



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

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COMMISSIONERS

Ethridge A. King, Jr.
Larry W. Ward
Charles J. Marquardt
Victoria A. Harris

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tanya L. Ford-Crump

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Lesley Waxman

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Minutes of March 30, 2022

Commissioner Ward called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm on March 30, 2022 via Zoom.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Larry Ward	Present
Commissioner Victoria Harris	Present
Commissioner Ethridge King	Present
Commissioner Charles Marquardt	Present

Also present was Executive Director Tanya Ford-Crump, Assistant Director Lesley Waxman and Rachel Tanenhaus Executive Director of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

Motion: To close Public Comment.

Moved: Commissioner Ward

Seconded: Commissioner Harris

Roll Call:

Commissioner Larry Ward	Yes
Commissioner Victoria Harris	Yes
Commissioner Ethridge King	Yes
Commissioner Charles Marquardt	Yes

Passed: 4—0

II. MINUTES

During the review of the minutes the meeting was interrupted by an individual writing profanities in the chat. Ms. Waxman removed said individual from the meeting.

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 16, 2022.

Moved: Commissioner Ward

Seconded: Commissioner Harris

Roll Call:

Commissioner Larry Ward	Yes
Commissioner Victoria Harris	Yes
Commissioner Ethridge King	Yes
Commissioner Charles Marquardt	Yes

Passed: 4—0

Chairman Ward welcomed Ms. Tanenhaus to the meeting and made the following motion:

Motion: To suspend the rules to bring forward the discussion with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

Moved: Commissioner Ward
Seconded: Commissioner Marquardt

Roll Call:

Commissioner Larry Ward	Yes
Commissioner Victoria Harris	Yes
Commissioner Ethridge King	Yes
Commissioner Charles Marquardt	Yes

Passed: 4—0

The meeting was again interrupted by an individual writing profanities in the chat. Ms. Waxman removed said individual from the meeting.

Ms. Tanenhaus, ADA Coordinator for the City of Cambridge and Executive Director of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities introduced herself. Ms. Tanenhaus noted that she had received the list of areas to be discussed during the meeting.

Commissioner Harris thanked Ms. Tanenhaus for coming and commented that in addition to the items previously provided for discussion could we also discuss how we incorporate accessibility into our communications plan for the upcoming elections.

Ms. Tanenhaus agreed that discussing accessible communications was important, but she would rather start with the list first and then move onto the issue of accessible communications.

Before moving on to the list of topics provided, Ms. Tanenhaus provided an overview of what her office does and does not do relative to persons with disabilities.

Ms. Tanenhaus and the Commission then moved to discuss the topics previously provided:

Automark Machines

Ms. Tanenhaus commented that these machines are very old and do not have spare/replacement parts available. However, there have been no other machines approved by the State so we have to work with these machines. She noted that the disability community could use some assistance in learning what other machines are available. She commented that this is a serious issue across the country and the state.

Ms. Waxman asked if it would be helpful for the Election Commission to write a letter to the Secretary of State on this issue? It could also be done jointly with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

Ms. Tanenhaus commented that in her role she would not be able to write a letter, but perhaps the Advisory Board would be able to do so. It would require approval, but she is interested in looking into it.

Commissioner Harris commented that the Election Commissioners would be happy to attend meetings with the Advisory Board and would welcome real world examples to provide to the Secretary of State.

Ms. Ford-Crump commented that the Commissioners should attend an Advisory Board meeting. She also noted that the City has preferred the use of resolutions when communicating from the Commissions to the state. She noted that the Election Commission did this with the State Redistricting Commission. Maybe consider a joint resolution from both Boards.

Ms. Tanenhaus noted that she attends regional meetings on these matters and would be happy to bring the issue up at their next meeting. Perhaps there could be the opportunity for a multi-city resolution.

Accessible Vote by Mail

Ms. Tanenhaus started by commending the Commission for taking this issue up last fall for the Municipal Election and having an accessible vote by mail option available for Cambridge voters. She observed that this was particularly important during a pandemic when many in the disabilities community are at higher risk for complications from COVID. She is excited to have this option available going forward.

Ms. Ford-Crump thanked Ms. Tanenhaus for her assistance with Accessible Vote by Mail and commented that this option will be incorporated in the communication plan.

Ms. Tanenhaus commented that the Election Commission could also leverage disability organizations and aging organizations to further get the word out about this option.

Commissioner Harris asked if there is an available list of organizations in the City which the Election Commission should include in their outreach and communication plan.

Ms. Tanenhaus commented that should would send along a list. She also noted that she would be happy to include it in their newsletter as well as coordinate including it in the City's daily email update.

Ms. Waxman noted that we may have a different provider this year because the State coordinates services for State elections but we will be prepared to communicate the service/system as soon as the state informs us about what they have selected.

General Feedback

Ms. Tanenhaus started her comments with the observation there probably are a lot of things that go wrong that we just do not know about. It can be very stressful for a person with disabilities to vote, especially in a pandemic, and when something goes wrong they may not report it as that only increases the amount of stress.

Ms. Tanenhaus noted the following observations:

- Automarks set up in a manner that people can see the user's vote is an issue. It is imperative that the person using the machine has privacy.
- Poll workers may sometimes stand too close to the person using the Automark which creates a privacy issue. It may not be intentional, but it still creates privacy issues for the user.
- These issues need to be stressed in training as these areas are governed by Federal law.
- Attitudes of poll workers can sometimes cause issues, often this may be because the poll workers are older and may have hearing and other issues that exacerbate communication difficulties with the voter.
- Persons with disabilities using Automark machines have a difficult time confirming their votes. This is made even more difficult by the age of the machines.
- Poll workers need to be aware that voting is very stressful for persons with disabilities and have compassion for them. It will help make the experience better for all.

Commissioner Harris commented that it would be very helpful to have a component of training focused on working with voters who are persons with disabilities.

Ms. Tanenhaus commented that they would be happy to assist with or participate in training of poll workers.

Commissioner Ward commented that much of our training has shifted to online over the last couple of years. Does the Commission for Persons with Disabilities have any videos or online training?

Ms. Tanenhouse responded that the Commission would be happy to have in person training or via Zoom. She also noted that any videos should have captioning included in their design/production.

New Locations / Bike Lanes

Commissioner Marquardt thanked Ms. Tanenhaus for all the support that she and Ms. Thurman from her office provide in reviewing new locations for accessibility.

Ms. Tanenhaus commented that her office is glad to support the Election Commission and any other City Departments in ensuring accessible access.

Ms. Ford-Crump commented that she is concerned with the loss of parking related to the implementation of bike lanes and what that could mean for accessible voting locations.

Ms. Tanenhaus commented that the City's Traffic and Parking Department has affirmed their commitment to retain accessible parking as part of the implementation.

Commissioner Marquardt noted that when reviewing locations with Ms. Thurman there has never been an issue with having enough accessible parking as the Election Commission would convert metered parking to accessible parking for the day to ensure enough accessible parking was available. The loss of metered parking would remove this approach as an option.

Ms. Tanenhaus commented that this is a good point and we can work on this with Mr. Barr in Parking.

Commissioner Harris commented that schools would help resolve accessibility issues for polling locations as the schools should be designed with accessibility in mind.

Ms. Tanenhaus commented that they do not have a close working relationship with the schools.

Commissioner Harris commented that the Election Commission is working to set up a meeting with the City Council and the School Committee regarding the use of the schools as polling locations and support from the Commission for Persons with Disabilities would be greatly appreciated.

Ms. Tanenhaus responded that she would be happy to help.

Outreach and Communication

Ms. Tanenhaus commented that she and her team would be happy to provide training and support for inclusive outreach and communications.

Commissioner Harris commented that the outreach component could include multiple platforms and how to reach voters who have a disability.

Ms. Ford-Crump commented that it is great to work with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities and we look forward to continuing this work.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Tanenhaus for attending tonight and her and her staff for their ongoing support in ensuring accessible polling locations for Cambridge voters.

Ms. Tanenhaus exited the meeting.

III: REPORTS

1. Executive Director's Report

There was no Executive Director's report.

Ms. Ford-Crump did comment that she had met with Lee Gianetti in the Public Information Office about him attending a future meeting of the Commission and provided him with some dates of future meetings.

Ms. Ford-Crump also commented that she had provided Mr. Gianetti a listing of Commission accomplishments, including COVID accomplishments to be included in the Annual Report and the Budget Book.

Ms. Ford-Crump will forward the information provided the Mr. Gianetti to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Harris commented that it will be important to establish an outline of what the Commission wants to accomplish in its meeting with Mr. Gianetti.

2. Assistant Director's Report

No Assistant Director's report.

3 Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Harris reported:

- The Cambridge Democratic City Committee met on March 17th for the purpose of identifying three names to provide to the City Manager for selection of an Election Commissioner. The three candidates selected in order:
 - Victoria Harris
 - Gary Mello
 - Pamela Thomure

Commissioner Ward reported:

- He has another call into the Mayor regarding setting up a meeting for the Election Commission, City Council and School Committee regarding the use of schools as polling locations.

IV. ACTION AGENDA

Old Business

Communication Plan / Public Outreach

Commissioner Harris commented that she had sent out a draft communication timeline. She asked the other Commissioners to review it.

Ms. Ford-Crump commented that she had started to review the draft and that it was a good starting place.

Ms. Waxman commented that comments should be provided to her and Ms. Ford-Crump.

Upcoming meetings of the Election Commission:

April 13 – Meeting

April 27 – Annual Organizational Meeting

May 11 - Meeting

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:18 pm.

Moved: Commissioner Ward

Seconded: Commissioner Harris

Roll Call:

Commissioner Larry Ward Yes

Commissioner Victoria Harris Yes

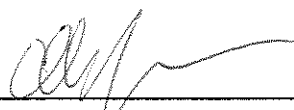
Commissioner Ethridge King Yes

Commissioner Charles Marquardt Yes

Passed: 4—0

A True Record

Attested by: _____



Charles Marquardt, Secretary