

**BRAINTREE COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES**  
**Fletcher Hall Meeting Room, Town Hall**  
**1 John F. Kennedy Memorial Drive, Braintree MA**  
**Monday, February 4, 2019, 6:30 p.m.**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Lynn Vaillancourt, Vice Chairman  
Mary Russo, Member  
Robin Torpey, Secretary  
Crystal Evans-Pradhan, Treasurer

**NOT PRESENT:** Meredith Lincoln, Chairman

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

**Call to Order:**

Meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Vaillancourt at 6:33 p.m.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

The minutes of January 7, 2019 were reviewed.

*Motion made by Robin Torpey to approve the meeting minutes of January 7, 2019.  
Motion seconded by Mary Russo. The motion passed by a 4-0-0 vote.*

**Review Action Items from January Meeting:**

1. Purchase wheelchair carriers for BFD/BPD: Ms. McGrath stated the police department expressed that they do not have any interest at this time. The fire department is interested in three. She has engaged the town solicitor to determine liability for a person's personal property while the town is in possession of it. Once she has this information she will present it to the Commission. Vice Chair Vaillancourt explained they would have to consider what happens to the wheelchair if the person is admitted to the hospital, as the hospital would not want liability for it, and the person could not use it while at the hospital. Ms. Evans-Pradhan stated that this came to their attention because New York City purchased these. She stated it would also be used if someone's wheelchair battery runs out and they need to be transported home. She stated Brewster Ambulance has a chair car but it can take hours for them to arrive to pick someone up. This would also be helpful for emergency preparedness in case of evacuation.
2. Consideration of changing monthly meeting time from 6:30 p.m. to an earlier time: Ms. Torpey stated she would like the meetings to remain at 6:30 p.m. Vice Chair Vaillancourt was in agreement with the 6:30 p.m. time. Ms. Pradhan-Evans stated that the 6:30 p.m. time is not convenient for ADA participants who use

public transportation. She asked if the time could be rotated, where at times they meet earlier in the day. Ms. Russo stated the earliest she could be at a meeting is 5:00 p.m. Ms. McGrath stated that she believes 5:00 p.m. would be convenient for Chair Lincoln. Vice Chair Vaillancourt stated their meetings used to be held at 6:00 p.m. but members requested they be changed to 6:30 p.m. due to family dinner concerns. Ms. Evans-Pradhan stated that they should consider doing some type of remote participation for people who want to participate but cannot make a 6:30 p.m. meeting. Ms. Russo stated she would like the meetings to end by 8:00 p.m. Ms. McGrath stated the agendas will be structured to ensure the meetings do not go beyond 8:00 p.m. Ms. Evans-Pradhan recommended looking into purchasing a robot that could be used for town meetings for those who cannot leave the house but want to participate in a meeting. Ms. McGrath stated she will look into the options available.

3. Benches in South Braintree Square: Ms. McGrath stated this was discussed at the last meeting. She stated there are two benches near Southside Tavern and the yogurt bar, one across from the McDonald's parking lot, and one in front of Tiger Home Inspections. They met with DPW, who will be replacing the benches with composite material benches. They are also considering installing an accessible table in the courtyard area near the yogurt bar. The bench near Tiger Home inspections has access issues that will be corrected. Vice Chair Vaillancourt asked if the Commission could have input on what benches are chosen. Ms. McGrath stated she believes the benches may have already been ordered, but will reach out to the DPW to find out and she will email pictures to the members.
4. Reach out to Bob James and BEMA members to inquire if there are any emergency preparedness trainings available for individuals with disabilities: Ms. McGrath stated they had discussed Portlight training, however, Mr. James is not familiar with this training. The Commission had asked if she could speak with him about any other training that may be available in the Commonwealth and she is in the process of reaching out to him. Ms. Evans-Pradhan stated there are other programs available, however, they are not as comprehensive as Portlight. She stated they do an online training course for \$30 per person or can conduct a seminar. Vice Chair Vaillancourt stated if the intention would be to train Braintree town employees for emergency preparedness for the disabled community the Commission has to determine the best possible way of doing this in the most cost effective manner. Ms. McGrath stated the town has an Local Emergency Planning Committee and this would be a good place to start this discussion. She stated she will reach out to the Chair of that committee
5. BCAM closed captioning: Vice Chair Vaillancourt stated BCAM has responded and stated closed captioning is cost prohibitive. They continue to look into it to see if there is lower cost equipment or availability, but so far there is not. Ms. Evans-Pradhan asked what the cost is. Ms. McGrath stated she does not know the cost, but was told it was cost prohibitive. Ms. Russo stated her husband is not able to hear the town meeting when televised. Vice Chair Vaillancourt asked if it was possible to provide a transcript of town meetings to individuals

who cannot hear the meeting. Ms. McGrath stated that there are meeting minutes available and most if not all are posted on the town website.

6. Accessibility photo campaign: Vice Chair Vaillancourt stated they are trying to provide public information regarding what affects accessibility in the town, and hoping to put this in the Braintree Forum or BELD. This would help residents know what they can do to make the town more accessible. Ms. McGrath stated there is a process to go through to do this and they would have to go through procurement. She stated the Commission will have to discuss what they want and come up with a proposal and she would bring it to the Mayor's office to get the process started. She asked that this discussion be tabled until all members are present. Members were in agreement.
7. Special education busses being passed while stop sign active and lights flashing: Ms. McGrath stated at the November meeting the Police Chief and Traffic Safety Officer spoke and offered suggestions on what they can do to help this situation. Ms. McGrath has been trying to schedule a meeting with the Superintendent of Schools and the Police Chief but every time she sets one up it is cancelled. Crystal Evans-Pradhan stated that in other towns they install cameras on the school bus and a picture is snapped when someone passes the bus. She felt the fees collected from ticketing could pay for the cameras. She also suggested going to town council and asking to increase the amount of tickets for passing a school bus, which would be a deterrent to drivers. Mary Russo stated cameras can pose a problem because some drivers pass the bus by accident if the lights and sign come out as the person is passing. Vice Chair Vaillancourt noted that they not only have to consider the cost of the cameras, but also the cost of maintenance and training for those cameras.
8. Sound amplification system for public meeting rooms: Ms. McGrath stated she has sent a letter to the Mayor outlining the Commission's vote and requesting approval. She stated she will keep the Commission updated on this item.
9. Paint utility boxes in South Braintree Square: Ms. McGrath stated this process begins with the DPW and the Traffic Advisory Committee. The box has been identified as a town owned signaling box. The signals are being upgraded in the future. The Traffic Advisory Committee has no objection to it being painted but will not permit any directional verbiage or signage. Anything the Commission considers has to be approved by the Traffic Advisory Committee prior to it going to the Mayor for approval.

Ms. Evans-Pradhan stated the intent of this project was to use it as part of a townwide safety campaign, not just painting one box. Vice Chair Vaillancourt stated the idea of having students at the high school participate was to assist with the safety awareness and to have multiple boxes painted. Ms. Evans-Pradhan stated the South Braintree Square box is dangerous as it abuts a crosswalk, so if someone steps out they may not be seen and could be hit by a car.

Vice Chair Vaillancourt asked if the issue is not so much painting the boxes, but actually moving this particular box or installing flashing pedestrian lights, similar to those used at South Shore Hospital. Ms. Evans-Pradhan also suggested looking into the installation of LED blackout lights which are only activated in an active crosswalk situation. Ms. McGrath stated she will discuss this with the DPW.

10. COD narrative for BPS regarding safety concerns for Braintree school busses:  
Vice Chair Vaillancourt stated that this is tied in to the previous discussion and should be handled with the meeting between the School Superintendent and Police Chief.

### **Update on ADA Coordinator Position:**

Marybeth McGrath introduced Kristina Ziniti, the new ADA Coordinator. Ms. Ziniti introduced herself to the members and told them about her background.

### **Announcements/Information:**

Ms. McGrath provided members with a copy of the monthly meeting schedule. She stated the Commission is required to hold ten meetings per year.

Ms. Evans-Pradhan requested that Andrew Marron place an event message on Facebook for monthly COD meetings.

Ms. Evans-Pradhan noted that Tom Hopkins, Director of MA Architectural Access Board, has died.

Vice Chair Vaillancourt stated she will not be available for the Monday, March 4 meeting.

Mary Russo asked to revisit item #8. She stated that her husband is hearing impaired and amplifying sound actually makes it worse for hearing impaired individuals. Ms. Evans-Pradhan agreed, stating that many hearing impaired individuals find this equipment useless. Ms. McGrath asked the Commission how they would like to proceed, as this has been voted on and forwarded to the Mayor. Vice Chair Vaillancourt stated the equipment discussed does assist a segment of the hearing impaired population. Ms. McGrath stated there are other tools that can be used, this is just one component.

Ms. McGrath reminded members to call her or send an email to confirm whether they are attending the monthly meetings so she can ensure there will be a quorum.

*Motion by Mary Russo to adjourn the Commission on Disabilities meeting at 7:52 p.m.  
Motion seconded by Robin Torpey. Unanimously voted.*