MONTPELIER ADA COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes

The Montpelier Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Committee held its regularly scheduled meeting on **Tuesday, June 5, 2012** at 10:00 A.M. in the City Manager's Conference Room.

Committee Members Present:
Kim Brittenham, VCIL, Chair
Anne Wilson
Angela Timpone, City Council Member
Tom McArdle, Assistant Director of Public Works
Arne McMullen, Recreation Dept.
Guests Present:
Kevin Casey, Economic & Community Development Specialist
Michael Arnowitt
Kim Bent, Lost Nation Theater

Introductions and Welcome

Our guests introduced themselves and noted their interest & reasons for attending. Kim provided some background information for the benefit of the guests.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 3, 2012

Two needed corrections were noted by the Chair:
Pg 2: revise Mr. Fraser's statement about number of times the complaint process has been employed.
Pg 4: revise ADA anniversary date; actual vs celebrated.

A general discussion ensued about the Library topic as reported in the minutes (Library Summary Report) and questions were raised about the status and whether a letter had been sent to the Library Board. Tom noted that he prepared the letter for Bill's signature but a copy had not been received for the record from the Manager's office & doesn't know how it was communicated with the Council liaison but will inquire.

Kevin spoke of grant for library book drop relocation and need for City Council approval of guidelines and criteria which have not yet been reviewed by loan committee. Kevin said he has prepared draft grant review criteria.

Anne asked why the cost of the book drop is $8,000 and wanted to know what that amount will pay for. Is it a slot in the door or something else. Kim said she met with library staff and explained that unless the book drop is only for use after regular hours, they are not providing equal access.

All wondered who the new Library Board liaison is from the City Council and whether he / she was made aware of the book drop issue & unresolved grievance issue.

Editors note: meeting minute review / approval concluded at end of this meeting. Approved with corrections noted above.

Pedestrian Signal Summary

Tom said the new systems have been installed but programming is not complete. He explained how they work and what the accessibility aids they are supposed to achieve.

Michael commented about the new pedestrian crossing signals and noted some issues with the Main / Memorial / Northfield intersection. He said he was unable to hear locator tone and described how he uses the step count method for orientation to find tactile warning, aligns himself on the crosswalk with limited visibility of markings, but unable to hear voice message. Tom noted he & Michael had spoken and will be meeting to provide on-site explanation of new system and will coordinate with re-programming efforts with contractor.

Kim mentioned a public service announcement she had participated in about wheel chair safety. There have been a couple of fatalities including one or more in crosswalks. She said she had worked with Luck Bros contractor in Barre regarding the construction project traffic control and crossing safety issues. Tom noted that chair users are vbery low profile and easily hidden from view by vehicles, etc and asked if chair users are encouraged to use the pennants – or should be – to help protect themselves. Similar to snowmobilers which are also very low profile vehicles.

Mike mentioned that the crosswalk zebra markings are very helpful for his limited visibility.

Kim asked Mike if he was inconvenienced or worried about safety. He answered, no, he has some experience. Tom said the tone changes and site meeting will be scheduled this week.

Ann mentioned that the Barre / Main intersection is the most difficult and worst crossing in town and all agreed but Michael said people seem to see at that intersection – not as big & wide – so he doesn't have too much trouble.

Kim reminded the group that we need to get back to the agenda – supposed to be reviewing minutes – but pedestrian safety should definitely be a topic for further discussion on a future agenda. Michael noted that VABVI has organized training on-site of new intersections and how to use new systems.

Michael & Kim wanted to know the total crossing time for each intersection which Tom will provide.

More about the Library:

Michael mentioned the library computer terminals and the need for accessible systems. The technology is lacking; need speech program w/headphones. They need to be requested.

Privacy screens were also noted as a need. Kim mentioned they need to provide larger screens – monitors. Anne mentioned computer access is now a very important part of the library services.

Kim also noted that library staff probably needs some technical training to provide assistance when needed. She has had some discussions with them about this and will re-visit.

ADA Awareness Event:

For the benefit of the guests, Kim explained the idea & intent of the event that needs to be planned.

Angela said she did an op-ed piece for the Bridge & will do another but needs some guidance. Kim said an explanation of the new 2010 standards should be explained. A one page document / ad is needed to provide notice that Montpelier can provide to assist businesses with access issues – should include Loan fund & technical assistance component which few seem to know about.

Editor's Note: Kieth Vance from the Times Argus stopped by the meeting with a few follow-up questions for Tom about the new traffic signal pedestrian systems. He will be writing an article about the APS systems in the paper the following day.

Kevin said he did confirm that $2,500 grant is noted in the loan fund program as being available for ADA related technical assistance but it's a reimbursement arrangement. Kevin explained for Angela (arrived after discussion) the grant criteria needed for the loan fund**.**

Kevin said from his business experience gained partly during his employ by Jeff Jacobs, that there is a lack of an understanding about how to address barrier issues but that most are aware of the ADA and that it does apply to them. They just don't know what is needed – what is a barrier and how to address it.

Angela suggested that we need to take down the barrier to technical assistance fund and that Kevin should include eligibility criteria for the loan committee if he isn't already doing so. Tom said that there should be some program accountability requirements for reporting, services and activities.

Kim suggested that there needs to be an answer in 3-4 weeks if it's going to be included in the awareness campaign and Kevin explained the steps that need to be taken. Bill review and council agenda for approval are next steps.

Will want to highlight businesses that have made accomplishments in accessibility such as and should include others that have done similar work:

- Heney property Blanchard Block: new sidewalks & ramps
- Three Penney Tap Room: new access ramp and other accessibility improvements as part of expansion
- Pet Store: offering a dog scholarship for training companion & guide services

Michael noted businesses may not be aware of the disabled in towns and what the needs are. There is an invisibility issue which the awareness campaign should help with.

Regarding Thrush restaurant and disappointing absence of accessibility accomplishments, there was a discussion about the lack of good answers for historic sites. However, it was noted that many have been able to find solutions while others may see historic issues as means to seek exemptions with inadequate effort. Not certain what the situation may be at this location but Tom Noted that Glenn Moore is probably able to explain.

Kim reminded all that VABCIL (Sheila Thurston) remains willing to lead and guide people through sites such as Farmers Market for sited experience with blind folds and has goggles available that simulate different types of vision disabilities such as limited peripheral, etc.

Other Updates – Committee Members

Arne mentioned that he has a Norwich Architect sudent project for the swimming pool facilities and are looking the design possibilities of a two story accessible recreation department structure at this location.

Kim mentioned that the Community Foundation has funding accessibility needs to meet mission statement.

Set Next Meeting Date

Due to the holiday conflict, the next meeting is set for July 10, 2012 @ 10:00 am. (to conclude @ 11:30 am due to meeting room conflict)

10:00 am – Noon: awareness campaign

by: Tom McArdle