

BRAINTREE COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
Meeting Held Via Zoom
Monday, August 4, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Kristina Ziniti, ADA Coordinator

Call to Order:

Crystal Evans served as Acting Chairperson for this meeting.

Meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by roll call vote: Crystal Evans-yes;
Robin Torpey-yes; Mary Russo-yes; Scott Lamphere-yes; Kelly Ormsby-yes

Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Ziniti stated the minutes of July 7, 2025 will be reviewed at the September meeting.

Ms. Evans asked that the handicapped parking fund discussion be moved to the first item on the agenda.

Handicapped Parking Fund Account:

Ms. Ziniti reported the current balance in the handicapped parking fund, through June 2025, is \$49,900.78, which is an increase of \$1120.00 since the last meeting.

Discussion: Commission on Disabilities Members

HC Funds/Potential Items to Purchase: Ms. Evans asked if there is any information available on what the cost would be to install benches, railings, and a pathway at the Monatiquot River Walk. Ms. Ziniti stated the Conservation Planner is leaving her position at the end of the month. She was shown pictures of the benches that were installed at the Council on Aging and she liked them. She stated she will follow-up with Facilities regarding the stone dust path.

Ms. Evans stated the benches in South Braintree square were removed due to rot and were never replaced. Also, the benches at the entrance to French's Common are in disrepair. Mr. Lamphere stated the benches at French's Common may have been repaired, but if not they should be replaced. Ms. Evans asked that the bench in front of the library be looked at also. Ms. Torpey suggested they may be able to get a discount if ordering multiple benches.

Ms. Evans recalled they had ordered benches for South Braintree Square and they were never installed. She asked Ms. Ziniti to look into this. She also suggested installing granite blocks next to the trees in South Braintree Square so people can sit down. There would not be room for a full size bench. It was agreed Ms. Ziniti would put together information on pricing for the benches and the Commission would vote at their next meeting.

Ms. Evans asked Ms. Ziniti get pricing for bike racks that would be large enough to accommodate E-bikes, scooters and tricycles. Ms. Ziniti stated she will reach out to other communities and will add this to the agenda for the next ADA meeting. Mr. Lamphere stated in his experience he does not see anyone using bike racks when they are available. Ms. Torpey was in agreement that kids will not use the bike racks.

Ms. Evans asked if the town is planning on replacing the patio area near Southside Grille, as the bricks are sinking. She recommended if it is being replaced to add accessible picnic tables with umbrellas or some type of shading. She said there are also benches that convert into a picnic table. Mr. Lamphere expressed concern that anything that is put in be durable, as they will be damaged. He sees this all over town whether it is basketball hoops or charging stations, they are ripped out shortly after installation. Ms. Torpey expressed concern with someone injuring themselves using a bench that converts into a table.

Ms. Ormsby asked Ms. Ziniti to get a quote on an AAC device, as discussed at the previous meeting, so the Commission can determine if they want to install one in a playground.

Sidewalks at Richardi's/Olympian Diner: Ms. Evans stated there is a chronic problem with the first parking space in the Olympian Diner parking lot. People are not parking fully in the space and extend over the sidewalk. She would like the Commission to consider either advocating for changes in structure with the town or sending a letter to the restaurant owner. She stated the police have been called numerous times by people who cannot get down the sidewalk. Ms. Ormsby asked if the space can be converted into a handicapped space. Ms. Evans stated that was an idea she had, as there are no handicapped spaces in that lot. She stated with this lot, and the overflow parking they have, the ADA Coordinator has the ability to enforce addition of a handicapped parking space under Mass Architectural Access Board. She stated another option would be for the town to install plastic bollards along the first parking space, however, people may just run them over when parking. Mr. Lamphere suggested painting a white strip to indicate the boundaries of the parking space may serve as a short-term solution. He stated parking in that lot is difficult given how tight it is.

Ms. Evans stated the parking lot at Richardi's has no lines and in the lot to the left of the stairs large trucks extend out onto the sidewalk. She recommended putting a handicapped space in that lot. Mr. Lamphere stated if the lot was properly striped there should be plenty of room for a truck to park without extending onto the sidewalk. Ms. Evans suggested also having the town install a no parking on the sidewalk sign on the sidewalk between Richardi's and Dunkin.

Mr. Lamphere stated this is a problem all across town with businesses. A brand-new restaurant opened across from Dunkin and the lot is rubble, with an unsafe handicapped parking space. He stated there needs to be a more uniform approach to address some of these issues. Ms. Evans stated in the instance of the restaurant that renovation should have triggered Mass Architectural Board compliance, which is the responsibility of the Braintree Building Department.

Ms. Ormsby stated this appears to be a much bigger issue that keeps happening over and over and needs to be addressed with the Mayor. Mr. Lamphere stated it is frustrating that Braintree is not doing the basics when a project is done. He stated they are always stuck in a loop and never have the people in the room who can fix it. Ms. Evans stated Mayor Joyce is fully aware of this, but recommended the Commission write her a letter requesting her presence at a meeting to discuss these issues and ask her to take action.

Mr. Lamphere stated he has emailed the Mayor and gotten no response. They have requested new members and only got one. He does not feel the Mayor has much interest in the Commission as a group and does not respond to messages. Members discussed examples of businesses and buildings in town that are noncompliant, even after renovations that should have triggered modifications to make them compliant.

Mr. Lamphere and Ms. Evans asked Ms. Ziniti if she is in agreement that there is a problem with the town employees enforcing 521 CMR. Ms. Torpey stated there appears to be a lack of commonsense. Mr. Lamphere asked that discussion of problems areas in town be added to the agenda each month. He stated town hall still does not have an accessible pathway to the building from the handicapped spaces and the ramp was never completed to bring it into compliance. Ms. Evans stated when they approved repaving the town hall parking lot the purpose was to improve access to the ramp and when the project was complete they had done everything except the access to the ramp. Mr. Lamphere stated the path to the high school is in terrible condition and there is very little access when parking in a non-handicapped space.

Ms. Russo suggested they make a priority list and work on items two at a time. Mr. Lamphere stated the town may have a priority list established that the Commission is not privy to, but they do not get communication, and there is no communication provided when these discussion items show up in the minutes.

Route 37/Grove Street Improvements/State Officials: Ms. Evans stated she spoke with Senator Keenan, Senator Driscoll and Representative Cusack's offices to determine what the Commission could do to work with MassDOT to obtain funding to work in the areas of Braintree that are within their jurisdiction. Senator Driscoll's office asked that a list be put together and sent to them so they can work on funding. This includes Route 37, Route 53, Grove Street into Columbian Street, Union Street rotary, Capen's bridge and the Elm Street bridge. She reviewed a PowerPoint presentation to outline this process and identified problem areas. It was agreed to continue discussion of this at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: September 8, 2025

Adjournment:

Motion made by Robin Torpey to adjourn the Commission on Disabilities meeting at 8:09 p.m. Motion seconded by Scott Lamphere. The motion passed by a roll call vote: Crystal Evans-yes; Robin Torpey-yes; Mary Russo-yes; Scott Lamphere-yes; Kelly Ormsby-yes.