

**Town of Acton
COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES (COD)**

**MEETING MINUTES
April 17, 2018**

Members Present: Madeleine Harvey (Chair), Ann (Nancy) Corcoran, Danny Factor, Lisa Franklin, Leslie Johnson

Associate Members Present: Joan Burrows, Franny Osman

Others: Joan Gardner (Board of Selectmen [BOS] liaison), Pescha Kokis (volunteer)

Call to order 9:30 am

Citizens' concerns None

Announcements

- Mady reported that the House Ways and Means Committee had voted in favor of another \$1 million for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program
- Franny attended a transportation summit and the Massachusetts DOT conference, where she and other Acton officials gave presentations. Both were informative.
- Leslie stopped by Pedal Power in Acton and inquired about bike rentals, and was told that most residents own bikes, and they were moving “slowly” into rentals. There was one recumbent tricycle there for purchase. COD is interested in pursuing this matter. Danny suggested that Green Acton might be able to help.
- The Commission received a letter in response to ours regarding an issue that was dealt with at several executive sessions. The following motion was made with 4 years and 1 abstention: “At the June COD

meeting from 9:30 to 9:45 we will have an executive session where the letter will be shared and we can discuss it.”

- Mady agreed to send an email to the sender acknowledging the letter and explaining that it will be reviewed by the commission in June.

Board of Selectmen (BOS) report

A new Town Manager has been appointed and he will start in June, overlapping briefly with the current Town Manager. Joan Gardner presented to the candidates the question that the COD developed at the March meeting and all seemed to have had a satisfactory response.

Minutes

The March minutes were approved with no changes or corrections.

Town Meeting de-briefing

- The several warrant items that were pertinent to the COD all passed.
- It was agreed that access/accommodations for those with disabilities were very good at this meeting, including adequate seating, simple check-in procedures, the CART system, and electronic voting. It was noted that the clickers all included Braille.
- Mady agreed to write a letter to Peter Ashton thanking him for all these improvements.

May Retreat Details

- All COD members agreed that the survey sent out by Sarah Bursky, the professional consultant who will run our May retreat, was very good and to the point.
- Lisa noted that we need discussion on “rescuing people” and that we need to empower them instead. We need to listen and not attack one another.

- At our request in March, Danny spoke to an Open Meeting Law (OML) attorney about whether or not the public should be invited to the two-part retreat. Insofar as part of these sessions will be about strategic planning, and since the conversations could easily slide into references to other meetings and discussions, OML prevails, and we will post an agenda for both meetings. We were reminded, however, that we are not required to call on visitors/non-members for comment.

Emergency preparedness follow-up

There was brief follow-up on our March discussion with Sheryl Ball, Health Director, as several members had been absent for that meeting. There is a push to make the new Senior Center/Council on Aging (COA) building the main shelter, but that would require a generator. Joan Burrows will meet with Sheryl Ball and Sharon Mercurio, COA Director, to discuss this further

Re-appointment of officers/June elections

- Members briefly discussed their respective roles and their level of comfort with what they are required to do.
- It was suggested that perhaps we could occasionally rotate facilitation of the meetings, so that Mady would not have to run all of them.
- It was further suggested that in general, responsibilities could increasingly be rotated and shared.
- Mady was asked to send around a list of her responsibilities as chairperson, and what she has had to do over the past 3 years. Lisa offered to also send her list from the years she served as chair.
- There will be brief further discussion of this in June, but it appeared that members are satisfied in maintaining their current roles.

June agenda

- A preliminary agenda for June was set.

Access issues

Access coordinators Danny Factor and Joan Burrows provided us with written updates on all current access issues being pursued by the COD. Progress has been made in a number of areas including working with Westford on increased access at Kimball Farm, sidewalks on Route 2A between Davis Road and Route 27, and pull cords for Senior Center bathrooms. Work and follow-up continues on ten other issues, many of them involving Frank Ramsbottom, Building Commissioner, who is working closely with Danny and Joan on these matters. COD had no concerns with recommendations made by the access coordinators.

Meeting adjourned 12:30 pm

Documents distributed None

Respectfully submitted by
Joan Burrows and Madeleine Harvey