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>>Hello. This is Jamie.  
>>Adrienne: Hi, Jamie. This is Adrienne.  
>>Harriotte: Hi, this is Harriotte. I'm just getting my -- okay. I'm just grabbing some water and I will re- appear.  
>>Adrienne: Hi, Holly.  
>>Bonnie: Hey, Holly.  
>>This is Pauline. Hello, everybody.  
>>Hi, Pauline.  
>>Harriotte: Hi, Pauline. I'm not visible, but Harriotte is here.  
>>Holly: Hi, everybody. Thank you for setting up live transcript, closed caption. I can see it at the bottom.  
>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. It looks like we're just waiting for a couple more people before calling the meeting to order. I could swear that that's Brian Postlewaite, but that's not what the name says.  
>>Oh, that's really funny.  
>>Adrienne: I saw it coming in and I was like, I don't know if I know who that is so I was a little -- I was a little --  
>>Brian: No. That's a fair concern. Now I have to figure out how to change it.  
>>Adrienne: I think I can change it for you. Let me try that.  
>>Brian: I thought I'd set it when I logged in, but I guess it changed it to my tablet name.  
>>Adrienne: I believe I spelled that right from memory, please correct me.  
>>Brian: You did. Good job.  
>>Adrienne: Julia, give me -- okay, I will watch for her.  
>>What's your last name, Brian, this is Harriotte?  
>>Brian: Sure, it's Postlewaite.  
>>Harriotte: Oh, yeah. That sounds like somebody who worked in a post office 200 years ago.  
>>Brian: You would think. I measure letters, make sure

they're not too heavy.

>>Pauline: And stamps, too?

>>Brian: I just count the number of stamps.

>>Harriotte: I've heard a number of names with that latter ending, though.

>>Brian: The w- a- i- t? It's an old English term for like somebody who maintains land.

>>Harriotte: Oh, hmm.

>>Brian: So it's like a caretaker- type term.

>>Suffix.

>>Suffix, that's the term I was looking for, suffix.

>>Harriotte: It occurred to me, Copperthwait.

>>Brian: Yeah, I don't know.

>>Harriotte: I have an affection for people's names because I can recognize all the ones that are German -- or not all, but most of them anyway.

>>Holly: Nice cat tail, Adrienne. It's making me smile. Mine is lying across the door so no one can get in and out.

>>Adrienne: Yeah, that's Jill the cat, Jill who just caught wind of I'm sure a bird or other critter in the backyard.

>>Harriotte: And doesn't she run your house, maybe, Jill the cat?

>>Adrienne: She does, Harriotte, and what is remotely very disappointing is I would appreciate any financial contribution to our lifestyle and that does not happen because cats can't get jobs, apparently, as skilled as she is at so many things.

>>How old is she?

>>Adrienne: Jill just turned 8 year- olds.

>>Harriotte: She's in her prime.

>>Pauline: Yeah. Ginny's mother has a cat who is about 20 or 21 now.

>>Homer is 20 at least.

>>At least.

>>Yeah, at least. We're not totally sure how old he is because he was one of those cats that kept out on my mom's back porch and she and my brother fed the group of I think three. And finally they just came to live there.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Sorry about that. I was trying to do this meeting in a cooler room and my Internet just was not happy with being that far from the router. So hopefully it will stay working now.

>>Harriotte: Hopefully you won't suffer.

>>Bonnie: I'll give Lian just a second to get back to their computer and then we can get started. All right.

So I'm going to call the meeting to order and do a roll call.

"Recording in progress."

>>Bonnie: Thank you, Adrienne. Welcome to the meeting, it's Tuesday, July 12, 6:36 p.m. I'm going to go through the members first and then everybody else just so that we can take a note of who's here. And I will call on folks in order. Brian Postlewaite.

>>Here.

>>Bonnie: Holly Simione.

>>Here. Sorry.

>>Bonnie: That's all right. Thank you. Lian Guertin.

>>Here.

>>Bonnie: Great. And I do not see Katie Milton, so I'll mark her as absent. And I'm Bonnie Denis, Chair. So we have Adrienne Pomeroy, ADA Coordinator. And associate commissioners Harriotte Rirnvig, Henry Harding and Pauline Downing.

>>I think I'm here.

>>Bonnie: Great. And Jamie Perconti.

>>Yes. Hello.

>>Bonnie: Guests, Ginny and --

>>I'm here representing P tack.

>>Bonnie: Great. Thanks, Ginny. So I'm going to go a little out of order, just I want to be respectful of our guest's time. So Julia is going to talk to us about Somerville after school and summer programs for youths with disabilities. We had talked about this as a potential area of funding for the Commission, so I thought it would be good to have a parent representative talk to us directly. So take it away and then after you're done, we can ask any questions.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Sure. Hi, everybody. I'm Julia Toof. I've been on PTAC with Ginny, but I'm planning to leave. I'm on a Special Education Parent Advisory Council and that's taking up a lot more of my time. I'm a parent of two children with Autism.

>>Bonnie: Oh, I am so sorry. I did not amend the agenda and so I forgot this, but I had a request to do an accommodation thing prior to the start of the meeting I am so sorry. So I want to give space for that and then we'll jump into you again. Apologies.

So Adrienne.

>>Adrienne: Thank you. This is Adrienne, thank you Chair Denis: I have, with her permission and Pauline, I know you hear me, so if I get anything wrong, please feel free to chime in. Pauline has been, you know, here with us, and besides the accommodation of braille that we're already aware of that I am working through, we did have another conversation yesterday about some additional things that all of us can do in this space to support Pauline and folks who may join us who identify the same way as Pauline, because we do -- you all discuss so many things in this meeting, and that's great, but sometimes there's so much

information, it can get a little lost.

So Pauline and I talked about just a few things yesterday that would be helpful, especially when we're looking at plans or variance requests or maybe we have guest speakers who bring in materials for us to view about different ways to discuss that information. So even though somebody like Pauline who can't see the PowerPoint or can't see the blueprint or the plans has some general idea about what is being shown so she can participate as much as possible in this conversation.

So that does take I think some advocacy work with the partners that do come in to do that work, you know, previously. That might fall to me, in combination with Chair Denis to maybe have a prior discussion or maybe be able to look at them to look for those things. Even involve Pauline when we can. But when they're here, sort of about how they're presenting those materials and how we are having, you all are having discussions so that everybody can get their feedback in, especially since Chair Denis sets agenda, there are certain timed things just to sort of go through everything.

So with that said, the first thing I think we can all do that benefits everybody is really be aware of the speed of our speech and how fast we are talking in order just to make sure we are all hearing everything as clear as possible. And then empowering this group that if you feel like you haven't heard something the right way or it's not clear, feeling free to say, can we pause a moment and can you repeat yourself or put it in the chat if you're able to do so. So that's one thing that the chat benefits some folks.

The other thing I think that would be beneficial, and I did review the agenda with Pauline, I read it to her over the phone yesterday, is maybe going forward building in some time and actually reading that agenda right at the top of the meeting, and that way everybody can hear what's going to happen, especially those who may not be able to see it when Chair Denis shares it.

So I think that's a thing that we can do. And then particularly with the discussions when we have plans or variance requests, like all these details in front of us, you know, sometimes things like that say -- or we can read that it says six feet or three feet. Someone, you know, Pauline has told me, she doesn't necessarily know what that is because she can't see the plans. And you may not be able to materialize in your head what six feet actually looks like, so really working to sometimes break down that information or maybe have an analogy or an example, a visual example that we can describe that can make that easier to understand.

And then I think finally that everybody in the world should work on regardless of how you identify and how you engage with the

world, and I know this group has the a vested interest in that, is plainer language, you know, having things presented in a way that can be understood by everybody, it does not exclude anybody because it may be a more complicated way to word things.

And so we as a group, I think you all as a group have a lot of power to sort of -- you know, you can adjust things as we go, but I think it also empowers you as a group and then me as somebody who sometimes has to make connections with people who want to speak to this group to say, you know, are you thinking about plainer language, or are you prepared to break this down a little bit.

So those are the things that Pauline and I talked about, not only to benefit her because she is an active person, but sort of universally, you know, going forward to increase access.

So Harriotte, I see your hand. I want to ask Pauline to make sure I covered everything we talked about yesterday.

>>I only have one other comment.

>>Adrienne: Sure.

>>Pauline: This might, you know, I don't want to offend anybody, but when people talk about blindness and visual impairment, they're two different things. And for some reason government seems to think that your visually impaired even if you're blind and they're totally different. Someone who is visually impaired at least to my knowledge is someone who has some vision, you know, whether it's usable or not, but they have some vision. But someone who is totally blind, they're totally blind, they can't see a thing.

>>Harriotte: Good point, Pauline. This is Harriotte.

>>Pauline: And there is a differentiation, but I'm always asked oh, are you sight impaired? No, I'm blind, thank you very much, and I don't mind saying so. You know, and I think people need to get over being afraid of using the word "blind" because that's the -- that's the state of affairs, you know. I'm blind.

>>Harriotte: Ditto, this is Harriotte, I am, too. Are you complete, Pauline?

>>Pauline: I'm totally blind. I have no vision at all.

>>Harriotte: No. No. I meant are you finished speaking, that's what I meant.

>>Pauline: Oh, I'll get my ears fixed. Sorry about that. Yes. I'm through, thank you.

>>Harriotte: Okay. So one of the things that's helpful, again, this is not just for Pauline and me, but all of us, is if we do our best to say our name just before we start speaking. That's hugely helpful for Pauline and me, and ultimately for everybody to learn each other's names over time or just to be comfortable.

And the second thing is, and this is said in a number of the

meetings that I'm going to, please say the name of the organization and then the acronym, because let me tell you, there's so much abbreviation soup that it can drive -- drive us wild, at least me. That's just a request. That's just a request.

>>Pauline: This is Pauline. I agree wholeheartedly with that.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Thank you so much, Adrienne, for sharing, and Pauline, for asking what you need, and Harriotte, for your comments. And that is a good reminder that I was a little spacey in terms of my wireless cutting out and I forgot my usual announcement.

We do request that before you speak you say your name. It helps with identification and it also helps later for people reading the transcript to be able to follow the conversation. And we've had a request that if people are comfortable sharing their pronouns, that's great as well. So again, my name is Bonnie. My pronouns are she/her. And I see Jamie and Lian with raised hands.

I'm happy to continue this discussion. I'm happy to do a couple of very quick comments if they are or to come back to it, but I do want to note that our presenter has kids and might be on a time deadline. So if they're brief, chime in now, and if not, we can come back to this immediately after the presentation.

>>Lien: This is Lian. I have two things, one is a follow up to that that I can come back to. But also I just want to note that I am not seeing an option for the closed captions. So I just wanted to find that early on.

>>Bonnie: If you click the "more" button on the bottom of the screen there are two options, there's a show subtitle and there's view full transcript and either of those should work.

>>Lian: Is that the, from the captioner or the automatic one from Zoom?

>>Bonnie: The full transcript, view full transcript is definitely from the captioner. I have not clicked the show subtitles, so I'm not certain.

>>Lian: That just may be a change from the last time I looked at Zoom. So thank you for that.

>>Bonnie: Great.

>>Lian: Yeah. I can come back to my other question afterwards.

>>Bonnie: Thank you. Jamie, did you want to come back afterwards?

>>I just wanted to raise something that is related but probably its own separate discussion, so we definitely should not have that discussion right now. I don't want to keep Julia waiting, but I just wanted to mention, you know, with these accommodations and trying to be mindful of speaking slowly and clearly and the

in- depth discussions that we often get into in these meetings, we are frequently pushing up against the limited time that we have for the Zoom meeting and I'm not sure what the origin of that like fixed like in the meeting is, but I think it would be worth looking into what our options are for extending the meeting for a longer time slot. Thank you.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Thank you, Jamie. Noted to continue that discussion later. And Adrienne, I noted your suggestion to read the agenda as well. I also went over the agenda with Pauline this morning. If anybody needs me to read the items, I will do that; but otherwise, I'd like to move on to Julia and make that a note to start doing in August. All right. So Julia, thank you so much for your patience.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: This is Julia, my pronouns are she/her. Thank you for having me. To that point, I will, I'll just say again, I am on the Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or the SEPAC, and in our meetings we also are supposed to read out all of our acronyms because of translation as well.

So currently, I am on the SEPAC. I have two autistic children who both have individual education programs known as IEPs, and we also have a ton of alphabet soup within the school system, a lot of acronyms, so I'll try to be very mindful about spelling them, spelling them out.

There are individualized education programs. IEPs, also 504s, which are other accommodations that are not to the extent of an IEP.

So I wanted to join you all tonight and thank you, Bonnie, for inviting me, because there's a big issue in general in Somerville with having enough of what is called out- of- school time programming, or OST, and there is especially an issue with not having enough of this type of programming for children with disabilities. I will probably switch between the term "children with disabilities, children with IEPs." Again, if anything I say is not clear, feel free to stop me. And this really just is not, there's not sufficient programming for out of school time, which means summer, after school and school vacations.

Yes. Oh, I'm sorry. So there's really not sufficient programming for children with disabilities. This is a problem for typically developing children as well to a degree, but not to the same degree. So I have presented a list that I had gone through with school committee, but I'm happy to just speak about it extemporaneously or just off the cuff, because I think this group may have more insight into some of these issues and may also have some ideas, but I would love to just present what some of the problems really are.

So one of the biggest issues is that children with

disabilities really cannot be easily accommodated by most of the after- school programming in Somerville, and what that means is that their parents cannot necessarily work full- time unless they're able to pay for, say, a baby sitter after school, which is a significant -- which is a big expense, and also is an issue because it means those children do not get the same level of socializing that other children do. And I have heard other parents often say things like friends are made in after school programming. So that's a real issue of exclusion. It's not just child care, it's also enrichment and social time.

That's one significant issue, or big issue, I'll say. I'll try to simplify my language. And then another, another big problem is the fact that these schools offer after school programming through a group called Community Schools. The process they use is very difficult to understand, but essentially you apply in January and your application goes into kind of a black hole and you find out months later if you got a spot.

Parents of children with disabilities tend to find frequently that their children were wait listed when it doesn't make sense that that occurred. Like I as a personal example, I applied for my son on January 9th. I had to call in June and found out he was wait listed. He goes to a school where not a lot of the children are returning students and he was wait listed all of last year. It's just an example. It's not necessarily my personal grievance, but it doesn't really make sense that he was excluded from this program except from the fact he has an IEP, or an individual education program which they're required to follow because it has particular accommodations.

There are other after school programs in the city, but they often are for particular age groups or they say require potty training or toileting, only 50% of autistic boys are potty trained by the age of five, for example. And these programs also are known to kick children out if they have behavioral problems or require them to leave the program. And that can happen if there's insufficient -- if there isn't enough staffing or if they just do not know how to accommodate the children.

So this first came to my attention, both this problem and after schools and in summer camps, that frequently also often require potty training, which they won't say in their manual, you have to find it out, they'll say on the phone you have to accommodate so there is not necessarily a trail. This came to my attention because I'm in a FaceBook group with a lot of parents with children of disabilities and the majority are autistic or have ADHD and other disabilities, see sure disorders, physical disabilities, et cetera.

And it's common for parents to get calls to pick their

children up early because of behavior or to pick them up from camp, to be told that they can not go on a field trip unless the parent goes, too, even though that's illegal, and telling the parent without enough time in advance so that they cannot get a -- I don't know what the acronym stands for but a CORI check, a background check that's done in schools. I forget what the acronym stands for but essentially a background check, so there may not be enough time to actually do it.

And there are a lot of these instances. I was told this past spring about a child who actually is in the after school program and is in a wheelchair whose parents were told that they could not be accommodated during vacation week programming because there would be two field trips to an arcade and a movie theater and those are accessible places that can fit wheelchairs. The issue was travel. So they were trying to tell parents that they needed to take off five days of school -- or five days of work and this child be excluded from social time because what is really a pretty minor problem, considering everybody else was going to be -- was going to be given transit to those field trips.

And of course, when school committee got involved, the child was accommodated. But it shouldn't come to that. And even knowing to reach out to school committee or to reach out to City Council is a privilege and we do see that children in certain communities or whose parents may not be as educated, may not be as wealthy, may not be as privileged in a number of ways do not know when to push back or what their rights are.

And so from my perspective, you know, I -- I'm white. I went to law school, so I know how to fight back against issues that tend to come up, so my children are generally accommodated and have -- and do have IEPs, for example. But a lot of people do not. And I am starting to speak more with the Latino community which also tends to be more excluded from a lot of this programming. Their children tend to get these accommodations less often. It just is true.

Luckily, they have started to organize and work with Massachusetts Advocates For Children, or MAC. And I don't want to get too derailed talking about some of that, but I just want to point out that, you know, these are pretty big problems and I have lots of individual instances where I -- that I can point to.

But really, what it comes down to is there just is not necessarily the -- there is not the commitment within the city to accommodate children with disabilities. It's easier to tell parents something like you are not -- you know, you're on the wait list. We can't accommodate.

I just opened up an e-mail from the Special Education Parent Advisory Council e-mail or SEPAC e-mail where someone said, you

know, I'm moving to Somerville and my child has a see sure disorder and I prefer to go after school at the school, it seems the school can accommodate but we're wait listed. I think those children should be prioritized and not wait listed or told they can not be accommodated, especially since a lot of the accommodations that a lot of the children need is really more increased staffing ratios, for example. Many would need sensory breaks, functional elevators. A lot of this is really not that complex.

And I partly wanted to talk with this Commission because I wanted to talk with also adults with disabilities who have probably been through a lot of this in childhood, unfortunately, probably have personal experience. And I'm sorry to say a lot of this continues. But especially here, it really -- it really should not. Like there are ways to -- there are ways to be inclusive that are really not that complex and I think it comes down to, you know, the commitment to do it and funding and staffing, essentially. And really training, training staff as well.

Because like my children both go to the Capawano school, it's children three to five and something like 30% of the population has disabilities, so it's -- it's just unbelievable to me that, you know, one of my kid's classmates who is autistic and nonverbal was told this past spring that he could not be accommodated for spring break vacation coverage. His mother was told he could not be accommodated at the beginning of the year because he required potty training, even though he could wear a pull-up, and after school is mainly going to the playground and playing in an after school classroom and having a snack. Like it's not particularly complex, but it's important to have that social time and for parents to be able to work.

And this mother was able to push back. Again, that's someone with a college degree and an education who knows how to do that, knew how to go through a handbook that is in English and say there is nowhere that says this. And so her son was accommodated. But they initially told her that he could not be included in the program. And we just hear so many instances of this, it's fairly -- it's, you know, heartbreaking, really.

But it also does not need to be this way. And I think that this group's advocacy could be helpful. I do see that there is further push in this area, but the fact is, the city really does prioritize the typically developing kids. So while programming is limited, the spots tend to go to those children first. And what we see is a lot of the families who are able to do so end up moving away, either they don't get these accommodations or they leave. And I think if Somerville is going to pride itself on being an inclusive progressive place that excluding essentially one in five children pretty regularly, because that is how many individualized

education program is a huge deal.

I'm happy to hear thoughts or questions or anything because I talked quite a bit there. But I do have a lot of specific instances and notes. And it's funny, my son recently went to the Massachusetts Autobahn Society's camp and it was a partial day and difficult for us to get out there, but they clearly hired neurodivergent counsellors and they had significant neuro divergent for autistic and children with ADHD campers as well and the autobahn goes out much their ways and labels trailed ADA compliant and really tries to reach out to people with disabilities and be inclusive in a way that is really amazing.

>>Harriotte: Are you up for questions?

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Yeah, please.

>>Harriotte: Go ahead, Bonnie.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. I want to say thank you, Julia. Yeah, I definitely want to do questions. Let's try to maintain some order. So Harriotte, I'm going to let you go and then I see a hand from Lian and then anybody else. You can either use the raise hand function and I promise I will note, or you can speak up if that's difficult to do and I'm happy to put you in the order.

So Harriotte and then Lian.

>>Harriotte: Thank you. This is Harriotte. And I'm very happy to hear your presentation. And I have a couple of really fundamental questions. I was in a main streaming program many years ago in Georgia, so I experienced some of this but years ago. What I was wondering is the following. I think I heard you say that the after school programs in Somerville are subcontracted with community care or something like that. Is that accurate?

>>Julia Gibney Toof: That's a very good question. So technically, they are through a program that is under Somerville Public Schools called Community Schools shortened frequently to CS. The school district has argued before that Community Schools is not part of the school district in order to not necessarily have to accommodate disability.

I believe -- I do know one family that has gone to the state and the state found for her family and essentially said that Community Schools was part of the school system, even though it's technically somewhat separate. But that is what the group is called, it's Community Schools. And the reason they are more prepared to be inclusive for some of this programming, after cool programming and vacation programming, is because they tend to, a lot of the staff tends to be paraprofessionals and the paraprofessionals tend to help with mainstreaming in general education classrooms. And some also will focus primarily on the substantially separate classrooms or they're called subseparate. My daughter is currently in substantially subseparate classrooms,

there are more paraprofessionals.

Does that answer your question?

>>Harriotte: It partially answers, but what I wanted to say was, is there nowhere written that there should be parity, as many students as need after care should have access to after care?

>>Julia Gibney Toof: No.

>>Harriotte: See, that's where I think the concept is crazy. And also, I'll leave this for later, about you just, you know, where can we help? There we go. That can come later, but anyway, there we go. Thank you.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Thank you.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Thank you, Harriotte. Lian and then Brian.

>>Lian: This is Lian. So my question is somewhat related in terms of subcontracting, but more specifically, so a few years ago I used to work for a company that would come in to after school programs and run classes in, you know, a specific area. And I'm curious sort of what percentage of after school, after school time in general is things like that where there is a separate group coming in to do the thing that they are trained to do and, you know, teach a specific class to the group of kids that signed up versus more general like the after school that it's just through the school or like the larger company?

And how much of the, sort of the focus on children being denied accommodations or denied spots in a class is on sort of general out of school time versus a specific, you know, special interest class that they might be wanting to take?

>>Julia Gibney Toof: This is Julia. So that's also an interesting question. I would say that the major program like Community Schools is mainly social, so they mainly have an after school classroom or have recess or play games, and there are separate clubs that you can also participate in within the school. But for the most part it's more, more social time.

And there are -- to your point, though, there are specific interest-based after school programs, for example, arts and crafts is one that I've heard is very good at being accommodating. It's an artistic-based program through the city, but it's more expensive. And part of the reason it is more accommodating, apparently, is because, especially of children who are neurodivergent, I have been told part of the reason for that is because the staff is older and they have smaller ratios, but because of that, it can also be more expensive.

>>Lian: And so just as a follow-up, this is Lian again, is the primary -- like is the primary focus that you're looking to have on specifically the just getting kids into after school at all or are you also concerned about like the separate groups coming

in that maybe don't have the training that, you know, are also focusing on those areas so that disabled kids have the option to, you know, be in a specific club or take a specific class they're interested in?

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Really, the primary, just because I know so many parents who work part- time or don't work anymore because -- and they would like to, but they would also like their children to be able to be included. So it's really -- I'm sorry, this is Julia, I forgot to self- identify -- it's really, it's really both, you know. Because like, for example, some of the -- some of the programs that do exist through the school, like my children are both doing something called extended school year, or ESY, and that's because they're younger and so like my daughter, for example, is in the autism and my son is in an extended school year. But there is no extended day or after care that is attached to that.

And the city has a program for children who are going into both prekindergarten and kindergarten this year called summer explorer and it is the exact same days, location and building and hours as these two programs that my children are in. Only the children who are in that are typically neurodeveloping and are offered an extended day to 4:00. They're offered more hours than the children with disabilities who are legally entitled to that schooling in the summer where they also received mandated therapies.

And it's a little shocking to me because I saw this months ago and said could other children participate. And I talked to, you know, I talked to somebody in early education who said yes, but we have to see if other parents want to sign up first and we'll see what the wait list looks like and after that if there is space and staffing you could potentially enroll. I was told it was too full, but it's okay.

But I know another mom whose nonverbal autistic child was sent home on a bus at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday and she had been told he was in that extended day program and was told he qualified and because he was in the extended school year. After she argued with a few people they found him a paraprofessional and he will be starting on Monday.

But still, things like that happen all the time and it really -- I know staffing is difficult right now. We're in a unique period with the pandemic, that just remains an issue, but they really don't need to do things like that. Do you know what I mean? It seems very purposeful.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Thank you. I see Brian and Jamie. And I wanted to make sure Pauline, did you have anything, any questions?

>>Pauline: My question is, why does it take running through hoops to do anything for kids or people with disabilities? I don't get it. Are we such a callous society that this is the norm or whatever? I don't know.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. I share your frustration on that and I wish I had an answer.

>>Harriotte: We all wish we do. This is Harriotte.

>>Bonnie: All right. Brian and then Jamie. Brian is also our secretary so that might be the moment of silence.

>>Brian: This is Brian. Sorry, I was trying to get that last line down. Because though it was a rhetorical question, it was an important point. So I think my main question follows on Harriotte, the last thing Harriotte said or asked, is what, Julia, do you want the SCPD to do? Is there an initiative that you want us to support or are you asking us to just be aware of this concern and if something comes up to be ready to support?

I'm not really clear what's the action item.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: That's fair. This is Julia. I would like your support. I have -- there is a new out of school time director, or OST director named Heather McCormick, who is focused on the programming and she has acknowledged that there are real gaps in the program for children with disabilities. When I had reached out to her she told me a coalition is forming to advocate for better out of school time programming for children with disabilities and for more of a community that has been excluded in general and I told her I would like to be involved in that.

Assuming that is happening, I would certainly like your support. In the longer term I would also really welcome ideas from you all because one thing that I have sought to do starting on the SEPAC, or Special Education Parent Advisory Council, is to try and push for and possibly even create programming, because unfortunately, I have heard of parents really having to do that.

Like, for example, my husband had been in a lifeguard and swim coach for a long time, so he's going to get certified and see if he can do adaptive swim lessons to teach kids how to swim. So we have thought about doing programming like that. And I think that your support and -- the awareness is I think also very important, but I think that support for future initiatives or drives to improve funding and improve staffing in these programs would be extremely helpful. And just because a lot of the biggest advocates here really do end up moving away. There are only two children with downs syndrome in Somerville public schools anymore because families moved away because they did not get the support that they needed.

I would also welcome ideas for programming, and that's not something that, you know, anyone needs to come up with now, but

it's interesting, like my son is doing an adaptive sports clinic which is just unfortunately not at a good time. It's like in the middle of the afternoon, which is not great for working parents, and no one thought to combine it with the summer program that does exist for some kids, so a lot of people just cannot do it.

But while I think it's a great opportunity, I also see it and think everything doesn't need to be about sports, too. And often I have noticed neurodivergent children have different interests, too. I think it's important to participate in this programming, but it would be wonderful if there were other programming, too, instead of just having an adaptive version of something that neurotypical children, for example, typically do, if that makes sense.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. That makes a lot of sense to me and I'm really glad to hear it voiced because I think, you know, my background is in adaptive sports and that's where I would have gone to first. And it's great to have the expertise and to hear like we should be looking at other avenues as well.

Jamie, Holly, and then I've noticed a hand back up from Lian and Harriotte, but I also have some comments. So Jamie and then Holly.

>>Jamie: This is Jamie. So I wanted to ask about how the issues that we are talking about intersect with the way that the pandemic has been affecting everything and obviously that has changed a lot from the beginning of the pandemic until now. And you already mentioned getting staff is a difficulty. But are there any other particular things that come to mind related to the ongoing impact of the pandemic?

>>Julia Gibney Toof: That's a good question, and I'm not -- staffing is certainly an issue. And I do think that pandemic funds or ARPA funds could potentially be used. I think that's one way the pandemic relates to all this, too, because I know that a lot of our ARPA funds have been unspent and in the school system -- I'm sorry, the American Rescue Plan Act, some of that funding or ARPA had been used for competence sorry purposes, which means services like occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech that children with disabilities may have missed or been unable to access during the pandemic.

So I know that that funding is there and this would be a potential use for it, increased staffing, for example. I will say that some of these issues were a lot more stark during the pandemic as well because when schools were completely remote there was out person in- person after school programming, but it wasn't accessible so it meant there was really only in- person programming done outdoors, if you could pay for it and, you know, have gotten into it and were accommodated.

And sometimes it was held in places like playgrounds that might not have had a locked gate, which would personally not feel safe to me as a parent and I think we're -- I know many parents of children with Autism and ADHD would feel the same way. So I think the pandemic really brought some of those issues to light.

But the biggest problem is really, is staffing.

>>Okay. Thank you.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Uh- huh.

>>Bonnie: Holly.

>>Holly: Thanks, Dennis. This is Holly. Hi, Julie, it's very nice to meet you. My two children have unique educational needs and different disabilities also, and it's interesting that you said that a lot of families move because they can't get the services in school.

Do you happen to know if they're also getting outplaced or if they're not getting either, inclusionary education in our public schools or if they're being placed outside of the city, which actually my oldest daughter was because of her needs. And it's more of a question, I'm just curious.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Sure. This is Julia. So I happen to know that there are fewer children in out of district or OOD placements than there used to be; that the district has moved to reduce that and also reduce the number of children who are in substantially separated classrooms.

There is a push more to general education or gen ed and inclusion, which I think is great. However, the district does not always provide sufficient paraprofessionals to make that successful. Like it's not really inclusion done right if you have children with IEPs, are mainstreamed put into a general education classroom without adding the support that will help them to be successful.

It's a concern I have because the district does not have paraprofessionals in classrooms after kindergarten. They do, in first grade it's some of the classes will have it, but something actually -- a lot of parents have typically developing children push for this year. And I'm on the Special Education Parent Advisory Council specifically asked for paraprofessionals in all classrooms from first to third day to support inclusion, and I know that the Somerville educators union, or SEU, also requested that, too.

>>Holly: So I believe that when you share your experience and you identify a problem, but that's how we use our voices. But you've gone that second step, which I also think is very important, and identified things that could solve a problem. And I wholeheartedly believe that the biggest barriers for any person who has any type of a disability is education of other people.

So I strongly support making sure that all of our children have what they need, but I think it's going to come through examples. And I'm very excited to work with you on that. And I think -- I don't want to take up too much time, but I think that this needs to be another conversation, sort of more coming up with some ideas and maybe other groups, but that's up to you, Chair Denis. But thank you. I'm glad to hear you speaking up about this.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Thank you.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Thank you, Holly. Yes, I do want to note we do have other items on the agenda, so I think that this conversation should absolutely be continued and also I'd encourage people, we cannot deliberate outside of these meetings or have discussion, but people are welcome to send me ideas so that I can compile them for future discussion.

Or Julia, if you'd like, I can share your contact information for people to be able to contact you directly. You can decide that.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Please, do. Yes, this is Julia. Please do. I can also share the Special Education Parent Advisory Council e-mail as well. Is it okay if I put that in the chat or do you want me to e-mail that to you directly?

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. If you could do both, that would be amazing. The chat isn't accessible to everyone here and I will not remember to save it, so that way we'll have it in both places and I can e-mail it to everybody afterwards.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Okay.

>>Bonnie: So I want to give this about four more minutes. Comment from myself. I think in terms of ideas, I agree with Holly, it sounds like education might be a really good piece and I think that's something. So Brian, you had asked what is the ask here and I had reached out to Julia thinking that if there are concrete things we might be able to use funding, now that we have access to funds, and it sounds like it might be a little tricky. I don't fully understand, but it seems -- or maybe you can clarify this. It sounds to me like there is a contract with the school system and there's not enough spots for everyone. Do people pay for those spots or is that covered by the district when spots are available?

>>Julia Gibney Toof: This is Julia. They do pay and the district gives some funding or scholarships to some students who cannot afford it. So that's a possibility. I know that they had been doing more outreach because, again, a separate but related issue, a lot of members of the Latino community who are more recent arrivals do not necessarily know about the existence of after school programming as well and also lose out on that additional

enrichment and social time. And it's also -- it can be expensive. And some of the programming runs with the school is something like \$150 a week, and so per child that's something like \$600 a month, that can be pretty expensive for some.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Thank you. Yeah. So I think we as a Commission can definitely do some discussion in the future about if we think funding individual spots is worthwhile or if education or, you know, lobbying the school committee to get more funding towards this.

And I will note that the use of those American Rescue Plan Act funds has not all been decided, so that might be a really good place for us to advocate as well.

So very quickly, I saw Lian and Harriotte, and then I want to move on to other agenda items.

>>Lian: Yes. This is Lian. On that same vein, I know you mentioned that staffing was probably the biggest issue. In terms of things that might be easier to do something about right away, aren't there areas where additional equipment or additional training could make a big difference?

>>Julia Gibney Toof: I think that's one of the biggest problems is that I think a lot of different organizations within Somerville, even outside of the community schools organization, I think they just do not know how to accommodate. I think that's part of it, that it seems complex.

So I mentioned going to, you know, for example, Drumland Farm Camp and they had more staffing. They had some older counsellors and a nurse who were very well trained and then they had a lot of teenagers, essentially. But there was still just more eyes on the kids and they had them outdoors, which was very regulate -- you know, like helped the kids to be regulated. So I found that they were able to add particular accommodations.

And when I spoke to them, they talked about breaks and sensory toys and things that are really not that complex, once you no he that particular space, but that might be difficult or overwhelming for some of these organizations because -- and a good example to me, I was told, for example, the YMCA is going to have more spots but I've also been told by another family their child with ADHD was kicked out of that program for multiple behavioral incidents, let's say, whereas maybe that same child did not have those incidents in school with well-trained professionals.

>>Lian: Thank you.

>>Harriotte: Bonnie, I think I'll forego, this is Harriotte, I'll forego my turn and right to Julie. The only thing I'll say is obviously, we've just put our toe in the puddle and the first thing that grabs me is school committee, Mayor's Office, et cetera, et cetera. Education. So I would love to chat with you or

exchange e-mail, Julie, see if we can make some things through. Thank you.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Sure.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Thank you. And, yeah, thank you so much, Julia. I think it is just the start of the conversation. And, you know, we're going to be discussing further into the agenda use of the accessible parking funds, and one of the things to note is the procurement process, which unfortunately takes time. So I want to be realistic about whether or not we're going to be able to accomplish anything this summer.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Uh- huh.

>>Bonnie: But I think that this is a really important topic and we would love to figure out how to be of assistance because I don't think the problem is going to go away. So thank you for getting us started pretty in- depth on it.

>>Julia Gibney Toof: Thank you for having me. It was very nice to meet all of you.

>>Harriotte: Thank you, Julia.

>>Bonnie: Thank you. So I think in the interest of time I'm going to hold my chair report until the end if there is time. Harriotte wanted to discuss a little bit about the municipal vulnerability preparedness grant, which is quite the mouthful to say. So Harriotte.

>>Harriotte: Sure. This is Harriotte, and this is going to be very brief. I was invited to be on something called the equity council for I think it's a two- year overseeing kind of granting thing. And fundamentally, I think 93% of all the 300 towns and villages and entities in Massachusetts are by law supposed to have municipal vulnerability preparedness. And the definition is simply prepared for any disaster to support vulnerable individuals, and that ranges from age to disability to low income, immigrant, you name the marginalized groups.

And what I've learned in part thanks to Adrienne and in part thanks to some other stuff, is that technically we have a plan, but it doesn't really function without an action plan, and those are two separate parts of the process. And the action plan is I think in the application phase of a whole bunch of cities called the mystic valley -- someone help me -- Mystic Valley Water Shed, that's it, that's a part of it anyway. But everything from Chelsea to Medford, Somerville, Cambridge, et cetera, these different municipalities are involved in developing an action plan.

And I would love any assistance from anybody on this Commission or anybody you know because wherever there's extensive web research to be done to help get underneath this a little more thoroughly, I could really use some assistance. So basically,

this is a request. Well, I think my e-mail must be on the list somewhere, but you can share it with anyone. And that's pretty much it. Because the whole point is, from what little I've experienced, these MVPs are underdeveloped. And you think about really small places that have 300 people or 1,000 people, they don't have a whole lot of funding to figure this out and to even consider the ramifications. It's also a huge topic. So if anybody is interested, if they can do a little bit of research with me, that would be fantastic. Thank you.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Thank you, Harriotte. In the chat it's the Mystic River Water Shed Association, and that from my research is the current grant that Somerville is working on. I think emergency preparedness and disaster preparedness is in general, from the -- has spoken to this and there is technically a plan, but there's not a lot of things fleshed out for some of it. Like if people with disabilities have their housing affected and they need specialized housing, there's recognition that we don't really have a surplus of accessible housing in the city and there's not a plan on how to address that specifically.

So I think that's an area that I have some particular concerns on, you know, having been kind of forced out of the city because of the lack of it. But I think in a disaster situation it's also critical to think about because simply moving people out of the community I don't think is sufficient because it's really hard to get back in.

Jamie.

>>This is Jamie. I just want to mention that issues relating to emergency preparedness and one of the plans for something in that general area that the city has was discussed earlier in the year in the City Council's open space Environment and Energy Committee, which is chaired by Councillor JT Scott, so that might be maybe worth touching base with Councillor Scott just to see if that is related or if any of the things that are still in that committee are related to what you're trying to figure out, Harriotte.

>>Harriotte: Yeah. Yeah. Good. Thank you. I know him personally, so I can certainly talk to him about it. I think it just takes a lot of vigilance, this is Harriotte, I think it just takes a lot of persistence over time to make any head way with this, just like the education issue. Thank you.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Indeed. Brian.

>>Brian: This is Brian Postlewaite. One thing that I would add is that we do have an emergency management -- shoot, I'm getting Justin's title wrong, I'm sure -- but we have a director of emergency preparedness or emergency manager that started last year that helped the city navigate and develop our current

emergency management plan, again, I'll probably get the term wrong. Harriotte, I'm not aware of an emergency action plan, but I think I know what you're getting at.

But what may be helpful, Adrienne, is to see if Justin Kates can join us for some meeting and get us some insight into the elements that go into our emergency and disaster plans.

>>Harriotte: This is Harriotte. I have one postscript, which is the action plan is in effect to provide, I believe, funding also. So if you get a grant, you get some funding. Now, whether it's exclusive for the planning stages of the action, I need to check through their resources to be absolutely clear about that. So yeah, that would be great to have Justin come in. Thank you.

>>Adrienne: And just to clarify to the title, I just looked it up, it appears it is Director of Emergency Management, to help out my colleague, Brian Postlewaite, on those titles. But to be fair, they change sometimes and people often control their own narratives about those, so. So I will check with him about coming and maybe -- and I could maybe talk with you, Harriotte, about some specifics, or you, Bonnie, about what we want to see in that overview so we're making good use of that time. But I will start that conversation tomorrow to -- and I'm not sure, Chair Denis, what we have coming down for August. Would you like me to aim for August? No. Okay.

>>Bonnie: I think August we have several things already and it's probably going to be pretty full, so I think that it would be great to get Director Kates lined up for September.

>>Adrienne: Okay.

>>Harriotte: Interim I could check in with him, I suppose.

>>This is Brian. I know that we just -- the plan that the city has is a three- year plan that was approved last winter; however, there was discussion of updating it on a more regular basis, which is -- which the city does have the opportunity to do if we so choose. So I don't know if Justin or Chief Breen or anybody has been considering updating it more regularly. But I think having this Commission part of that next update would be good to get in Justin's and everyone else's mind before we get to the point of actually updating it because once we get there, it goes by really fast.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Great. Thank you. All right. I want to keep us moving. So very quickly, somebody who I believe is a consultant, but Adrienne, maybe you can clarify, I wasn't sure of what her title is, has reached out about the MBTA Davis Square red line accessibility improvements, which is primarily focused on adding and updating the elevators so that there is elevator service on both sides of the station. Does that sound correct, Adrienne?

>>Adrienne: I believe so. I was just trying to find her e-mail so we could get the credibility right.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. I'm not going to do that because I have the agenda up in my e-mail right now.

>>Adrienne: That's what I was trying to do.

>>Bonnie: So there is a meeting with the Council on Aging on July 18th, which I think is, it's either next Monday or --

>>Harriotte: Yeah, it is.

>>Bonnie: -- yes, at 11:00 a.m. It is in-person at the Tufts Building, and I will forward that e-mail to folks after this meeting so that if you want to attend you can. I have also requested a separate meeting specifically for this group because I know that daytime doesn't work for everybody and in-person does not work for all of our accessibility needs. And I think that there might be materials that it would be useful to get translated ahead of time.

So I have requested her to come to the August meeting and present and I'm hoping to have an answer to that by the end of the week so that I can get that agenda sent out by the end of the week. But that meeting, we have been invited to it, so anybody who is available and wants to attend, please feel free to do so. I see a hand raised from Harriotte, so great. I know Adrienne is planning to attend. I myself am not comfortable attending in-person so I will not be attending.

>>Harriotte: Shoot. I forgot it was in-person.

>>Adrienne: We did bring that up collectively. She was like the address, and I was like --

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Yes, Adrienne, thank you for bringing that up. And I did reiterate that to accommodate people with disabilities there really needs to be a not in-person option, so.

>>Adrienne: She is apparently the assistant project manager for City Point Partners, which -- and I'm making assumptions -- sounds like a working consulting firm, in that vein, but I would have to do a Google to determine.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Thank you, Adrienne. Yeah. So the upshot is they're going to add elevators to Davis Square so that it's more accessible than it currently is, and I think that's wonderful. They are at 75% of the design phase, so there's a little bit of input here. It's not a complete finalized plan. And again, I will forward that e-mail right after this meeting so that everybody has that info.

And other business, continued business, I attended the Mass Architectural Access Board, they did a brief discussion of the variance we did last month on 114 professor's row, which is a Tufts dorm that was asking to not make everything accessible. There

were a number of things that they happened to not have to do, from ramp to elevator to bedrooms, to bathrooms on all levels, and the status of that is the access board decided to move it to a full public hearing, so that has not yet been scheduled, but it will probably be a week from Monday or three weeks from Monday, and as soon as I see it on the agenda, I can share that with people.

In the meantime if you have public comments that you want to submit, you can do that via e-mail or calling them. People are able to speak during that public hearing. I was not able to speak yesterday during the nonpublic hearing, which was unfortunate because one of the reasons that they called for it to go to a hearing is to give this Commission more time to comment.

And as we all know, we submitted comments already. Yes, Pauline, I share your laughter because it's a bit absurd. They specifically also cited a compelling letter from the public which was submitted by Crystal Huff, which attends our meetings, as having enough good content that there should be a full discussion, which is great. But I know that Crystal submitted their letter after we submitted our comments.

I have e-mailed the Access Board asking them to confirm receipt of our comments and have not received any word back. So hopefully they do that to acknowledge it. And I'm mentioning this because communication with them has been a problem.

Also on that agenda yesterday was another request for a property in east Somerville on Thurston Street, it's number 115, a developer was asking to not make a required bedroom accessible. That is a request that this Commission did not see. I know that ISD received that request.

>>Harriotte: What's ISD, excuse me?

>>Bonnie: Thank you, Harriotte. The Inspectional Services Department.

>>Harriotte: Right.

>>Bonnie: So they oversee building permits and they are also an entity that needs to get notified whenever somebody wants to not follow all of the building codes.

Adrienne and myself have reached out to the Access Board trying to sort out this communication. It's a little unclear what the results of that will be, but we are working on trying to get that. I did ask for a full copy of that request that the developers made for 115 Thurston. I have not received it. But the board denied the requests as they stand, so the developer will either need to make the request differently or not move forward.

So right now we don't need to do anything unless somebody feels like reaching out to a developer directly to talk about the importance of accessibility.

Jamie, I see your hand raised.

>>This is Jamie. When you say "not move forward," do you mean do the project without variance and actually comply, or do you mean not do the project at all?

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. So it's all speculation. The developer was not at the meeting given it wasn't a public hearing and they were not required to be there. Their application for the variance said that in order to provide a second bedroom in one of the units, they would need to make that bedroom have a step up into it, which would not comply with making it accessible as required by the various codes their building triggered.

The Access Board said no and they suspect that what the developer will choose to do is drop that bedroom and turn that from a two-bedroom into a one-bedroom. So I am trying to find out who the developer is. I do know from research that they did not ask the zoning board for relief, the zoning board of Somerville.

So what they told the Architectural Access Board is because of Somerville's requirements on setbacks and heights of buildings, they could not make this particular bedroom accessible because of the height they needed to get the garage spaces. They said if they raised the whole floor up, then the whole building would be taller and they would be more than the stories they're allowed to have based on Somerville zoning.

So my thought on that is they could ask the Somerville zoning board for relief on that to get permission to build higher and still provide that other bedroom. But probably left to their own devices they will just not have that bedroom and make a smaller unit, and thus not provide an accessible family size unit.

>>This is Jamie. Thank you. That's good context.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. So again, there's -- they haven't been granted permission, so they can't -- they can't make it inaccessible, but I think this is a prime example of where if the city was working more closely with the commission we would have seen this variance and been able to have discussion and been able to reach out to City Councillors or the zoning board and the developer to try and determine can we work together here.

I will also note that one of the reasons for the height issue is because Somerville zoning has an arbitrary requirement that all buildings that are residential have to be built two feet off the ground, and it's not for flooding or anything useful like that. It's because they want to give people living on the first floor privacy and they think that building the windows two feet up will do that.

And I think, you know, as a Commission we might want to do some more advocacy work in the future to change that rule because living in a city, we all have neighbors. We all have windows. And I think we're all capable of using curtains and shades or using

different building material options to make enough of an issue.  
Brian.

>>Brian: This is Brian. I just wanted to have the courage that advocacy. I do know that the planning director is aware of that issue and that is something that they're looking to adding into the next code revision.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. I'm glad to hear it. There are a lot of people on city staff and City Councillors that are aware and I have not seen movement to submit a request to formally strike it from the zoning, and so it might fall to us to do that. But I'm glad the city planner is looking at it.

All right. We have five minutes left. So accessible parking funds update. Last week or the week before, I'm not sure what time is anymore, myself and Holly and Adrienne met with the city auditor, Ed Bean, to discuss access to our funds. I shared some documents with people that I know may not be accessible to everyone and I am happy to individually go over them. But the basics are we have a little over \$90,000 in that fund right now. The money comes in every single month with new parking fines that are collected for accessible parking violations.

We have now received some reports for the past couple of years, and looking through those reports it looks like every month we get somewhere between 5,000 and \$11,000 in parking fines, which is pretty substantial. It looks like the fall months historically have been higher in terms of those violations, or higher in terms of people paying them. It's a little unclear to me if those -- the dates are when a ticket is issued or when it is paid, but I think it's the latter, so it's possible that the parking violations themselves are happening notice summer months and it just takes a little bit for the payments to be submitted. So if we want that level of detail, I can reach out to the parking director to get some more info on that.

The procurement process, procurement is basically getting things approved and paid for, and if something is under \$10,000, we have to use what they call sound business practices. We need to do some research on our own, whether that's calling companies or looking on the Internet or talking to people we know who work in whatever area we're looking at and say, hey, is this a good price, are they providing good services, and that's all we need to be able to submit a request to pay for something that the commission decides we want to get done.

Anything between 10,001 and \$50,000, we need three written quotes at a minimum before we can submit anything and we need to choose the quote that is the lowest and provides the services that we have identified a need for. So if, for example, we decided we wanted to do out-of-school programming for children with

disabilities and we said we want to devote \$60,000 of our funds to doing one year of programming -- that's a guess, I have no idea how much it would cost -- but if we wanted to do something on that level, we would need to actually get written quotes and go with the lowest quote.

And once it goes above that \$50,000, we would need to put out a request for proposals, which is often referred to as an RFP, and then, again, we would have to leave that open and people would contact us based on what we put forth as requirements and they would say I'm interested in putting in a proposal for this, here's what I would provide, here's what I would charge, and then again, we would need to go with the lowest offer that meets our identified needs. That I don't believe has a requirement for number of submissions because people may or may not be interested in bidding on our project, but we are required to keep it open for a certain amount of time.

So it's a little complicated the more money we want to spend. If we have smaller projects, then all we need to do as a Commission is decide what we want to spend the money on, identify somebody to research and reach out to people that we want to provide the service, and then once we vote to approve something, Adrienne can submit a request for the funding and that has a process within the city auditing and procurement department where they put out an invoice.

And I can share that if people want the nitty-gritty of the process, but basically the city is required to follow certain accounting practices and do checks on everything to make sure that people are getting paid appropriately. So we will not do that work ourselves. We will just put in a request.

>>Hello.

>>Bonnie: Yes, Pauline and then I see Brian.

>>Pauline: No. I was just thinking about the parking -- the parking fund thing. When do we have to have a plan for that?

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. So City Council voted last month to allow us to make our own decisions as long as they fall legally within the guidelines of what we're allowed to spend the money on, which is that the funds have to be used to serve people with disabilities in the community. So we no longer need a plan, we just need to make sure our projects fall within that and we don't need to get their approval all the time.

>>Harriotte: Hooray. This is Harriotte.

>>Bonnie: Brian very quickly, and I want to note that it's time to wrap up, unfortunately.

>>Brian: This is Brian. It wasn't that important. I was just going to clarify the \$10,000 limit. It can't be multiple procurements with the same vendor and that's a trap that a lot of

people get caught in is they like, oh, well, we asked them for two separate \$7500 jobs, and wow, we can't do that because now that's over 10 grand. So that's just a common trap that I wanted to remind us.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. That's very helpful and I don't believe that came up in our training, and that's a good note to get some clarity on whether that is in a specific timeline. Like I understand we couldn't do two in a row, but I definitely want to get clarity on if we hire somebody to do one program and then six months later have a different thing, does that trigger it as well, so.

>>Brian: It is per vendor per calendar year.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. That's, again, really helpful. Does it get triggered when you go over that amount?

>>Brian: So if you -- let's say you go to group A and ask for a service that's \$7500 and then before the next fiscal year you go to group A again for another service, whether or not it's the same service, procurement will say -- actually, auditing will come back and say, sorry, we're not allowed to sign this contract because you've already met your limit for this vendor. You'll have to wait for next fiscal year or you'll have to find another vendor to do the same service.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. You can't get quotes --

>>Brian: If you then go -- so you could go and do quotes and you could do the three quotes, you could do everything else, you could do that. I'm sorry. That was the third option that I didn't state.

>>Bonnie: Thank you. Okay. Lian, I note your hand, but I also note we're at 8:04 p.m., so I want to check in with our captioner if we can do two more minutes or if we should wrap this up.

All right. So, Lian.

>>Thank you. This is Lian. I just want to get back to my follow-up that I said at the beginning I had a question around the identifying yourself before we speak. And what I wasn't sure on is if there is like a conversation that ends up going back and forth a little bit, is it helpful to identify yourself every time or is it clear from the context that it's the same person responding again?

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. As you'll note from my modeling, I think it's helpful. Hopefully the captioner is catching it. But in case not, because there are often pauses in the things we're saying and sometimes people jump in, I think it's -- it's best practice if we can try to do that. And I understand it can get awkward, so if you don't, hopefully people will catch most of it, but I think the goal is to aim for that. Thank you.

>>Lian: This is Lian. Thank you for the clarification.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie. Great. So I am going to motion to adjourn the meeting. I know we didn't get to everything. And, yes, I will go back briefly to Jamie's comment on the time limit.

I don't know the history. I do think that it would be difficult given our population to do open-ended meetings. I know I certainly could not hold the focus like City Council does for four or five or six hours with no idea of when things will end. But I think it is worth perhaps next month having a discussion as a Commission if we want to maybe switch to two-hour meetings instead of one-and-a-half since we pretty routinely butt up against the time that we do have.

So I can definitely add that to next month's agenda and if people can think about that in the meantime in terms of your capacity and whether or not that would be a difficulty to you. The other option would be to do less items on agenda or two meetings a month. I think there's going to be no perfect solution and it will just be a matter of consensus of what the group thinks is most feasible.

So thank you, everyone. And I'm sorry for not remembering, do we need an official call or do I get to just adjourn?

>>Harriotte: Adjourn.

>>Brian: You're actually supposed to vote or adjournment.

>>Bonnie: Great. Then would somebody like to motion?

>>Brian: I move to adjourn.

>>Lian: This is Lian. I second the one I heard Brian making.

>>Bonnie: This is Bonnie.

>>Brian: Well taken.

>>Bonnie: So Holly.

>>Holly: Oh, no. I'm good.

>>This is Lian: I motion to adjourn.

>>Holly: Yes. And I will second that motion. This is Holly. I thought Brian was first and Lian was second.

>>Jamie: Holly, I think you're being asked to vote on the motion.

>>Holly: I approve then.

>>Bonnie: Brian? I saw a thumbs up from Brian.

>>Brian: I approve, yes.

>>Bonnie: Great. This is Bonnie. I also approve. Thanks so much, everyone. And I will see you next month.

[Concluded, 8:09 p.m., eastern]