

Council for Community Accessibility

September 29, 2025

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

Members present: Lesley Davis, Karin Willison, Marche Daughtery, Chris Jackson, Haoxi Wang, Deborah Myerson, Hannah Lencheck, Sarah Hueston, James Mitchell, Isabel Piedmont-Smith, Mike Stribling, Anna Thompson Jones, Chris Spink, Hopi Stosberg, Amy Shrake, Susan Seizer, and Linda Crawford.

City Staff: Michael Shermis, Annabelle Vosmeier

Guests: David Hittle, Director of COB Planning and Transportation
Anna Thompson-Jones, Program Director, SICIL

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

Financial Report: Michael reported a balance of \$1,936.90, with an additional \$500 expected.

Presentations: David Hittle, Director of Housing and Transportation for the City of Bloomington, informed the Council that the City Council has recently met, and will meet again in about six weeks, to discuss present ordinances, best practices and what other cities are doing in regard to housing issues. He mentioned that for the past 70 years, most structures have been houses for single families. Currently the city is looking at how there might be increased opportunities for affordable housing, something the city is currently lacking. David has been meeting with neighborhood groups, employers, school officials, and others to become better acquainted with Bloomington's housing concerns.

The CCA would like to see affordable housing that also includes accessibility and possibly housing with universal design.

Hopewell, which is public owned, ideally would have its own ordinances. Hopewell South, which will be completed first, is planned to have very small homes on very small lots with a 350 square foot home the smallest. Suggestions from CCA members asked that the city consider that 500-800 square feet is needed for a house to be accessible, with a bathroom on the main level. Also, the newly built homes should have no steps for entry and thresholds not to exceed ½ inch. For other factors involving accessibility, there are resources that could be utilized.

A question was raised about the possibility of prioritizing those needing accessible housing on a list. The response was that a prioritized list could not be mandated, but perhaps incentives might be offered.

Chris Spinks, from SICIL, suggested that building something without accessibility and having to retrofit it later can be significantly more expensive than building it with accessibility in the first place.

Anna Thompson Jones, also from the regional SICIL (Southern Indiana Center for Independent Living), one of ten such centers, would like to more closely collaborate with CCA. The center in Mitchell serves eight counties and works to develop independent living skills with its clients. The center serves to refer clients to resources, to provide peer support, and to help clients transition from one living situation to another. As SICIL's goal is independent living for its clients, it works one-on-one with its clients. Anna said that SICIL would be happy to host a pop-up CCA meeting.

Report from the City: The CCA provided training for the Transportation department which was well done and well received. Training is planned with Parks and Rec in December and the IT has requested training. Marche volunteered to help with the IT training.

CONA (Council on Neighborhood Associations) will host a fair at Farmer's Market on October 18th from 10 am to noon to provide resources for the neighborhood associations. CCA will table.

FlixBus provides accessible transportation outside of Bloomington; Bloomington residents could travel to downtown Indianapolis.

The state offers funding in the amount of \$50,000 through the Ramps Up program that would enable permanent ramps to be installed for houses or mobile homes. SCAAP would handle the income verification and MALL, SICIL, Area 10 Agency on Aging and Habitat for Humanity would partner with CCA to help with the local program.

Partner Organizations Awareness and Outreach: Chris reminded attendees that MCPL provides a monthly house call service but the patron must be a county resident. The current most requested item from MALL is a rollator. He is currently investigating a way to streamline and promote the service of providing mobility aids.

DSI recently hosted a social event for its clients and are currently working on plans for a Christmas party.

Stone Belt has recently recognized its clients and staff; they are currently working on ways to continue its services and programs despite federal budget cuts.

New Accessibility Concerns from Members/Visitors: The Mill is working on correcting problems with accessibility to its facility. Leslie mentioned that in Minnesota, the accessible parking spaces have the words "no parking" painted on those spaces!

Committee/Partner Reports:

Accessibility Committee: Five businesses have been surveyed: Showers North to serve as Election Central, Allison Jukebox, Monroe County History Center, The Oak, and Honey-baked Ham. The History Center has multiple accessibility problems. The Accessibility Committee made some recommendations, but it will require a major monetary effort to make the building accessible. The Oak has an entry step and some bathroom issues. Honey-baked Ham has a few minor issues. There will be another survey done of all election sites, including those outside the city limits. Juniper and The Venue have requested surveys.

Transportation and Mobility Committee: In addition to the mention of the FlixBus, Deborah mentioned that the October meeting of the committee is a quarterly joint meeting with BT Advisory board on October 14th.

Activities and Events: Gather Round the Table will be held on October 27th at The Mill from 4:00 to 6:30, offering heavy appetizers prepared by One World. The topic this year is employment. Don't forget to register!

MALL: Karin reported that a very competent repair person comes every Tuesday to work on mobility aids needing repairs. Karin said there is a need for manual wheelchairs and she has called home-

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assisted service organizations to let them know of the need. A suggestion was made to check with Hospice.

Report from the Chair: The City of Bloomington has awarded a \$15,000 grant to AccessAble USA which will be used to help small businesses advertise their accessibility features that go beyond the ADA requirements.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Crawford, Secretary