

Burlington Committee on Accessibility

August 20, 2013

Room 12, City Hall

Committee Members Present: Ralph Montefusco, Ron Redmond, Bob Rusten, Michael Watson, Elaine Zimmerman, Patrick Standen, Jen Francis, Bradley Stephenson

Committee Members Absent: Russ Scully, Shelly Waterman, Ardelle Cabre, Mark Irish, Sheryl Bellman

Others Present: Santina Leporati, Peter Kriff, Kelly Stoddard Poor, Mabel Prine, Kesha Ram, Heather Timmons

Meeting Minutes

Public Comment, Introductions

Patrick welcomed everyone to the Burlington Committee on Accessibility meeting. He thanked Church & Main for providing food and noted recent renovations of the Daily Planet deck are not wheelchair accessible. Ralph points out that boards and committees should be making sure that renovations meet ADA compliances. He volunteers to make calls to further investigate this.

No more public comments for now.

Parks Master Plan

Jen outlined the plan. Why create a master plan? It creates an overview of the goals for the future of Burlington Parks. Process for the plan: existing conditions, existing plans, public engagement (website for public comment: www.burlingtonvt.gov/ParksMasterPlan/), supply/demand, visions and implementation, draft report and final draft.

Ralph encouraged anyone who would like to give input on the Master Plan to attend City Council meetings and/or Parks and Rec Commission meetings. City

Council meeting tomorrow is at 5:45. Ralph encouraged anyone to attend with concerns or to ask him to voice concerns at meeting.

Jen listed many reasons why parks matter. Burlington has approx. 518 acres of city parks/cemeteries, that's 12 acres per thousand people. Although we have a lot of acreage, we are still lacking many types of parks (particularly neighborhood parks). It is important to make sure the city has the right ratio of different types of parks, including cemeteries, forests, and community gardens. She is looking to see where there could be improvements to park access. There are many upcoming outreach events for the Parks Master Plan, all listed on a flyer. Jen encourages anyone with concerns/ideas about the master plan to talk to her.

Ralph suggested she consults the Accessible meeting/event checklist. Also points out the importance of not only have accessible park but also facilities. Jen talked about the movement to create more universal facilities. Peter commended the parks department for the accessibility of the tree house at Oakledge. Ralph wondered what the approval process for the parks master plan will entail. Jen responded that there will be many opportunities for public comment throughout the process.

Santina from VCIL asked if there are any goals to make each park a certain amount accessible? Jen responded not yet but there should be.

Accessible Adventures website presentation

Peter Kriff started by thanking everyone who has helped get the project off the ground. His organization is called SILC (Statewide Independent Living Council), there mission is to improve and advance the equality with which people with disabilities can participate. The council is very committed to not only making plans but actually working on and completing projects.

The Burlington Access group and SILC worked as an ad hoc group to create an application called the Rolling Gourmet. The Rolling Gourmet is peer to peer review system, that's goal was to allow people to share their experiences on accessibility for various restaurants. The program grew to cover many other areas besides just Restaurants. Changed name to Accessible Adventures and began to cover things such as recreation, shopping, and places of worship. You can access website at: www.accessibleadventuresvt.org. People with disabilities should be able to view going out not as a task, but as an adventure. He hopes to be able to see the logos of many different Burlington organizations on the website. The website goes beyond just telling businesses what the ADA compliances are, it starts a friendly conversation.

The way the application works is you first see in the organization you are going to review is already in the database (find by searching it either by name or category). On the site you can both rate the organization as well as write a review (ramps, lighting, service, etc.). You have the option to review businesses on many different aspects. Businesses also have the option to add information about themselves; Accessible Adventures can help Businesses advertise to a huge group of people. Businesses also have the ability to view and respond to feedback, this allows there to be a conversation.

Heather suggested the site could include more information for those with developmental disabilities and their families. Patrick encouraged everyone on the Committee on Accessibility to take part in Accessible Adventures and do a review when they dine out, play or shop, join the logo exchange, volunteer to enter business info into AA and facilitate getting “database information.” Bradley suggested adding more social media to Accessible Adventures such having a Twitter/Facebook account.

Accessible meeting/event checklist draft presentation

Mabel presented the checklist she created with a former intern, Claire. They took information from ADA guidelines and other municipal resources to create a draft. They would like feedback to ensure it is inclusive and covers a range of disabilities. Ralph commented that it is useful because it is concise. The hope is that, once it is complete, it will be a living document that can be shared with other City departments and organizations that request it so it can be used as a resource. Ralph said that this should be accessible on the City webpage and to all departments. Santina will review it and add comments from VCIL. Peter Kriff would like to have it for the document library. Ralph would like to see accessible checklist for voting. Ron wants to work on making this feel readable and approachable for businesses. Jen suggested making this more of a brochure.

Designating leaders for ad hoc working groups

Ralph will continue to set up outreach meetings with various City boards and neighborhood groups. Bradley will lead the physical infrastructure working group, which is looking into ramps for several establishments in the downtown.