

Jennifer A. Civitella Hilario

September 13, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Attn: Bonnie Denis, Chair

165 Broadway

Somerville, MA 02145

Re: Questions for Potential Commissioners

Dear Bonnie:

At the Commission's request, I am submitting the following responses to the questions for potential commissioners.

*1. What made you interested in joining the commission?*

Community involvement and volunteerism are important to me. Instead of overcommitting myself, I am thoughtful when volunteering and I look for opportunities that will allow me to share my strengths and will also give me a sense of accomplishment. From September 2018 until March 2020 (i.e., the start of Covid-19), I volunteered as a catechist with St. Catherine's Church on Summer Street and taught grades 6, 7, 8 and 10. My faith is an important part of my identity and I believe I'm a good teacher. "Sunday school teacher" was a great way for me to give back to my community and also strengthen my faith. Along these lines, I believe my passion for disability rights and my advocacy skills (both as an attorney and a person with a disability) are strengths that I can offer the Somerville community as a commissioner on the SCPD. I am interested in joining the SCPD because access, equity and opportunity for persons with disabilities are important issues to me and I'm excited about the opportunity to advocate for these issues within the Somerville community.

*2. Do you have lived experience of being a person with a disability?*

Yes.

*3. What are two major accessibility concerns you have in the city of Somerville?*

- Access to civic resources
- The inexistence of safe, barrier-less travel (by whatever means) around the City

4. *What other ways are you engaged in the community? (Somerville, disability)*

Looking at my current engagement, Covid has limited my public activities because I am very concerned about someone in my family becoming ill. Looking at my most recent pre-Covid engagement, as mentioned above, I taught Sunday school at St. Catherine's Church in Somerville. Also, since 2017, I was active within our neighborhood (Bolton, Oak, Houghton and Concord streets) and organized social events, such as Halloween parades and block parties, along with a few other neighbors. Outside of Somerville, from 2017 through 2020, I was a classroom parent for my daughter's classrooms. Since March 2020, my civic activities have been limited to advocating for legislation that benefits my profession during Covid.

5. *What skills would you like to bring to the group?*

I do not bring any legal experience in municipal, civil rights or ADA laws. However, I do believe my experience as an attorney has taught me about zealous advocacy. I believe my advocacy skills will benefit the Commission's impact within the Somerville community. In addition, I believe my organizational and communication skills will also benefit the Commission.

6. *Do you have interest and availability to serve on sub-committees/workgroups as the commission works to become more empowered in the city?*

I am interested and am available to serve on one or more sub-committees. I am serious about making this commitment and look forward to the opportunity to contribute.

Please let me know if any of the commissioners have any questions or if I can provide additional information.

Very truly yours,



Jennifer A. Civitella Hilario