



Commission on Disabilities

Minutes

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

10 am

Virtual Meeting

The meeting was virtual, at

<https://actonma.zoom.us/j/94313570425>

Attendees:

Members: Pesha Kokis, chair; Lisa Franklin; Franny Osman; Leslie Johnson; John Gianetto, Melissa Wingfield, Franny Osman, and Joan Burrows.

Visitors: Paul

Select Board Liaison: Jim Snyder-Grant.

Town Staff: Austin Cyganiewicz

Public Concerns:

Announcements and Liaison Reports :

Longtime member and chair **Nancy C.'s husband** died. We will send a card (Franny) and ask for private donations toward a tree/shrub in his memory at Acton Arboretum as well as provide \$50 from our COD budget toward the planting. Lisa moved, Pesha seconded, 5-0 in favor.

In his **Select Board report** , Jim Snyder-Grant said the Town Meeting is May 1-2.

Franny reported on Human Services Committee (HSC): HSC is putting out a Where to Find Help brochure. Also Austin Cyganiewicz presented about transportation to the HSC this week. See more under Austin's report below.

Austin on Transportation

Town will be working with MAPC to initiate a Transportation Action Plan, including a community engagement process similar to the process by which the Town created a Climate Action Plan.

Austin explained that while there was ARPA funding requested to improve the CAT Bus, the Select Board instead asked for an assessment of needs (\$40,000) to choose how to make improvements.

Question asked re: what if CrossTown Connect can't help and rider doesn't have funds for an Uber. Austin replied that the Town has received more taxi grant funds from MassDevelopment (\$85K, up from the \$30k we received the last time we applied). The challenge is finding provider partners to provide the rides.

Austin said Town is considering adding 1 or 2 days per week for an out-of-service-area trip to Boston or Lowell—working with our vendor to see if we can do that to provide some medical or other longer distance trips. Also for a second cat, perhaps set up like Microtransit with on-demand immediate trips (“Roving Cat” “Wildcat”). Driver shortage continues to be a challenge.

It was noted that Stow, like Sudbury, has a working Uber type program. One member had to cancel a medical appointment because the van couldn't take her. It was suggested to look at Greater Lynn Services system of using trip planners who have access to every type of transportation. They book the ride for you. Take away the anxiety. “We've got your back. We'll get you back.” --a quote someone mentioned.

Ideas about Concord medical transportation: Take Concord's shuttle to the train and take the train to Acton? Add back the regular late trip for the vans from Cummings Building at Emerson to Acton?

More Transportation Announcements: April 10 Lobby week on the Regional Transit Authority **Advancement** Bill. Franny attended a lunch with several senior directors and transportation dispatchers at the Winchester Senior Center.

Accessibility updates: Austin announced Building Inspector Tom Moberg is retiring to Iowa. New Building Inspector will be Ed Mullin, starting April 17. Lisa said that we missed weighing in on a variance application for the Mass. Ave. housing (Tavernier Place). It was not clear why the Feb. 7 email was not received by COD.

Approve Minutes: Franny moved, Lisa seconded, 5-0 vote to approve the minutes of January 2023.

New Business:

We reviewed the plan for an ADA celebration/publicity of businesses' positive accessibility qualities. We should start now. The plan is to award certificates to Businesses with helpful accessibility improvements. Julie Pierce-Onos will stir up the businesses and get the info from them and we will do some outreach. It was noted that

businesses often don't know what things matter, e.g. wide aisles, how people handle heavy doors. The project will put pressure on stores and give publicity to stores. It will lead to a one-time only event. Lisa will get in touch with Julie.

Despite some concerns regarding repeating information that is already online, on apps, and a fear of a big project, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve moving ahead with this project. (Franny moved, Lisa seconded).

It was noted that the Paper Store door is heavy and the aisles are cluttered. Difficult if using cane or walker or wheelchair.

COD will write a **letter of support for a proposed accessible basketball** court at Goward Playground behind the library. Motion by Franny, Second by Pesha, 5-0 in support. Lisa will write the support note and will forward the original email to the COD.

Email plan: When emails come, Lisa will call Pesha to tell her it arrived, Pesha will reply. Pesha will email COD to let us know she responded. If after a day, there is no evidence that Pesha has responded to an email to COD, Joan will check in with Pesha and offer to reply to the email.

Pesha will get help from Joan on computer. She will go to Joan's with her PC to learn.

We adjourned at 12:17 pm.

Acronyms:

ARPA American Rescue Plan Act

CODA Commission on Disabilities Association (Mass.)

COA Acton Council on Aging

HSC Human Services Committee

MAPC Metropolitan Area Planning Council

TAC Acton Transportation Advisory Committee

SB Select Board

SMOC Southern Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc.

VCC Volunteer Coordinating Council

The listed agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair. *Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon*

request. Please allow advance notice. Send an e-mail to manager@actonma.gov or call the Town Manager's Office, or contact the Chair Lisa Franklin, by emailing lisafranklin58@gmail.com.