

**Town of Acton
Commission on Disabilities (COD)**

MINUTES

**Tuesday, August 21, 2018
9:30 am, Town Hall, Room 126
Approved at 9/18/18 Meeting**

Present: Three resident visitors and Laura Ducharme; members Nancy Corcoran (meeting facilitator), Madeleine Harvey (committee chair), Danny Factor, Leslie Johnson, Lisa Franklin, Joan Burrows, Franny Osman.

9:30 Call to order

Announcements:

Lisa: Another Community Access Monitor training is coming up. COD budget can help pay for it. Helps participants have a better understanding of physical access. October 17 and 18 in Natick.

Leslie: Person who was recently referred to us with issues of isolation turned out to be an old friend and Leslie was able to connect with her.

Danny: No written Access Report this month because many visitees were on vacation. Also, one of the bullet points on today's agenda is about the Acton Senior Center. Frank Ramsbottom is having a busy morning; he may need to pop in sometime and we can decide at that time if we want to take that issue out of order.

Citizens' concerns:

Citizen's Concern 1:

A visitor brought a letter about a desire to build a "small, dignified detached accessory unit" for a relative to live in to allow her to receive more daily assistance from her family. The Zoning Board of Appeals had suggested she reach out to the COD. It had been suggested that she build an apartment above their existing attached garage but it would need an elevator, which requires electricity, and what if it went out? And it costs \$35,000 to build the elevator.

Comments were made such as a suggestion to get the legal questions answered by Town Counsel and to bring the issue back to spring Town Meeting (as Planning Board suggests) with a better coalition and powerpoint presentation. It was noted that a 2/3 vote is needed to change this zoning law about detached accessory units, and that detractors are

sometimes focused on population changes and sometimes on design.

A visitor and a member of the COD offered personal assistance.

Danny moves that COD write a short memo to Town Counsel asking their understanding as to whether we must wait to appeal to Town Meeting or whether the ZBA can allow a detached accessory apartment.

Lisa seconds.

Unanimous yes (five).

__ moves that Motion that Joan and Danny will be delegates to organize a citizens group to advocate for unattached accessory housing.

Franny seconds.

Lisa abstains, 4 ayes.

Citizen Concern 2:

Mady Harvey reports about the recent email query to COD from someone who needs a backup generator for medical equipment. Nancy points out the first avenue of assistance would be from the medical team. No resolution yet.

Danny suggests we put the idea of police or fire departments purchasing emergency generators on the list for future agenda items.

Nancy suggests we make "These are folks to contact for...." cards. "

Citizen Concern 3:

Danny: This concern is about a physical access issue at Acton Medical Associates (AMA). For the second time in two or three years, the COD has been contacted by an employee of AMA about physical access issues. [In response?,] COD has looked and not found code issues.

- 1- There is no accessible bathroom on the first floor, pediatrics. Need elevator to go to second floor.
- 2- Would be easier access if people with disabilities could use the third floor employee entrance. They would need to put a ramp in where there are two stairs in a corridor and allow access to third floor.
- 3- Problem also if elevator breaks down.

Danny opinion: first two are voluntary and are not code violations. We could look into third one.

Pesha Visitor/Volunteer: I go to AMA, there was an elevator problem but it was fixed. Danny and Joan will make sure there is a written policy about elevator issue. They will take it on.

Nancy concludes: Lots of issues, complex.

Laura Ducharme, Community Resources Coordinator visits:

Laura comes with three things to bring to group from Town Manager, John Mangiaratti, for input.

1) Mass. COD offers a grant from state, up to \$200,000... John asked dept heads to bring ideas for this grant to the Sept. COD meeting. Group decides to ask members to bring ideas to the Sept. COD meeting. One visitor mentions idea of applying for generators.

2) John has registered for the annual meeting on Assembly Row for COD coordinators.

3) Senior Center grab bar issue

Town Manager John Mangiaratti contacted Mady about approval of a swinging grab bar for a rest room at the Senior Center. Mady, in turn, contacted Danny about this issue, in his capacity as co-access coordinator. Danny contacted a number of individuals including Tom Hopkins of the MA Architectural Access Board who informed Danny that a swinging grab bar is acceptable.

[Someone familiar with the issue might edit this part down to much much shorter.]

Re: Grab bar at Senior Center: back to the drawing board on that. COD, Nursing Service, Sharon Mercurio, are pushing for installation of a second grab bar in the stalls and bathroom that are designed for a person in a wheelchair. The stoppage was by the owner of the building. John Mangiaratti contacted Danny and Mady and wondered what they thought of the second grab bar on the right side of the toilet. There is a toilet and a large space on right. Heather York suggested a fold-down second bar. Would it be reachable by someone in a wheelchair? Someone post surgery was stuck on the floor recently. Would the second bar have helped them get up? Danny went to Frank Ramsbottom who said there may be a problem with folding bar: if someone leaves it in the down position, the next person using the toilet with a wheelchair would have their way obstructed. Danny tried to check with Tom Hopkins at Mass. Architectural Access Board. Tom was out on medical leave. Now Tom Hopkins says: yes, allowable. Ameliorated by sign or by staff members checking from time to time.

Motion described by Danny, moved by Franny:

COD to give a note to John Mangiaratti that COD has no concerns with a swinging grab bar. Danny, Joan and Frank Ramsbottom and Joan to look

into the question of grab bars on both sides of stalls all Senior Center stalls. Danny and JAll of this would be

absent any concerns from Frank.

**Franny moves the above, Lisa seconds.
Unanimous yes.**

Lisa expresses approval of John Mangiaratti's actions (brought by Laura Ducharme).

Board of Selectmen updates:

None, as no member of Board present.

Approve July minutes:

Lisa moves we accept the minutes with redlined corrections and others added here.
__ seconds.
Unanimous yes.

Danny moves that he check with Office of Open Meeting Law as to whether the process of secretary sending out minutes and accepting comments only to her and bringing a redlined copy with combined corrections on it to the next meeting for comment and approval (to speed up our review of minutes) violates any Open Meeting Law.

Franny seconds.
Unanimous yes.

10:30 Franny leaves temporarily, Joan and Lisa take over note taking.

Proposed form letter:

Visitor Terra Friedrichs presents a proposed draft of a form letter to be used by the commission when contacting entities regarding systemic problems. Discussion about personal names on end of letter (chair prefers not), about whether Mass. Office on Disability (MOD) should be involved (Danny suggests not), about whether this is our mandate.

Nancy moves that we revisit the letter at the Sept. meeting and to get input in the meantime from Town Counsel and Town Manager, about legalities and responsibilities. Leslie and Terra are responsible for the draft and comments should be sent to them and Leslie won't share the edits until Open Meeting in Sept.

Lisa seconds.
Unanimous yes.

Nancy suggests making cards that help people know where to go for information, to give to inquiring residents. People can still call the town, but it would be useful to have something at hand. Some people don't have computers.

Mady moves that Danny and Leslie will create a spreadsheet for Citizens Concerns on Excel, to be shared in DocuShare.

Danny seconds.

Vote yes unanimous.

Discussion about 5 year plan and strategic plan:

Discussion included question of whether the previous plan is not being followed or completed, and pros and cons of different levels of detail of plans.

Ended with a motion as follows (goals include previous goals we had and ones created with strategic planning consultant Sarah Bursky):

1. Permanent Goals and Objectives (can be amended)
2. Yearly formal evaluation of projects
 - a) Existing projects' future
 - b) New projects
 - human resources
 - fit into goals and objectives equitable [sic] [should this have said "equitably?]
 - balance between reactive and self-generated
3. Implementation
 - a) Confirm consensus on 2016-2020 goals. Keep as 2016-2020 or just call "COD Goals & Objectives. Proceed goal by goal until there is consensus.
 - b) Create spreadsheet of projects and choose project focuses.

Moved by ____.Danny.

Second by ____.Mady.

Vote: Unanimous yes.

In the meantime, we will focus on generating projects for the application for funding, put them into a cohesive document, and give the document to the Town Manager.

Updates about projects:

Pesha Visitor/Volunteer and Danny are still working on the handbook.

Franny: Effort on transportation initiative including Uber-Lyft type technology continues.

Danny: last time a unit that someone with only SSI can afford opened up was a year ago, that's how slow it is going. Even with Mass. Ave apartments approved for a 3

floor elevator building, residents in those buildings will have to be earning at least 40k per year to rent there. Won't have units available for people on SSI. It is possible Housing Authority will be able to purchase one. A few people have gotten together with idea that some other project or agency (not like Housing Authority which is busy managing) to buy up a bunch of condos that are available, perhaps purchase half a dozen, get more and more as they come up, they are pretty inexpensive on Great Rd., 150k or so, with the idea that Town could make them very affordable housing by deed restricting them at Town Meeting. That is more costly to do. It is called "condo buydown." 40B law...Nancy comments on a catch 22 in law.

Nancy: Nancy has found someone whose daughter in high school will work with two people Joan found, to get the puppets telling their stories again. Golden for community service. Goes on college applications. minimal time because script exists. Franny sent note to Drama director Jessica Harms and technical director Brendan Hearn following up a previous conversation with them to see if they can help Nancy and Joan make inroads into the school and help get Kids on the Block revived—in addition to Nancy and Joan's contacts.

Sept. agenda planned.

Documents shared at meeting: that must be put into docushare with these minutes:

- Draft letter written by Leslie and Terra
- Letter brought by visitor

Adjourned approximately 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Franny Osman