

Council for Community Accessibility

June 30, 2025

The hybrid meeting was opened at 4:00 p.m. by Lesley Davis.

Members present: Lesley Davis, Arthur Lopez, Karin Willison, Casey Guarino, Marche Daughtery, Martin Homan, Susan Seizer, Hannah Lencheck, Sydney Zulich, Amy Shrake, and Linda Crawford

City Staff: Michael Shermis, Annabelle Vosmeier, Adam Wason, Director, Public Works, City of Bloomington

Minutes: The May minutes were accepted as printed and distributed.

Financial Report: Michael reported a balance of \$136.90.

Presentation: Adam (Director, Public Works, City of Bloomington) began discussion of the city's annual sidewalk plan which has been in place with limited funds for the past several years. As this is a major source of litigation, this has become a priority for Public Works. Adam mentioned that by the end of 2025, a video survey of all the sidewalks will be completed, each given a rating of fair, good or excellent. In response to an inquiry, he mentioned that the sidewalk adjacent to the property is the responsibility of the property owner. This has been in effect since the early 1970's. However, if a street tree is the cause of sidewalk distress, the city will fix it. The city does provide some support for those on the lower end of the income spectrum whereby the city will cover 50% of the expense of repairing the sidewalk. (Cost can range from \$500 to repair a few sidewalk panels to \$10,000 for a larger stretch of sidewalk.) This is still not always a remedy as even 50% does not render the repair affordable. The Public Works department works with the Transportation Commission on sidewalk issues. Sidewalk grinding has removed 7,000 trip hazards in the city.

As far as snow removal goes, Adam reminded Council members that city residents have 24 hours after the final snowfall to clear sidewalks. However, given that snowfall might occur intermittently over a 24-hour period, it is hard to monitor compliance with this city ordinance. Public Works focuses on keeping downtown ramps clear. A pilot program will be introduced in 2026 that makes snow removal in the pedestrian network from Walnut Street to Winslow Street a high priority. Concerning pushing snow into accessible parking spaces, private contractors will be monitored and contacted so that this situation is corrected. Alleyways unfortunately are the lowest priority on the snow removal list.

Public Works hopes that open communication with neighborhood associations might help with snow removal problems. Perhaps there is a way to work with the associations to keep ramps open. Public Works is also working with the Transportation Commission to look at snow removal from the pedestrian standpoint.

Report from the City: Karin, Casey, Lesley and Marche reported that the training done with the fire department was very much appreciated. Training will continue with other city departments, perhaps moving on to Planning and Transportation and Parks and Rec next.

Annabelle drew attention to the posters advertising the ADA anniversary celebration to be held on Saturday, August 2nd.

Partner Organizations Awareness and Outreach: Hannah reported that Stone Belt is carefully watching for updates on federal budget changes and Medicaid updates. Community partnerships are continually being sought. Stone Belt is hosting CCA's first Pop-up meeting on July 9th from 1:30 to 3:00 pm with emphasizing what people want to hear from the CCA.

Bloomington Transit reports that they have a contract to improve accessibility at all bus stops. Of the 26 bus stops, 13 are in need of repair. They have budgeted \$600,000 to be used for bus stop improvement over the next three years. Blink offers microtransit and paratransit service within a designated area. The downtown shuttle is free during certain hours; BT is needing more people to ride the free shuttle!

Jeff Jackson with Go Bloomington talked briefly about the program that supports mobility programs.

Amy Shrake, Parks and Rec Inclusion Coordinator, reported that automatic door openers are being installed at the Twin Lakes Center and the tactile map has recently been installed at Switchyard Park.

New Accessibility Concerns from Members/Visitors: The parking lot for the Thrift Shop located at Third and Madison is very small; consequently, there is a temptation to park in a non-parking space which results in blocking the sidewalk's accessibility. Michael will look into this. There is a loose, sagging wire on a pedestrian signal at BJ's Brewhouse. There are no accessible picnic tables on the public bathrooms side by the Splash Pad at Karst Park. Michael will look into this as well. (Perhaps this was a temporary problem as there was a group function near the Splash Pad the day this was observed.)

Committee/Partner Reports:

Accessibility Committee: Two new businesses have qualified for decals: Wing Stop and Smoothie King, both in The Shoppes mall. Three additional businesses were surveyed, but they are far from meeting requirements for decals.

Lesley pointed out barriers at several downtown restaurants. Chinese restaurant Best Taste (now Red Lantern) which still has a step at the entrance despite façade restoration; Bloomington Thai which has table and chairs located at the ramp and Taste of India which is redoing a side porch. Michael will check on these locations.,

Transportation and Mobility Committee: The committee met recently with Sydney and Nic Narducci about changing the snow removal policy within private or public domains. Sydney reported that the previous winter's snow removal was complicated by snow plows on back order as well as snow plows needing repair. It was suggested that the list of volunteer snow shovelers (Snow Buddies) be kept as well as hopefully adding more volunteers. Perhaps an appeal for extra volunteers be made at the Fall's Gather event.

Activities and Events: CCA Pop-Up Meeting with Stone Belt will be on July 9 at 1:30. The ADA Anniversary Celebration will be on August 2 from 9-12. Michael is requesting funds from CFRD to cover the cookies at the event.

MALL: No updates shared due to lack of time.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Linda Crawford, Secretary