

BRAINTREE COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
Meeting Held Via Zoom
Monday, June 2, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

IN ATTENDANCE: Crystal Evans, Treasurer
Robin Torpey, Member
Mary Russo, Member
Scott Lamphere, Member
Kelly Ormsby, Member

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

Call to Order:

Crystal Evans served as Acting Chairperson for this meeting.

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by roll call vote: Crystal Evans-yes;
Robin Torpey-yes; Mary Russo-yes; Scott Lamphere-yes; Kelly Ormsby-yes

Introduction of New Commission on Disabilities Member:

Ms. McGrath introduced Kelly Ormsby, a newly appointed member of the Commission.
Ms. Ormsby introduced herself and provided information about her background.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of May 5, 2025 were reviewed.

Motion made by Robin Torpey to approve the meeting minutes of May 5, 2025. Motion seconded by Mary Russo. The motion passed by a roll call vote: Crystal Evans-yes; Mary Russo-yes; Robin Torpey-yes; Scott Lamphere-yes; Kelly Ormsby-abstained

Chipotle/Old Burger King:

Ms. Ziniti stated there have been no construction plans provided to date. The only work that has been done was a cleanout. She spoke to Mr. Forsberg to ensure that if the work is over \$100,000 they are expected to be in compliance. She mentioned the problems with the parking lot. She spoke with a representative from Messina, who said this is a shared parking lot with Tennessee Barbecue. There are 50 spaces total with four handicapped spaces. There is no van accessible space and she suggested converting a regular parking space next to two existing handicapped spaces into a van accessible space.

Mr. Lamphere stated there are also curb cut issues in this location. Ms. Ziniti stated she will go back and look at that. She stated all the signs need to be replaced. Mr. Lamphere

stated he feels there are other establishments who met the financial threshold for compliance but did not make the necessary improvements. He stated this should be part of the process for all projects. Ms. Evans stated the Planning Board has approved tearing down the old Burger King, which is 3200 square feet and replacing it with a Chipotle which is going to be 2400 square feet. She stated this is a major project and should be discussed with the Planning Department. Ms. Ziniti stated she will discuss this with Planning and with Mr. Forsberg.

Ms. Evans stated in the same plaza, at Subway, there is no curb cut and their door opens the opposite way for a wheelchair. She stated this should be addressed during this project, bringing the whole area into compliance. Ms. Ormsby asked if there is a procedure for communication between the Planning Board and the Commission. Ms. Ziniti stated there is always discussion between the offices with plans, etc. Ms. McGrath stated normally as the Planning Board receives applications they will send out a request for comments, which includes the Commission on Disabilities, so this will be brought to the members.

Ms. Torpey asked how many parking spaces there are in this plaza. Ms. Ziniti stated there are 50 total shared spaces. Ms. Evans stated the Chipotle will have 30 spaces. Ms. Torpey expressed concern with the down ramp between the two buildings, she stated it seems dangerous with people driving fast through that area. Mr. Lamphere stated hopefully with the new building there will be better traffic flow. Ms. Evans stated the pedestrian access in that area is terrible as there is no path of travel, which is required. She stated they need cohesive travel in all directions. She provided examples of plazas which are well laid out and could serve as models for other properties. She stated in some instances the town is looking at their layout and the property owner is looking at their layout and the two do not match. She also expressed concern about the present crosswalks at this plaza. Mr. Lamphere suggested that some of the older plazas be asked to provide upgrades to make their properties more accessible.

Elm/Middle Street Trail:

Ms. Ziniti stated this topic is on hold until DPW and Engineering can join in and provide information. Mr. Lamphere stated his specific concern is there is a designated handicapped parking spot which is on a steep incline and approximately 25 feet from a curb cut, is further from the entrance and requires the user to exit onto the street. He stated he has no other issues with the trail itself.

Ms. Evans asked about the Riverwalk, as there are no railings on the walkway. Ms. Ziniti stated she also noticed that and is going to ask Conservation about this. Ms. Evans also asked if there are plans to put benches along the walkway, or whether a seating area could be something the Commission can fund. Ms. McGrath stated they can reach out to Laura Morrison, the Conservation Planner and enquire about this.

Braintree Electric Light Department: Electrical Box Architectural Access Board Complaint:

Ms. Ziniti stated the box near Olympian Diner is owned by BELD. The Architectural Access Board reached out about a complaint and the box has now been repaired. The DPW Director has notified the Board about the repair. They will be paying closer attention to how the repair holds up, given the amount of traffic exiting the diner. Ms. McGrath indicated the Architectural Planning Board has closed the complaint.

Discussion of Parking Penalties:

Ms. Evans stated the last time the Town Council increased parking fines was March 2014. At that point they brought handicapped parking up to a \$150 fine, blocking a handicapped curb cut is \$150, parking in a bus stop is \$100, and within ten feet of a fire hydrant is \$50. The rest of them are \$25 to \$50 fees. She stated the fine for parking on a sidewalk is only \$25 and doing so is damaging the sidewalks. She asked if this is something the Commission could work with the Town Council on to increase some of the penalties.

Mr. Lamphere asked if the parking is being enforced. Ms. Evans stated she has spoken with the enforcement officer and he will speak to the offenders, who always have excuses as to why they are parked there. She provided examples of sidewalks which have been destroyed due to vehicles parked on the sidewalk.

Ms. McGrath stated the process to discuss fees would start with the Finance Director and the Police Department. During review they will look at other communities and conduct a survey to see what they are charging. She did discuss this with the Finance Director, who indicated the Police Department reviewed fees a year ago and felt they were in alignment with other communities. However, there is an opportunity every year to have the fees reviewed and she can let him know the Commission is interested in having a review. If any changes were to be made it would go through the Committee on Ordinances and Rules.

Ms. Evans stated another area of concern is the fine for interfering with snow removal, which is only \$15. Members expressed concern with people actually paying their fines. Ms. McGrath stated if someone does not pay their fine the information is sent to the Registry of Motor Vehicles and this can hold up registration or license renewals. Ms. Evans suggested implementing a tiered fine for multiple offenses.

Ms. Russo left the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Handicapped Parking Fund Account:

Ms. McGrath reported the current balance in the handicapped parking fund is \$47,850.78. Ms. Evans explained for Ms. Ormsby how the Commission fund works and the types of projects the Commission has funded in the past. Ms. Ormsby asked if there is a way to get information out to the Community when the Commission funds these projects. She

recommended trying to share this information with the town so people are aware and can use the equipment provided. Ms. McGrath stated the Mayor has a newsletter and they are trying to utilize this to inform residents. Ms. Ormsby stated utilizing the news bulletins at the schools would also be a good tool. She stated she could help facilitate doing this.

Other Business:

Ms. Ormsby stated she has briefly reviewed the transition plan on the town website and wondered if the plan had begun or if they now have gathered the information so it can move forward. An audience member, Mr. Ellis, asked if there is a list of all the noncompliant properties discussed during this meeting.

Ms. Evans stated See-Click-Fix can be utilized to track items that need to be addressed. The transition plan details a lot of town infrastructure issues for accessibility which need to be addressed for long-term planning. Ms. Ziniti stated she is almost done with updating what has been done so far on the transition plan. She stated things are getting done but not in any specific order. They are dealing with the same problems as other towns with lack of funds and staffing shortages. She stated the estimated cost for all the work that needs to be done was \$6 million, with \$4 million for the schools alone. Since it is now two years later the cost has probably increased 30 to 40%.

Mr. Lamphere stated that it is positive that there is work being completed and they do not always recognize that. He mentioned Watson Park and the improvements that have been made there as an example. Ms. Ziniti stated that is nice to hear, as that project took a long time to come to fruition. Ms. Ziniti reported that an updated sidewalk survey was finalized in 2024 and is on the town website. She recommended members review this report.

Ms. Evans stated she heard they are trying to get a grant for a walkway around Adams Park. She asked if this information is correct. Ms. Ziniti stated they are applying for a project grant through the Massachusetts Office of Disabilities. She met with Engineering and Parks and Recreation to try to write a strong application. They are trying to get \$250,000 to help with the walkway that goes around Adams Park and potentially add four to six benches around the route. They also want to add some additional accessible park equipment. Grant applications close in a week and then they will be reviewing applications and providing approvals in October.

Ms. Evans asked for an update on the Stop & Shop discussion held at a previous meeting. Ms. Ziniti stated she did go there with Mr. Forsberg and measured the sidewalk. Mr. Forsberg is looking into it further. She stated she will put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

Ms. Evans asked if the new DPW Director would be able to attend a future meeting. Ms. McGrath stated this is in his queue but he just started in March and is still getting himself settled.

Ms. McGrath stated she would like the Board to consider a reorganization at their next meeting to elect a Chair and other positions. Ms. Evans asked if they will be getting additional members. Ms. McGrath stated the Mayor is looking for new members but she is not aware of the status at this time. Ms. Evans stated she would like to wait until they have more members to reorganize. Ms. McGrath stated at the minimum they should appoint an acting Chairperson. Ms. Torpey was in agreement. Mr. Lamphere stated they should come up with a plan to implement a Chair for the foreseeable future, perhaps on a rotating basis. It was agreed to put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

Next Meeting: July 7, 2025

Adjournment:

Motion made by Robin Torpey to adjourn the Commission on Disabilities meeting at 8:10 p.m. Motion seconded by Kelly Ormsby. The motion passed by a roll call vote: Crystal Evans-yes; Robin Torpey-yes; Scott Lamphere-yes; Kelly Ormsby-yes.