



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

14 July 2020

Regular Monthly Meeting

Present: Nancy Salamoun, Staff Liaison, Mgr. of Equity Diversity and Inclusion
Bonnie Denis, Chair
Colin Killick, Commissioner
Brian Postlewaite, Secretary, Assist. Director of Engineering

Absent: Finn Gardner, Commissioner

Guests: Lisa Robinson, Director of Shape Up Somerville

Note: Due to COVID-19 Shutdown, all attendees were remote via Zoom Meeting.

General Business

- Meeting commenced on 11 August at 6:35pm.

Guest Presentation

- Lisa Robinson, Director of Shape Up Somerville, described the work the City has been executing to minimize the severe impact from COVID 19 on individuals and families in the City.

- Shape Up Somerville's original focus has been on Outreach & Policy, and a Mobile Farmers Market.
- Since COVID 19 they have focused more on Services, primarily on food security via a food pantry delivering to 30-900 households with 13-20 volunteers.
- As of July Shape Up Somerville has been shifting more to general health and food security policy.
- Project Soup is taking over more of Shape Up Somerville's previous food pantry service.
- Shape Up Somerville is developing a taxi cab voucher system to help people with transportation to food and medical services.
- Trying to figure out methods to provide SNAP benefits on delivered food from the Mobile Farmers Market. Currently the SNAP recipient must trust the deliverer with the SNAP credentials.
 - Commission expressed concern that there was no way to verify the deliverer's trustworthiness.
 - Commission asked whether Shape Up Somerville could provide bulk deliveries to apartment building or other congregate housing? Lisa noted that it is primarily a staff limitation.
- A separate organization, MAMAS (Mutual Aid for Medford and Somerville) provides volunteer grocery shopping and delivery services.
- SNAP online has expanded to Massachusetts, but only with Amazon and Walmart. The USDA online process is too difficult for small online retailers to navigate.
 - Lisa will follow up with Stop&Shop/Peapod to see why they do not have SNAP online.
- Many grocery stores have early hours for senior citizens and include all Persons with Disabilities.
 - Commission noted that only Trader Joe's and Whole Foods publish this policy. Many Persons with Disabilities are turned away because staff does not know the policy or the person's disability is not visible or apparent.

Chair's Report

- Bonnie found that none of the 1060 Broadway inclusionary residential units overlapped with the required accessible residential units.

- Work with the City Housing Department, who selects the inclusionary units, to provide more overlap between accessible and inclusionary units.
- Another option would be to work with City Council to ordain such a requirement.

Director's Report

- None.

Old Business

- Will the Gilman elevator be built? If so, when?
 - The Gilman elevator is currently in design.
 - Assuming a prompt City Council approval upon design completion, construction would proceed with an opening in December 2021.
- ADA 30th Anniversary Proclamation. Colin will draft, Bonnie will review & approve, Nancy will submit to Mayor's Office and City Council.
- Restaurant openings outdoors and accessibility concerns:
 - Many ramps to access restaurant parklet seating are either non-compliant or non-existent.
 - Burren fencing appears to lack 48" clearance.
 - Elm Street Tap Room ramp location is obstructed by a street sign.
 - Bonnie to send a complaint list, Brian to submit to ISD for inspection.

New Business

- Tufts variance request to extend their transition to meet accessible unit requirements by two years due to construction difficulties during COVID 19.
- Unanimously approved motion for Colin to write a response letter including the following:
 - A two year delay is excessive, one year should be sufficient.
 - Modular units were built during COVID 19, thus the modulars should accommodate the missing accessible units as a temporary condition.

Motion to Adjourn Meeting at 8:00pm; approved unanimously.