

Wauwatosa Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Accomplishments 2022-23

A. Education

- 1. The Wauwatosa Commission has been working with Special Education Director, Stacy Klemm, who attends our Commission Meetings on a monthly basis, to develop policies, procedures and methods to better accommodate individuals with disabilities and special needs in the Wauwatosa School District. We provided comment regarding the results for the special education audit. We also consulted with Luke Pinion from Wauwatosa Schools.**
- 2. The Commission met with Laura Geisler regarding the new security and accessibility features for Wauwatosa School Buildings. We heard about this new system and made comment on how to improve it for people with disabilities.**
- 3. The commission met with Police Chief MacGillis regarding the use of School Resource Officers.**
- 4. Several members of the Commission regularly attend school board meetings. We provide information and feedback about accessibility and special education topics. We learned a great deal from others at all the sessions, which will improve the scope of our advocacy going forward.**
- 5. Members of our commission participated in the Wauwatosa PTA Council Resource Fair at Underwood School on April 19, 2023. This event showcased resources for people with different disabilities along with activities to use mobility equipment and simulate various disabilities. We distributed brochures, provided information on our services and meeting access as well as answering individual questions. We also introduced ourselves to other service providers to expand our resource network.**

B. Housing

- 1. We continue to be a partner and work with the Wauwatosa Housing Collaboration (Senior Commission, Tosa Together and Diversity and Inclusion Commission).**
- 2. We continue to work with the developers of the Cornerstone Village AbleLight Project. These developers are working to make this project more affordable and accessible to people with disabilities, especially for people with low incomes.**
- 3. Members of our Commission provided comments to Friedman and Associates as they have conducted a Housing Study.**
- 4. We provided comment on the Zone Tosa for All report recommendations.**
- 5. Members of our commission participated in a focus group with the consultants for the Comprehensive Plan. Our commission conducted a focus group for the Comprehensive Plan at our September meeting. The focus is to address the need for affordable, accessible housing.**
- 6. Commission members met with Karl Schreiber to learn more about the Wauwatosa Home Rehabilitation Program so that we can share this information with citizens.**

C. Wauwatosa Zoning Issues

We have worked on developing a housing disability accommodation process for individuals with disabilities. We have been approached by families this year and last year, who have had difficulties getting zoning accommodations which would help make their properties accessible. The Commission has worked to develop and support amendments to the Municipal Code related to accessibility with zoning and zoning appeals.

D. Employment

We continue to work with the Wauwatosa School District on a project to increase employment and internship opportunities for students and people with disabilities.

E. Recreation

- 1. Members advocated on behalf of marginalized people for the new park on 116th Street to be created with ARPA funds. This group will be a resource, and will advocate to ensure Wauwatosa parks, facilities and green spaces are accessible to all.**
- 2. The Commission participated in the July 4th Parade including the debut of International Disability Flag. The flag was made and purchased from Flag Center, a Wauwatosa business. Accessories to allow the flag to be carried or displayed on a stand were purchased for maximum usability. This flag was officially recognized by the United Nations in 2017 and is meant for general use, particularly at disability-centered events such as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3).**



F. Health Department

- 1. We continue to work with the Health Department on the Association for Retired Persons Age Friendly Tosa Project to make Wauwatosa a healthier, more walkable inclusive community.**
- 2. We continue to work with the Wauwatosa Health Department on developing and implementing the Community Health Improvement Plan.**

G. Civic Engagement

- 1. Members of our commission participated in the Tosa Spring Resource Fair on April 22, 2023 at Wauwatosa Baptist Church. We designed and printed information brochures and commissioned a formal tabletop sign for our display. Leftover brochures were distributed at the PTA Resource Fair and other events. The remainder were placed at the resource table in the Wauwatosa Library and at both Senior Center locations.**
- 2. One commission member serves as a member of the Equity and Inclusion Commission. She represents persons with disabilities as the E & I commission engages with the Wauwatosa community.**
- 3. One commission member continues with Tosa Together working with the school district on inclusion and issues of concern reported in recent studies. This member provides input to this group which will have a positive impact on programming for people with disabilities of all ethnicities and walks of life.**
- 4. Members of our commission participated in the ADA celebration and groundbreaking at the new Ability Center Park on Wisconsin Ave on July 26th.**
- 5. The commission maintains an email address and Facebook page to inform citizens of relevant events and topics. We also respond to inquiries and requests for help with disability related issues.**
- 6. Members of the commission advocated successfully for the International Disability Flag to be flown at city hall on the week of July 24th in recognition of the 33rd anniversary of the ADA.**
- 7. Our commission learned about Project Lifesaver and Kits for Kids from Laura Laurischke with the Wauwatosa Police Dept.**
- 8. Supported selection of a book (One, Two, Three) with characters who have disabilities for Neighborhood Association Council's Tosa's All City Read. Attended various events in support of the book and its topics.**

- 9. Requested and obtained permission to fly the Disability Flag on the city hall flagpole the week of July 24-28 in honor of the 33rd Anniversary of the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act and subsequent amendments. Mayor McBride issued a proclamation to recognize the event and the day. The flag raising ceremony was covered by TMJ4 and aired on their popular Milwaukee Tonight program. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published an extensive article with photos of the flag, Mayor McBride and state representative Robyn Vining. Members of the Common Council and others attended the ceremony.**
- 10. Staffed a table at the Wauwatosa Senior Wellness Fair with our brochures and resource information on various disabilities. The International Disability Flag was displayed on a stand behind our table.**

H. Voting

One member of the commission meets regularly with the city clerk to address issues of polling place accessibility.

Goals for 2024

- A. While our Commission has gained greater visibility, we seek to become better known to the community at large as a resource for information. We also seek to be an active resource for city staff and groups as they draft the Comprehensive Plan and projects that arise from it.**
- B. We will continue to work with the Parks and Forestry, serving as advocates, supporters, resources, and active members of project teams.**
- C. We will continue to advocate for the development of housing that is accessible, affordable and available for people with disabilities.**
- D. The Commission is committed to continuing review and amendment of the Municipal Code to address the needs of people living with disabilities in Wauwatosa.**
- E. Continue to work with the Wauwatosa School District to help it foster more inclusion and equity for persons with disabilities.**
- F. The commission is working to develop a community-wide disability awareness event, featuring the film, “Crip Camp”. This film was created to educate the public to become more disability aware and features some leaders from the American disability community. We will also assist the school district in obtaining permission to show this film on a yearly basis and to incorporate it into the high school curriculum.**
- G. Our committee is putting together suggestions for the common council regarding guidelines on fireworks displays and has been asked to participate in Civic Celebration Commission meetings to ensure accessibility at all events they plan.**
- H. Work with city website designers on new city website to ensure latest accessibility guidelines are followed and create a web page with information on our commission.**
- I. Advocate for accessibility features in pending city projects such as renovation of the Muellner Building, City Hall/Library renovations, North Avenue project, and Mayfair/Boston Store development.**

- J. Work with city officials and staff to increase communication with commission to fulfill our role as a resource for people with disabilities. This is to support the city's strategic plan goals of diversity and inclusion as well as encourage and grow tourism for all people.**
- K. Initiate a relationship with the Tourism Commission to help attract visitors to our city. This includes groups as well as individuals. Organizations seeking event venues are increasingly requesting full accessibility for all types of disabilities. Our commission can provide information and resources to meet this demand.**
- L. Develop a community awareness campaign to educate people about disability issues and challenges of living with disabilities.**
- M. Participate in Tosa Night Out to expand accessibility at the event and further our education campaign.**
- N. Create a Disabilities Resource Page on the city website under the Health Department to complement the Seniors Resource Page.**
- O. Establish a relationship with state-level entities advocating for people with disabilities to provide local-level information and learn from their initiatives.**
- P. Establish a relationship with county, state and federal elected officials to serve as a resource for disability issues.**
- Q. Work with the City Clerk, staff, Chief Inspectors and poll workers to document questions and concerns related to accessibility of voting overall and challenges at specific polling locations.**