



## **Commission on Disabilities**

Meeting Minutes  
December 18, 2018

9:30 am

Room 126, Town Hall, 472 Main St. Acton, MA 01720

**Present:** Full members: Mady Harvey (Chair), Lisa Franklin, Danny Factor, Leslie Johnson (today's facilitator); Associate members: Franny Osman, Joan Burrows.

**Absent:** Full member: Ann (Nancy) Corcoran.

### **1. Opening**

Facilitator Leslie Johnson opened the meeting at 9:30 am.

### **2. Regular Business**

- A. Approval of Meeting Minutes – The meeting minutes from the Commission's October, 2018 meeting were reviewed and approved (with agreed revisions) by a vote of 4-0. The meeting minutes from the Commission's November 2018 meeting were reviewed and approved (with agreed revisions) by a vote of 5-0.

- B. Citizens' Concerns:

Between COD meetings, a citizen with a sight impairment contacted the COD about access regarding accompanying her child to the school bus stop. Franny volunteered to contact the citizen and is already assisting her.

### **3. Town Manager's Report**

Town Manager John Mangiaratti said that at the December 17th Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting, that board opened the warrant for the April 2019 Town Meeting, and John presented highlights of the proposed budget for 2019. The proposed budget includes 90% more money for sidewalks. The budget report is online and John suggests we read it.

The Town received \$160,000.00 for Sachem Way public housing improvements. Town is still waiting to hear about Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) grant for parking lot improvements (\$60,000.00).

### **4. Meeting cancellation discussion**



Discussion of what standard we use to cancel meetings for late-breaking bad weather. We used to use the same standard as the schools. COD member Nancy Corcoran (not present) had suggested we have a snow date of the following Tuesday. Danny thinks we should cancel more easily than the schools and town because some members have more mobility issues, and it should be the chair's decision, taking into account safety issues and particularly the burden of the COD's most at-risk members. Mady points out how hard it was to decide. Lisa says we don't expect Chair to be omniscient and we should have guidelines. Danny suggests wording and Mady makes a motion: that members tell the chair by 8 am if they are not going, and the chair will let people know by 8:15 if meeting is canceled. And that the chair will strive to arrange to reschedule the meeting for the following Tuesday at the same time unless there are objections by Commission members.

All in favor, 4-0.

## **5. Adaptive bikes**

Leslie did research about adaptive bikes all over the country. There are adaptive bike programs popping up all over the country as well as bike share programs. She learned a lot—about Michigan, Oregon, Wisconsin, Minnesota... --and handed out two documents: Types of Adaptive Bike Share Programs: Pros and Cons; and Existing Adaptive Bike Programs. There are three types: non-profits; partnerships between city and bike shops; and adaptive bikes part of two-wheeled bike share program.

Leslie also met with Acton Recreation Director Cathy Fochtman and her assistant Melissa Rier, Recreation Coordinator, and with Ross Lilley, Director of Access Sports America. Ross has a setup in Waltham where he offers adaptive bikes to people with disabilities; they can be taken out for 1.5 hours, \$20. He attended one of the meetings. He thinks the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is a good trail at which to have an adaptive bike program. Would offer his bikes or a special day. Cathy says there is low turnout to some town programs, suggests inviting other towns and working regionally. Suggesting local COD's, Councils on Aging, Veterans Groups, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail reps, Pedal Power. Now that Pedal Power is hearing that we are working on this, they are willing to change their minds about not renting bikes. If there could be an adaptive bike program at Pedal Power, right on Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, it would be convenient. There are reps from each town that the trail goes through, and Leslie got buy-in from those reps as well as any COD's in neighboring towns. Spoke to Kristin Guichard, Assistant Town Planner, and the Planning Department would like to see adaptive bikes planned. The reason they didn't do it for the Zagster pilot program was that those rentals were for commuting reasons and adaptive bike renters tend to use them more for recreation reasons. Joyce Reischutz, owner of Pedal Power is interested in attending any meetings.

Danny is very impressed with all of Leslie's work, especially with Pedal Power participating and with the regional effort. It was mentioned that Jim Snyder-Grant is a an avid bicycle user and bicycling supporter in town that can be solicited for support in this effort. Leslie asks if she should meet with Town Manager John Mangiaratti. Franny suggests talking to the Board of Selectmen and John at the same time. Lisa asks what Leslie's desired rental setup is. Leslie



replied: Town owns bikes, they are kept at Pedal Power, and Pedal Power rents them out. There was another state where a bike shop that was involved got grant money. Citizen Pesha Kokis stated that if you can't get to the bike rentals to rent them they are useless. Need transportation TO the locations. Conversations were recommended with Health Director Sheryl Ball, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Community Health Network Area (CHNA)15. Citizen Terra Friedrichs wishes she could rent the bikes from Zagster through Town instead, like a library card, for privacy reasons.

## **6. Annual Report Draft**

Take out the term, "birth defects".

Under transition plan, sounded like survey and work were being covered by a grant, but it is town money. We did apply for a grant but it ended up being the Town (under Town Manager Steve Ledoux) that came up with money.

Suggestions for Annual Report:

Include mention of need for volunteers.

Include meeting schedule.

Use this wording: "advocates for accessibility around town"

Use this wording: "Both on Town property and ... privately owned public accommodations" (which means a private business or establishment welcomes all members of the public to come into store or office)

Use wording that tells that we are about not only physical access but we keep our eyes and ears open for mental health issues.

**Lisa moves** that we accept the Town Report

**Passes 4- yes . 0- no.0- abstain.**

## **7. Citizens Concerns/Form letter we worked on recently**

Discussion of what we are doing under this agenda item, as some people thought we were only approving the letter we worked on recently to be sent to people and entities involved in a disability issue, while others thought we were discussing a bigger policy issue--the fact that we have three wordings about dealing with individuals' issues (one in Handbook, one in directive from MOD, one in the form letter we recently penned). This agenda item is tabled until next meeting because the agenda item wasn't clear and because time is short.

## **8. Town Meeting Review**

Communication Accessible in Real Time (CART) words on the screen looked small to one person.

It is impossible to watch the local TV—picture is dark, acoustics not good. Very bad TV coverage.

Danny suggests starting with Town Moderator. He is willing to go to Peter Ashton, Moderator. Handicapped seating – was it enough? In overflow room? Appears to have been enough.



Check-in was smooth.

Peter Ashton and all speakers, including the Assistant Moderator in the overflow rooms, should summarize what they see when they ask a question of the audience, e.g. "How many of you have been to a Town Meeting before?" or "How many of you have made up your mind?" Don't just allow laughter or take the answer quietly and move on; Peter should specifically state what he sees out there, because people watching TV and people with low vision do not see the results.

## **9. Membership issues**

Danny and Mady are leaving COD at end of June. Given how difficult it is to find volunteers for any committees, now is not too soon to try to recruit new members. We will be looking for several new members.

Issues of membership and disability need clarification. We need to maintain a majority of people who see themselves as part of the community of people with disabilities. Even though there are seats reserved for others, we have to keep this membership up. Need to be clear how to define that, look for that, advertise it.

Danny suggests that for the next meeting all COD members should go to the Handbook and look in the bylaws and see what the statutory requirement for membership is. (1 person who is a family member of a person with a disability (pwd), 1 person who is appointed or elected to another body...etc. ) Danny suggests that when you look at the requirements that a majority are pwd .

Discussion of the value of people who have disabilities vs. people with lived experience in their families or community, as members of COD. Discussion of what is desired, what is comfortable, and what is required by law, when learning about potential new members, and self-disclosure vs. self-identification. Discussion of whether we have a majority of voting members who are pwd.

It is likely that 18 to 30% of people in Acton have a disability, depending on how you define it, according to various surveys.

Lisa suggests including the Town Manager and Volunteer Coordinating Committee in this discussion of membership and disability status.

It is noted that we should have a different term limit for someone without disabilities so we can more quickly replace the person without a disability with someone with.

Danny answers a question about legality of asking about disability in the context of getting new members. He says if a public entity has an affirmative action program, it is fine to ask about someone's race on an application. How polite or moral it is is another question.

## **10. Kelley's Corner. Green Acton's presentation**



Danny and Terra give presentation (with handout) about Green Acton's concerns about some turning lanes and length of crossing, and in particular about the concern that these matters risk Kelley's Corner being less pedestrian friendly and less safe. Franny asks for time on a future agenda for other viewpoints.

## **11. Future agenda suggestions**

Should we identify ayes and nays in minutes

Missing Minutes

Questions to do with Kelley's Corner

Accessible housing

**Lisa made a motion** that we do not put the missing-minutes-OML issue on the next agenda . Mady seconded the motion. The Commission voted 2-1 with one abstention to approve. Majority of the quorum has to agree so the motion was denied.

## **12. Adjournment**

At approximately 12:30 p.m., it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

- Meeting minutes of October 2018 and November 2018
- Green Acton handout on Kelley's Corner