

Acton Commission on Disabilities (COD): Minutes for March, 2025

Zoom meeting

Members present: Joan Burrows, Lisa Franklin, Leslie Johnson, and Melissa Wingfield. Also Jim Snyder Grant (select board liaison), Wanjiku Gachugi (town staff)

Members absent: John Gianetto, Pesha Kokis

Meeting was called to order at 10:02 am.

Announcements:

1. Crip Camp movie - A movie showing we held for the public went really well. Great turnout with lots of people who were really interested in it.
2. Articles in Acton Exchange - Lisa wrote an article for the Acton Exchange about the Crip Camp movie showing. Melissa and Joan contributed to an article about Transportation in town and how important it is for people with disabilities.
3. Sustainability Office update - Lisa presented ideas (for volunteer program) we came up with to the Sustainability Office, but they said no because the ideas were not related to what the grant money was for. The Friendly visitor program was not done because no one signed up who wanted a visitor to come to their home, or get a phone call to visit with them.
4. 504 - 504 is part of the 1973 Rehab Act, and 17 states are challenging the federal government on the grounds that 504 is unconstitutional. The Rehab Act was the starting point for the ADA. First Federal law for people with disabilities. Any state or program receiving money from the Federal government can not discriminate against people with disabilities.
5. Open Door Theater (ODT) - ODT's annual production is from March 21st - March 30th. ODT is an inclusive theater that puts on productions for the public every year. The productions are for anyone to be in, with or without disabilities.

We unanimously approved the February 18th minutes. Melissa made a motion, Lisa 2nd it. Approved.

Select Board and Liaison updates:

1. Habitat for All - Habitat for all might help create smaller houses and more affordable living situations. That's of benefit for people with disabilities who generally have lower incomes.
2. AHA - Talked about McManus Manor ... Area is being cleared now for construction. Hope to finish in fall of 2026. There will be a lottery, being advertised in 2026 sometime.
3. Kids on the Block puppets - We are looking for someone to take responsibility for the Kids on the Block Puppets Educational Program. Melissa is contacting someone in the Girl Scouts to see if they would like to do it.

New business:

1. Thank you card to El Huipil restaurant - We all drafted a short note to put in a card Melissa made. Jim is picking it up and will deliver it to El Huipil.
2. Animal policy - There was a discussion about it and it was voted on. Lisa made a motion, Leslie 2nd it. Lisa and Leslie voted yes, Joan and Melissa abstained. Approved.
3. Train Trip project - We will be taking the commuter rail to North Station in Boston as a group to see how it is done, then have lunch there. It is for anyone to go to. Will be advertising for it. Need to look into cost, times to go. People with obvious physical disabilities get a discount to ride.
4. ADA project - We unanimously decided to have this. July 26 is the 35th anniversary of the ADA being signed. We want to have a get-together to socialize at NARA Park sometime in July. We will be advertising for it, but need to see when we can rent a space at NARA, where we will get food from, and arranging transportation first.

5. Talked about Town Meeting articles related to COD - Briefly talked about Article 5 (related to transportation) and Article 23 (related to the Memorial Library and accessibility to it).

We adjourned at 11:55 am.

Documents used at meeting: Animal policy draft, Draft Warrant for the annual Town Meeting.