

Accessibility Committee
10-15-13
City Hall, Room 12

MINUTES

Announcements

Santina: leaving November 1, blog post about 'inspiration' as uncomfortable label for PWD, event information

Kesha: Community Dialogue on Racial Justice on Oct 24, all are invited

Shelley asked if the committee has a webpage and Kesha indicated that it does, but it is pretty bare. It contains agendas and minutes mostly. The link is:

<http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/Mayor/Advisory-Committee-on-Accessibility/>

DPW Visit

Ralph spoke about the Accessibility Committee at DPW and remarked that it is great to have Chapin here at our meeting.

Chapin highlighted that he is new, access to pedestrian and physical activity are near and dear to him, there is enthusiasm in city for Complete Streets, housing near transportation, a walkable city. He was humbled by a wheelchair experience he had with Local Motion. He is in listening phase, carrying out a mission of a vibrant and accessible city for all.

Ralph: we function as a link to greater community, processes for feedback not always widely known.

Brad: Ned has been helpful, all new construction should be accessible to the extent possible.

Ralph: debris and snow banks make travel hard, need more curb cuts.

Elaine: sidewalks are an issue, fell in an open hole, called and received gracious attention.

Chapin: request for service system allows DPW to track issues that are reported, how timely, communication back, etc.

Ned: please get customer service link information up on website.

Shelley: who handles ADA accessible parking issues?

Ned: DPW carries out federal and state laws regarding number of accessible spots.

Ralph: SeeClickFix is useful for reporting these issues.

Ardelle: holes in the sidewalk, guide dogs do not pass through narrow areas between snow banks, flat surfaces are difficult, North Ave works, Pearl is difficult.

Elaine: who do you call when bicyclists knock you over? Have been knocked over repeatedly.

Ned: that's a police issue.

Chapin: participation welcome in efforts to coordinate better education tools with DPW, BPD, Local Motion, fixing bike path.

Shelley: events often inaccessible, there is a need for a changing table for adults.

Ned: moving entities from meeting minimum standards to making spaces accessible.

Chapin: keep dialogue open, use SeeClickFix, report problems.

Committee Updates

Shelley: school update, ceremony to recognize Flynn accessible playground with ribbon cutting, Miriam update will be in email (highlight: accessibility issues are regular part of BHS update now).

Brad: good news about Scuffer and Lucky Next Door entrances accessible, Bento does not have to build a ramp because cost would be a disproportionate cost burden for them, DPW did its job in meeting standards, asking Gene Richards about airport disabled loading zone, College Street shuttle stop curb cut.

Ned explained the idea on this particular situation is best described with the phrase "that which is altered." Meaning that the business owners did not touch/renovate the front wall so they did not have to add a ramp. The total cost of the renovation was 5500. The amount to add the ramp was 1650 dollars. Due to the government shut down, the Department of Justice was unavailable, but Ned will contact in the future to see what can be done with Bento.

Brad stated interest in creating a designated disable zone at the airport. It is difficult to go across the sidewalk for a taxi. Ralph suggested going to the commission to further discuss this issue.

Brad also mentioned that there is no curb cut at the bus stop in front of the Whiskey Room close to Church St. Kesha added that a member from CCTA would attend the next meeting. This issue could be discussed with them at that time.

Brad stated that it would be nice/ideal for people in the community to let the committee know if they have any problems with infrastructure or anything else around the city.

Ralph indicated that is extremely important to work on public outreach. Residents of Burlington should be aware of the committee and the committee should be aware of the residents. Ralph has yet to meet with Wards 2,3,4,5, and 7. He also found the City and Zoning accessibility file from the first time committee was staffed. This file serves as an institutional memory. Much is outdated but there is importance within various documents.

Ralph began discussing "First Night" and said that he scheduled a meeting with Tom on the 21st at 2pm. He will be discussing the accessibility of First Night and how that process will happen. He understands that it will be a gradual progression but it's good to begin this year.

Ralphs also stated that the chair of AARP national board will be in Burlington and he plans to speak to her about inclusion topics and other issues around Burlington. He has a meeting with her Thursday (10/17) at 10 AM. He plans to talk about resources that this committee could use. He stated the importance of collaboration with groups in Burlington with the same mission as the committee.

There will be an event with Peter Welsh on November 12 at 9:30 AM at Memorial Auditorium. He will discuss Medicare, Social Security and what to expect.

Kesha mentioned the new VT Health Connect and the importance of reaching out to the community and individuals who do not understand how to navigate the website or have any questions. There has been many critiques on the website and its difficulty. Kesha also mentioned that Peter Welsh will be in Burlington Wednesday (10/16) at the Community Health Center from 4-8 PM, his discussion will be from 4:45-5:15.

Term discussion:

Kesha was thinking about 1 or 2 terms, giving 1 term to those who have not been able to consistently make the meetings. There was a discussion of have bylaws or some way to keep track of those who constantly miss meetings. Shelley said that anyone who wanted to be apart of the committee should come and we all understand that sometimes things happen that keep us from fulfilling out obligations. Shelley suggests that we shouldn't limit our framework but we should think of ways to keep the committee moving forward. She doesn't know how exactly that system would look like/function but it's a topic that the committee should look into further. There was an idea of making phone calls to those who have not showed up just to check in and see if they are still interested.

The conversation shifted to adding more members who has knowledge and resources with the mental health community, as they are vital to the holistic mission of the committee. There needs to be a balance between mental and physical health.

There was also an idea to add another business owner to replace Russ Scully who has not been able to attend various meetings.

Next Steps

Ralph mentioned that it was Accessibility Awareness Month at UVM. He believes that the committee should have been apart of some events held by UVM. In the future, there should be communication between UVM and the committee about events like this. It would be helpful to both UVM and the committee to involve those from the community to participate in these events. Kesha stated that there are occasions in which space is limited for people from the state/community. Sometimes events are only for UVM staff or students, depends on the event.

There was unanimous agreement that schools are a good way to raise awareness on the committee and accessibility issues as well. It could be a good way to get students involved in the committee (e.g. designing posters or updating social media.)

Lastly, there was a discussion on the rooms that could be used for committee meetings. The one used for this meeting is a possibility for future meetings. There is also the Public Works Department Conference Room on Pine St.