



ADA Advisory Committee
Thursday, October 24, 2024 @ 3:00 PM
Levy Senior Center / Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Members present: Murphy Monroe, Julia Pantoga, Jack Kleisner, Litrea Hunter, Donna Stevens

Guests: Carlos Hranicka, Melissa Manak, John Kapetan, Ronnie McCarron, Betsy Uzzell, Fred Wittenberg

Staff present: Amy Kellogg (Senior Services Division Manager), Yazari Gutierrez (Senior Services Coordinator), Audrey Thompson (Director of Parks & Recreation), Michael Callahan (Deputy Director of Parks & Recreation), Liz Williams (Community Development Planning Manager/Interim Housing & Grants Manager), Alex Ruggie (Law Department Corporation Counsel)

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The September 26 minutes were approved by Jack Kleisner and Julia Pantoga.

3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Guest speakers

- The Legal Department's role in Evanston's ADA/Disability Services:
 - City has an in-house Law Dept. Work closely with City on ADA issues internally with staff and with City departments to ensure we are providing ADA accessibility.
 - Evanston is committed to adhering to the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - Currently working with a team on developing website accessibility, per the recent DOJ ruling for Jan. 2026 ADA compliance
 - Committee can always reach out to the Law Dept.
 - There has been one age discrimination lawsuit related to ADA in past 10 years. EEOC complaints come in related to access to public facilities, these have been dismissed due to unsubstantiated findings.
 - Legal Dept can provide advice related to the ADA Transition Plan, cannot mandate that it is followed. These are decisions for elected officials.
 - The Dept can provide notification of any lawsuits filed related to the City's

ADA/Disability Services

- Envision Evanston 2045: accessibility in the City's upcoming new comprehensive plan and zoning code
 - Envision Evanston 2045: an initiative that includes two outcomes: new comprehensive plan for the City within built environment, rewrite of City's zoning ordinance or what can develop on land within the City.
 - Last comprehensive plan updates were in 2000, zoning code last written in 1993. Experiences and values have shifted for vision of Evanston.
 - Draft of the plan to come next week. Over next 5 months, more conversation to come to ensure it aligns with community's vision.
 - Includes topics of housing, climate change, mobility, supporting businesses and workforce, parks and open space, economic development
 - A lot of ADA Transition Plan-related items included in the plan. Comprehensive plan is put together holistically with each topic.
 - Lots of surveys, community events already. To date, over 3000 community members have provided feedback. Many opportunities still available to provide feedback. Want everyone to have access to the draft as process moves forward. Will go to the Land Use Commission. City Council is determining body for approval. Final decision to be made in March 2025.

Review of new inquiries/grievances

- Fountain Square flower pot placement: grievances received about safety related to pot placement at several Fountain Square corners as well as Davis/Maple. City teams have met twice and it has been determined that there are more pots and different placements now than from original plans. Continuing to communicate and pots will be adjusted to meet ADA guidelines.
- Sidewalk blocked at 1400 Greenleaf: due to construction fencing. Permit Project Manager for the City must approve sign placement and alternate route provided.
- Sand barrier at South Blvd Beach: sand build up due to heavy pedestrian traffic blocking accessibility between the beach and Sheridan Rd. Team has addressed this and will monitor area in future.
- Unsafe platforms during construction by Jewel on Chicago Ave: temporary thin, wooden boards were placed to cover uneven ground making an unsafe path. Firm, stable, slip resistant paths must be provided in addition to signs and alternate routes as needed.
- Feedback about Evanston's role in ensuring accessibility at special events: complaint submitted after Folk Festival which was held on the lakefront. City has a Special Events Committee that approves all special events and permits. Manager Ruiz to work with Legal team and Special Events Committee to improve guidelines and resources for outside vendors
- Re-do of sidewalk remediation at 725 Oakton: asphalt filling had been completed but was bumpy and uneven. Work was redone. Manager Ruiz shared a link included on the City's Sidewalk Improvement Program webpage, "Need to report a sidewalk in need of repair?" These requests go to 311 and asphalt mitigation will be completed as a temporary fix until sidewalk can be permanently updated. Concrete grinding of sidewalks is not available at this time.

Other items

- Upcoming events

- 10/29: "Neurodiversity Unmasked" training for City staff: ADA Committee Chair Murphy Monroe leading this training.
- CMAP Regional ADA Coordinators Group: Manager Ruiz to attend in November.
- Next meeting: November 21, 2024 at Evanston Public Library

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A visitor shared that Board meetings, but not City meetings, are in compliance of ADA.
- A visitor reported being unable to get confirmation that the Civic Center provides accessible equipment for voting: Manager Ruiz to address this
- A visitor shared information about an upcoming support group for individuals with disabilities: Sharing is Caring, next meeting is on Oct. 27.
- A visitor shared that the ADA Advisory Committee is a "driving force" in making changes associated with accessibility
- A visitor encouraged the City to connect with Tammy Duckworth to encourage partnership at all levels
- A visitor expressed frustration related to lack of accessible, affordable housing in Evanston.
- Visitors expressed the need for better lighting along streets for safety and accessibility

5. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

- A member inquired about where money will be coming from for the Envision Evanston 2045 plan. Manager Williams explained that the City is looking to innovative revenue sources, property taxes. Increasing housing will increase tax base. Plan will address deficits in the current budget and will take time, provides a framework to ensure we're achieving the vision.
- A member stated that all accessibility/ADA work needs to be completed regardless of funding.
- A member shared frustration communicated to him from community members who have been unable to complete portable polling. City Clerk Mendoza was shared as the best contact for this. Another member shared the option of voting by mail.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 PM.