



Meeting Date: 9/14/2017, 12:30 pm
Location: Conference Room, 10th Floor

In Attendance: F. Mercede, M. Levine, D. DiBlasio, E. Grebeck, G. Lindquist, K. Murray, D. Thompson, P. Magalnick, W. Magalnick, H. Szymczyk, A. Bingham

MINUTES

Meeting started at 12:30 pm and FJ welcomed the group

May meeting minutes to be approved at next meeting

Agenda provided for the group.

New member Ed Grebeck introduced himself. Ed is in a motorized wheelchair and buses and trains are his primary source of transportation. Ed would like to provide input as he can see infrastructure issues with his wheelchair.

Marty mentioned more people are needed on the committee. He states we need all the help we can get.

Outdoor dining

Phil spoke with regards to the continuing issues regarding restaurants and sidewalks. They are afraid to walk on Bedford Street, Spring to Broad Streets. Honorata spoke up, as a visually impaired person and has the same difficulty with walking along those streets as well. There was an issue with the chocolate shop on Bedford street and their signage on the sidewalk. He spoke with the owner as an advocate for the disabled and mentioned the sign is impeding their walk-way. He contacted the Stamford Police Department, spoke with the dispatcher and no action was taken. There are repeat restaurant offenders:

Hudson Grille
Brother Jimmy's
Picante
Capriccios
Quattro Pazzi

The tables and chairs are trip hazards and may result in someone getting injured. Also, Ed could not access the intersection Bedford/Broad due to barriers due to construction. Due to the four inch drop he had to re-route in the street, go around and back down the street to cross the road. Other restaurants with tables/chairs attached are: Wedge Inn, Planet Pizza, and Dairy

Queen. Walter mentioned Amore on Hope Street is also an issue. He mentioned sidewalk clearance is an issue with extra people due to extra tables and chairs. Amore recently had a pig roast on the sidewalk which also caused an issue with sidewalk clearance; Marty mentioned that not only is that a problem it's a health violation. Marty mentioned he recently went to Amore and did not find a problem with access and he has seen progress. FJ mentioned he has not seen any progression and Bar Zeppoli, a new restaurant on lower summer street, clearly impedes the sidewalk; no progression but going backwards. The question arose as to how they were given a permit for their outdoor dining.

Questions arose with regards to the city employed parking enforcers and their lack of action on summer street. FJ mentioned his recent trip to Table 104 and the situation has not changed. He could not access with his family and was barely able to park in their "so-called" handicapped space via the portable ramp at the rear entry near the bar. The owner, offered to move the tables and chairs for Frank so his daughter could access but the option was not feasible. Per FJ, "You can't explain it unless you live it". Marty mentioned "Maybe you should stop going there".

Marty brought up the lack of sufficient staff and at this point it is appropriate to write a letter to the paper. "Violate standards of the City and consistently allow people to put tables and chairs where people walk. It's a public sidewalk; it's for everyone to pass through, not just the disabled, wheelchair or sight impaired". This is at the expense of the pedestrians and the city cannot effectively monitor it. It's time to let the public know. FJ - he did not take the role of Committee Chair with the possibility that there would be no action on the part from the city. He's very frustrated. The city bureaucracy is unable to get out of their own way and provide enforcement.

Phil brought up Jim Lunney and the call to the building department. Phil was told he said it's not his job. Phil and Honorata - also visually impaired - was nearly run over by a police officer two weeks ago as he was in the crosswalk. He feels this is a poor example being set when a police officer, who should be upholding the law, shows poor behavior. Also discussed is the lack of tree trimming, low hanging branches jutting out on the sidewalks. It is a hazard to someone with sight issues. If this could be taken care of, it would be helpful. Kevin recommended reaching out to Citizen Services which will generate a work order. Honorata asked if the citation officers are able to give out tickets for the A signs? Marty mentioned "can't issue citation for a violation unless it is in the ordinance as a violation". Marty mentioned Amenity areas (zones) in response to the 7 or 9 trash bins on wheels Honorata brought up with regards to it being the weekend and bins are out on the sidewalk. Per Kevin, the trash receptacles were removed for special events and prevention of bombing issues. The steel units (victor stanley) were downtown and removed per the police department. The Sanitation department placed what's on the sidewalks now.

City Accessibility Upgrades

Kevin - Funding is in place and can move forward. He hopes to have an update next month.

Honorata asked if it's possible to have a table without chairs so that a wheelchair can roll up. Kevin recommended they sit down, review the catalog and she can help him choose the table for the beach area.

Mat at Cummings -3 stages. It goes down to just above the high tide line and the slope is steep. Marty pointed out the coverage was not well advertised. Marty mentioned while he is pleased it happened, it's not on the side where you want to swim so another mat may be needed.

Feedback is needed - are they using the mat, should it be moved, would an additional mat be necessary? The cost is \$10K.

Quigley beach (previously Horseshoe Beach) is 50 feet in length and takes you to the tide line. Issue is there is a drop. Cove beach has access issues - getting into the beach itself. There is no parking area for self-driving or a place to leave your car. He would like to see first if there is a need.

Alicia asked if A4A has a Facebook page and if so, perhaps put a photo of the mat. Also, perhaps DSSD can put a photo on their web site. Someone brought up the cost of the exercise facility at Cover beach; cost ca \$50K and the donation was private.

New Ventures

Phil - He met with concerned citizens and has decided to chair a Stamford Coalition. As a public citizen, outside of A4A, he sees a lack in resources and help with problems. Phil mentioned the group is not meant to be adversarial. Marty congratulated Phil. Phil said he would like to have a city employee on the committee. As of now, certain members do not attend the A4A meetings and it would be helpful if they attended. What is the direction of the group?

Capital Projects

Capital projects are in place. Kevin will provide an update each month. Actions will be taken to upgrade the doorways from the garage into the LL area with blindfold doors. The 1st floor elevator vestibule has fire doors which have to remain and are currently kept open by security. The garage door parts have been ordered and is slated to begin on Saturday. He apologized for the delay. The senior center doors will be addressed as well. The bathroom doors are being discussed with engineering. The thought is to potentially have a unisex bathroom and plan on another unisex bathroom on the 4th floor. 1st & 4th Floors are part of the plan. Kevin brought up complaints received for Cummings beach and sidewalks. He noted the issues and will address. He will also look into the bathroom at West beach. FJ asked if Danny and Kevin can be added to the list for attending the meetings each month. Kevin responded yes and has it marked on his calendar for the second Thursday of each month.

Accessible Transportation

FJ - hotels. One of the wheelchair bound consultants visiting stayed at Hotel Zero and asked the front desk for transportation options and the person did not have an answer. Ellen was supposed to explore the options and look into who or what options are available so we can fix it.

Ed brought up Bulls head and Ridgeway and snow removal. He mentioned the merchants do not properly remove the snow. His wheelchair is 28" wide and sometimes the snow is 6" high and the turning radius is difficult. He would like the merchants to be aware of the difficulty. Walter stated the rule is 24 hours to clear the sidewalks after the snow stops. If the issue remains after two days, the police can be called. FJ mentioned it's not enforced. Phil brought up the sidewalks in front of the government center. It's a "zig-zag" and is dangerous. As a suggestion Kevin mentioned contacting James Travers or calling 4140. Phil responded it's a state road. Eileen Jefe who was a no show and has not rescheduled. The decision does not show up. Honorata asked if the possibility of a charging station to be installed for an electric wheelchair. Kevin will look into (needs to know about voltage, plug, outlet - specs for chargers).

Meeting adjourned at 1:30pm