

C.A.I.R. COMMISSION
COMMISSION FOR ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT IN RUTLAND

Minutes

Wednesday, October 15, 2014

Present: **Chair:** Robert Barrett

Alderman: Gary Donahue

Other Attendees: Jessica Butterfield, Glenn Reed, Rose Reed-Denardo, William Lucas

The meeting was held at 3:30 p.m. in the Rutland City Alderman's Chambers on the 2nd floor of Rutland City Hall. Robert (Bob) Barrett opened the meeting.

The first item for discussion was a review of progress on any accessibility issues brought up at previous meetings. Glenn R. noted that the curb cut, tactile pavement and crosswalk work at the crossing between the Howe Center and Ramunto's Pizza was almost complete. Bob B. said that sidewalk improvements have been completed on Allen and Madison Streets. Specific progress on future projects was postponed to the next meeting as Nate Stansberry from the DPW was not present.

Bob B. said that the elevator people are still looking for the correct Braille stickers for the City Hall elevator. Jessie B. offered to print off elevator directions in Braille from her own Braille machine as a temporary measure and Bob B. said that was okay.

Discussion turned to new accessibility issues found in the community. Jessie B., who uses a wheelchair, said that she encountered a huge bump on the sidewalk on the south side of West Street, past Nichols Street, and it broke the end of her cane. Bob B. said he would have Nate S. look into it.

William L. raised the question of if there is adequate assistive technology for the blind and visually impaired at Rutland City Library, particularly in the card catalogue section. He and Glenn R. will check into this and report back at the next meeting.

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Glenn R. and Jessie B. reported on issues encountered on their walk from the Howe Center to City Hall. Specifically, it was noted that a huge, SUV was parked across the sidewalk at Greg's Auto Service. It forced Jessie to go off the sidewalk, which drops by about two inches, into gravel and she briefly got stuck. Bob B. suggested having a group approach such businesses when these issues arise and educating them on accessibility issues.

The question was asked as to how the City of Rutland prioritizes where to complete curb cuts with tactile paving. Specifically, does the DPW try to complete these improvements at both sides of a crosswalk? Bob B. indicated he believes this to be the case, but other attendees noted several spots where the improvements are done on one side of the crossing, but not the other, and that some spots it has been that way for over a year. This item was also postponed to the next meeting, to be addressed by Nate S.

Glenn R., Jessie B., William L. and Rose D. reviewed their findings from a walking survey done on Oct. 1 on two City blocks that include Merchants Row/Strongs Ave., Washington Street, Wales Street and Center Street. The biggest issues noted were the steep, sharp sidewalk turn at Wales and Strongs that forces wheelchairs onto the road, vehicles blocking the sidewalk on the west side of Wales, a few spots without curb cuts/tactile paving, and a grating next to a tree on the sidewalk towards the middle of Center St. that causes problems for wheelchairs. Bob B. said that he and Nate S. would check out these issues and noted that a local business had recently been ticketed on Wales St. for blocking the sidewalk to pedestrians.

The question of accessibility of the Rutland Police Dept. was also raised and it was suggested by Bob B. that a future walk-through of the building might be a good idea. The front entrance, which is accessible by ramp, does not have automatic doors or a buzzer. Bob B. also pointed out the problem that there is a stairway immediately next to the elevator on the second floor which presents a hazard to those with mobility or sight issues coming out of the elevator. Rose D. mentioned the location of the disabled parking space as being less than ideal as well.

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A question was asked as to what C.A.I.R. funds can be used. Bob B. explained that the original funding amount was in response to the need for a sign language interpreter at C.A.I.R. meetings and it can also be used for hardware for doors. Rose asked about using it for disabled signage, such as directional signs, and Bob B. indicated that this comes out of other City budgets.

The next meeting of the C.A.I.R. committee was scheduled for 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, December 17, 2014 at the same location. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:20 p.m.

Special thanks to Glenn Reed for producing this month's minutes in place of the Nate Stansberry.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nate Stansberry", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nate Stansberry, Associate City Engineer DPW