

**Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility
Town Hall Meeting, Wednesday, May 16, 2018
4:30 PM start**

Attending:

Nate Besio, Erika Reil, Shannon Young, Chris Loyer, Karen Richards, Mike Charron, Jeffrey Hale, Chris Loyer, Dave Clark, Beck Camp-Allen, Meg Tamulonis, Brenda Churchill, Emma Allen, Martha Keenan, Ron Redmond, Darlene Bayko

Chair Nate Besio opened the meeting by welcoming attendees. Explained what the Committee is, and what it is not: The Committee is an advisory body and not an enforcement body. Committee advises the Mayor about challenges to accessibility and provide suggestions and recommendations to the mayor. The committee has concentrated on the public right of way, public buildings and events and activities that occur in the City. The focus in the last year has been on the Downtown Improvement District: Lake Champlain to South Winooski Avenue; Pearl to Main Streets. The committee enforce the ADA as it relates to private businesses. Does not focus on private property. There are ways the Committee can address issues of accessibility on private property, such as doing an inventory of downtown businesses that are accessible and not accessible and offer suggestions. The Committee's approach, primarily, will be to acknowledge and recognize those businesses that are making concerted efforts to attract customers by improving and enhancing accessibility

Our subject matter experts for the Town Hall included:

- Mike Charron, Civil Rights Specialist, 802-224-1809, mcharron@vcil.org
- Ericka Reil, Wellness Workforce Coalition Coordinator, VCIL ericka@vcil.org, (802) 224-1816
- Shannon Young Shannon Young, Employment Consultant at Transition II Inc, 346 SHELBURNE ROAD, Burlington, (802) 846-7292, shannon@transitionii.com Transition II, Inc. is a private non-profit organization that offers competitive job placement and consulting services to individuals with disabilities, It matches the needs of business with the skills and interests of individuals with disabilities, providing support and consultation for a successful working relationship.
- Chris Loyer, Green Mountain Transit Public Affairs Coordinator, cloyer@ridegmt.com (802) 540-2451.
- Karen Richards, Executive Director, State of Vermont, Human Rights Commission, 802-828-2482 karen.richards@vermont.gov

TOWN HALL SUBJECTS

1. TRANSPORTATION
2. BUILDING ACCESS
3. EMPLOYMENT
4. HOUSING

Nate Besio: We're looking for input to open a larger dialogue for future Town Hall meetings.

Martha Keenan, introduced subjects, subject matter experts and facilitated discussion

1. TRANSPORTATION

GMT Services described by Chris Loyer including various committees they run: ADA Advisory Committee, GMT Advisory Committee, both meetings open to the public. If you're interested in becoming a member, contact Chris Loyer.

QUESTIONS FROM ATTENDEES

Question: What's the process for making a bus stop more accessible. Example: College Street at Church. ANSWER: Any construction will have to be on the city's end. GMT will support any changes that are needed at bus stops.

Question: Piles of snow around bus stops during the winter. Answer: Recommendation from Martha for both: Please download and use the SeeClickFix app as it is a tool to help the City identify areas in the city's infrastructure that needs to be repaired, improved.

Question: Crosswalks. If you have an accessible sound feature, that sound feature must be operable by law. There is a crosswalk that potentially has its crosswalk sound feature turned off and Martha will check the location and verify if that's so.

2. **BUILDINGS / BUSINESS ACCESS** – Mike Charron, Civil Rights Specialist, 802-224-1809, mcharron@vcil.org. Having problems gaining access to a private business? Go to the business and explain to them what the issue is. Bring it to the business's attention. Do it in a non-combative way. You get more flies with honey than you do with vinegar.

QUESTION: Is there such a thing a grandfather clause. ANSWER: NO. There are only two reasons why a business would not address accessibility.

1. If it's too expensive and would put the business out of business
2. Structurally impossible to make the needed changes in the space they have available.

Explained the difference between Title I and Title II of the ADA,

As a renter of the space, you and the landlord have a responsibility to

QUESTION: Does a business or property getting a DPW Building Permit then activate the ADA?

ANSWER: Going for a building permit, code officer should be aware of enforcing any piece of the ADA that is required. Make sure that doors are wide enough, accessible entrances, etc. Once you're in the building the only part affected by ADA parts that are being acted upon for the actual renovation. Strong guideline that states that 20% of the work must be addressing ADA compliance.

QUESTION: Where do people go if they have an issue? ANSWER: 2002, Justice Department Consent Decree to comply with certain parts of the ADA they were not in compliance with. Before filing a complaint, go the Mayor's office, go to Planning & Zoning, Code Enforcement. Make yourself heard first. Put everything you do in writing. If you ask for an accommodation, put it in writing. If you go to DOJ, first thing they'll look for is a paper trail..

Accommodation is a change in policies and procedures for the way you

BENEFITS OF ACCESSIBILITY: When you're making your business accessible you're making it accessible for a wide audience, including mothers with strollers, a seniors. It helps the entire community.

3. Vermont Human Rights Commission. Karen Richards, Executive Director, State of Vermont, Human Rights Commission, 802-828-2482
karen.richards@vermont.gov

Anyone with an issue of accessibility TITLE 2 buildings they can contact HRC. Gives information. How to make a complaint.

QUESTION: What is the process for making a change with a restaurant like Sweetwaters.

QUESTION: Have you explored mapping restaurants and public restrooms that are publicly available.

ANSWER: Discussed Accessible Adventures website. If you find a location that's fully accessible.

Martha: Showcase the businesses that are accessible, for example, for the Marathon. Celebrate the people who are doing it right. <http://accessibleadventuresvt.org/>

3. EMPLOYMENT, Shannon Young, Employment Consultant, Transition II, Burlington. 802-846-7282 shannon@transitionii.com Works with individuals from 18 to 65 in Chittenden County, referred by Voc Rehab. Work mostly with individuals who have intellectual and developmental disabilities Biggest challenge. Have a challenge with doing 100% of the job description. Have been able to do what's called a "job carve," in that the employment consultant pitches the idea to a potential employer. Have had some successes with this!

QUESTION: Do you have stats on the # of people with disabilities who are employable but can't find work? ANSWER: No

QUESTION: Do you have funds? ANSWER: Funded through Voc Rehab.

QUESTION: What about self-employment? ANSWER: Help people set up their own businesses, connect them to right areas.

4. HOUSING; Erica Reil, Wellness Workforce Coalition Coordinator, VCIL ericka@vcil.org, (802) 224-1816

Public Housing versus private housing defined. How to build a ramp.

Ask for reasonable accommodation from a store, landlord, employer. Give them a reasonable time for their reply. 10 business days. Ask for the reply in writing but emails also work.

In terms of housing, subsidized housing, ADA title II only applies to the outside of the building, Inside the walls in subsidized housing or public housing is covered by Fair Housing and not the ADA. Automatic door openers are not required under the ADA. But someone can ask for a reasonable accommodation.

QUESTION: What about Housing provided by colleges, public versus private. Answer: they fall under the Fair Housing Act. ADA coordinator at UVM, present at meeting.

Mike Charron talked about Universal design standards in new residences is making things accessible i.e. electrical outlets higher up. Door knobs versus levers – easier to turn.

Erica: Barre City. Their ADA group attends all town meetings, joins committees, take notes.

One of the best ways to be effective in an advisory role is to be aware of everything going on in town. Be informed.

Meeting Adjourned at 6 PM