during construction projects. She stated she spoke with Cambridge and Boston and they provided their policies for what they expect from contractors during construction projects. She reviewed key points from these policies. She has forwarded this information to Engineering, who does have construction guidelines, to see if any of this can be incorporated into Braintree's guidelines. Braintree's current guidelines follow state guidelines through MassDOT. Ms. McGrath stated they would like to discuss this with the Planning Department to see if they can put these construction guidelines into conditions when approving a project. Ms. Evans asked if the information sent by Cambridge and Boston were ordinances. Ms. Ziniti stated she was not sure but will look into it.

### **South Shore Plaza Updates:**

Ms. Ziniti stated she spoke with Allen Smith, General Manager at the South Shore Plaza, about the Commission's signage and emergency preparedness concerns. He stated the

escalators and some elevators are out. They changed vendors to Schindler Elevator Company and they have upgraded some of the equipment. They have had a better response with this company. The elevator in the center of the mall was scheduled to be repaired last week. She stated she and Ms. McGrath may go to the plaza and have a walk through with Mr. Smith. Ms. McGrath stated the Mayor will be meeting with Mr. Smith and she provided the Mayor with a list of their concerns, including an updated evacuation plan.

**Handicapped Parking Fund Account:**

Ms. McGrath reported the current balance in the handicapped parking fund is \$42,885.78.

**Other Business:**

Ms. Evans stated she attended a meeting where Mayor Joyce was in attendance and asked her about filling openings on boards and commissions. Mayor Joyce stated the Commission on Disabilities is one of her top priorities to address.

Ms. Evans asked that the next agenda contain continued discussions on snow removal and preconstruction protocol.

**Next Meeting:** March 3, 2025

**Adjournment:**

*Motion made by Robin Torpey to adjourn the Commission on Disabilities meeting at 7:35 p.m. Motion seconded by Scott Lamphere. The motion passed by a roll call vote: Crystal Evans-yes; Robin Torpey-yes; Mary Russo-yes; Scott Lamphere-yes*