

Acton Commission on Disabilities (COD): Minutes for June 17th, 2025

Members present : Lisa Franklin, Pesha Kokis, Melissa Wingfield, John Gianetto, Joan Burrows, Jim Snyder-Grant (select board liaison), Wanjiku Gachugi (town staff).

Members absent : Leslie Johnson

Meeting was called to order at 10:07 am.

We had a visitor interested in joining the COD, and invited her to join the meeting.

Per last month's request, we discussed the COD's responsibility in educating the public about the option for **hybrid attendance** at **town meeting** for those whose condition/s prevent them from leaving the house. This year the town sent a memo around that was also included in the town warrant, and on the town web site. Moving forward (in following years), we suggested posting it on the privately owned Acton Disability Forum site on facebook in the weeks leading up to town meeting as well as in the Acton Exchange. We voted unanimously that these ideas were probably sufficient to reach the majority of the public. Wanjiku will follow up.

We also reviewed access and accommodation at last month's annual town meeting. Positive elements were the reservation of front row seats for people with mobility challenges, the CART set up, the moderator's efforts to be inclusive and respectful, and the check-in option available at the front door. We applauded that one citizen was able to participate by zoom, voting and participating fully in the debates and discussions on the articles.

The problems encountered at Town Meeting this year included the automatic front door opener being locked and un-usable. We were not aware if anyone tried to use the lift in the auditorium. In the past, it has been used for storage and many volunteers do not know how to operate it. Lisa will write up these findings and send them in a letter to the Select Board and the Town Clerk.

We were invited by the Boston Disability Commission to join other regional organizations in supporting their ADA 35 Pride event. This involved adding our name to their web site. We voted unanimously to accept their invitation.

Our own ADA picnic is shaping up nicely. We all voted to spend up to \$350 to hire a school bus driver for 5 to 6 hours to run the van, bringing participants to NARA Park and home again. Laura Ducharme is waiting for the school transportation request list to come out so she can sign our event up. Jim will get a portable microphone and speakers for the event, and Lisa, Pesha, and Amanda (who was the visitor at the meeting and is interested in becoming part of the COD) will write up a short welcoming statement for Melissa to read at the beginning of the event.

Jim reported that the **Select Board** just finished making their long and short term goals including a more equitable and transparent procedure for addressing traffic safety in various sections of town. He also reported that the current work on the HVAC system in town hall reached the cost level that triggered the Architectural Access Board's (AAB) requirement to bring the property to full compliance with current AAB access codes. Those needs had already been identified in our ADA transition plan and will help guide the planning of improvement projects.

Travel training : Pesha finally heard back from the MBTA mobility support program. Unlike our original plan for our informal trip on the train, travel training program requires a 3.5 hour training session. We agreed unanimously to try for September 18 to do this. Pesha will check with Laura Ducharme that this date does not interfere with popular trip times when vans would be tied up taking people to medical appointments. We discussed various other complications involved, but voted unanimously that it was worth continuing ahead with our efforts on this project.

The **May minutes** were not sent out ahead of time for commissioners to review, so we will vote on them in July's meeting.

Our **Kids on the Block** puppet committee is still trying to find high school volunteers to become puppeteers. Amanda used to belong to AB Buddies at the high school, and she will reach out to people she knew from the group to see if anyone there might be interested. Someone mentioned the high school drama department.

There were were no **citizen concerns** .

We adjourned at 11:57 am.

There were no documents used at this meeting