



## Commission on Disabilities

Meeting Minutes  
February 19, 2019  
9:30 am

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

**Present:** Mady Harvey (Chair), Nancy Corcoran (Today's facilitator), Lisa Franklin, Danny Factor, Franny Osman, Joan Burrows.

### 1. Opening

Facilitator **Ms. Corcoran** opened the meeting at 9:30 am.

### 2. Regular Business

- A. Approval of Meeting Minutes – The meeting minutes from the Commission's January, 2019 meeting were reviewed and it was decided that the January minutes would be considered at the March 2019 meeting.
- B. Citizens' Concerns:

I. Mr. Factor: An AB student was hit by a vehicle in the fall of 2018 at the intersection of Hayward Rd. and Jefferson. During the previous school year, another AB student was hit by a vehicle at the intersection of Hayward Rd. and Main Street. Gary Poisson, an Acton resident who has a child with a visual impairment and lives in Hayward Rd. neighborhood, would like to talk to the COD about traffic safety concerns in this neighborhood in regard to his child and other neighborhood children with disabilities that he is aware of. The COD decided that Mr. Factor will invite him to attend our March meeting where the matter will be put on the agenda.

II. Mr. Factor: Roxy Rocker is a resident of Boxborough who is interested in becoming an advocate for people with disabilities in our area. She would like to help organize a job fair with a wellness component and meet with the COD. The COD decided that Mr. Factor will invite her to our April COD meeting where the matter will be put on the agenda.

III. Ms. Harvey received a letter regarding a woman's service dog, having to do with the definition of "service dog" by the State and by the Town. As the issue has not apparently come before the Dog Park Committee or the COD, the COD decided that Ms. Harvey will invite her to our May meeting, where the matter will be put on the agenda.

In summary, invitations are as follows:

March- Gary Poisson, Hayward, Jefferson neighborhoods sidewalk

April- Roxy Rocker, Job fair with wellness component



May- Service dog

C. Announcements:

I. Ms. Corcoran said that she had retyped the recently approved form letter for responding to people who contact COD with concerns, and would be bringing it to the Town Manager for legal review.

II. Ms. Osman reported on the Unattached Accessory Dwelling Unit warrant item process and the upcoming public hearing at the Planning Board meeting that night at 7:30.

III. Ms. Osman said that the next Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting would be Thursday, Feb. 28 at 1 pm at the Senior and Social Services Center, 30 Sudbury Rd. The decision to make some meetings in the daytime and at the Senior Center reflect a desire to solicit more input from seniors who use CrossTown Connect services as well as have more involvement from seniors in TAC. TAC would discuss the CrossActon Transit (CAT) bus at that meeting. It was acknowledged that Acton's transportation landscape is complex and we should have time on a future agenda to learn more about Acton's services.

IV. Mr. Factor announced that the Board of Selectmen voted to support the 31-unit development of affordable and accessible housing proposed by the Acton Housing Authority for 348-364 Main St. Some units will be more affordable and accessible than others.

V. Ms. Osman updated the Commission on recent transportation meetings and initiatives she has participated in.

-Task Force on Performance and Funding of Regional Transit Authorities has had many meetings. Ms. Osman is on this Task Force, and the group is working to write its final report to the Governor and legislature, which will inform budgeting.

-After putting out a Request for Information, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) heard from six microtransit companies and heard presentations from each of them. MAPC also wrote a grant application to the state's Efficiency and Regionalization program to use Uber/Lyft/Taxi type companies to fill unmet needs in the Minuteman Advisory Group for Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) planning subregion's more rural communities, including Acton.

-Transportation Advisory Committee's next meeting will be at the Senior Center in order to get more public input. That committee will also look more closely at the CrossActon Transit (CAT) bus.

Boxborough is considering leaving CrossTown Connect. They are in need of a new Town Planner. They have a new Town Administrator, Ryan Ferrara. Their Social Services Coordinator, Lauren Abraham, has now filled the opening of Director of the Council on Aging.

**3. Materials for Town Meeting:**

Discussion of what materials would be distributed at Town Meeting.

**4. Discussion of Spring COD Retreat:**



Ms. Corcoran made a motion that the COD retreat be in June because the COD is too busy in May. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve, with Mr. Factor abstaining. The motion was approved.

Discussion of whether we should have the June 2019 retreat on the third Tues. in June, the 18<sup>th</sup>, in place of our June meeting, or on an additional date.

Ms. Franklin made a motion that the COD retreat be on the usual COD meeting day, June 18<sup>th</sup>. The Commission voted 4-0 to approve. The motion was approved.

Ms. Harvey made a motion that she orders the food, up to \$200, for the retreat. The Commission voted 4-0 to approve. The motion was approved.

Discussion of the acceptability of the privately owned, accessible, location of Half Moon Hill as a meeting location, as Ms. Franklin recalled the Town Clerk saying it wasn't. Mr. Factor confirmed that he had subsequently confirmed that the space was allowable.

Ms. Burrows said she prefers Windsor Green for personal feel and closeness and ease of parking. Ms. Corcoran said she prefers Half Moon Hill for the comfort of the chairs. Ms. Osman noted that Half Moon Hill doesn't have air conditioning.

Mr. Factor made a motion that Half Moon Hill be the location of the June 2019 retreat. Discussion of whether this location is acceptable and it was confirmed that the Town Clerk was in approval. 4-0 vote.

As she lives in that neighborhood, Ms. Osman offered to make several parking spaces close to the Common House available for the meeting, including the one assigned handicapped accessible.

**5. Reviewed master calendar.**

**6. Update of handbook:**

Mr. Factor reminded members to send 150-word bios to him.

Danny moved that further discussion of the handbook be postponed until the next meeting. He said he would distribute copies of proposed changes to the handbook ahead of the meeting. Ms. Franklin seconded. The Commission voted 4-0 to approve the motion. The motion was approved.

**7. Adaptive Bicycle Coalition:**

Ms. Johnson, not present, provided an online update of the Adaptive Bicycle Coalition. Ms. Osman said she would include the communications in the minutes.



“An update on the adaptive bike program: We had a really good first meeting. Our group is calling itself the Greater Acton Adaptive Bike Coalition. Joyce from Pedal Power said she's willing to sponsor three adaptive bikes that the store will rent out. Ross Lilley of AccessSport America might do an adaptive bike day for us if we can raise the money needed. Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail are encouraging us to apply for a grant through them. We've created online and hard copy surveys to survey the community to gauge the interest level in adaptive biking. The online survey is up and running. I'll be distributing the hardcopy survey to three COAs. Once we get feedback from the surveys, we can hold another meeting.”

## **8. Open Meeting Law Training Follow-up:**

Ms. Franklin mentioned at the January meeting that she has a list of ideas/to-do items that she thinks we need to follow up on that came up in the Open Meeting Law training. She didn't prepare her list today because she didn't realize that was what was being discussed here, so this topic will be put on a future agenda. She asked the Town Manager's Administrative Assistant Lisa Tomy and Town Clerk Eva Skaradek if there was a way to link to docushare for posting things shared between COD meetings. Eva suggested that Lisa Tomy assist Ms. Franklin in looking into setting up a COD docushare. Ms. Franklin wants to find out how onerous such a procedure might be to use before asking the members to decide if they want to go ahead with it or not. Lisa put a copy of the Open Meeting Law training book (the powerpoint used in the training) in the COD filing cabinet.

Ms. Franklin suggests that, like the Board of Selectmen, we have the wording in our agenda offering accommodations such as larger print or hearing access.

Discussion of what letters should be posted on docushare. Mr. Factor had concerns about emailed requests to put something on the agenda being inadvertently deliberative. Ms. Franklin would like to wait to see how difficult the docushare process is.

Mr. Factor made a motion that we confirm that it is our intention to see that all updates and announcements made to the COD email shell between meetings reach the public as soon as possible. Ms. Corcoran seconded the motion. The Commission voted 2-1 to approve the motion, with one member abstaining. The motion was denied.

Ms. Franklin and Ms. Harvey said they felt this motion is “frou frou”, which means frivolous, because it is already required by Open Meeting Law.

The chair, Ms. Harvey, asks for reconsideration of the vote. Now the Commission voted to approve the motion 3-0, with one member abstaining. The motion was approved.

## **9. Discussion of Accessible Dwelling Units (ADUs) and the proposed zoning change to allow construction of detached ADUs:**



Selectperson Ms. Gardner mentioned that Newton and Ipswich went through the process of starting to allow these detached ADUs. In 7 years, they had about 16 units go through the process. It costs money.

The COD had decided in January to ask the Planning Board to bring a proposed zoning change to Town Meeting that would allow Unattached Accessory Dwelling Units. Ms. Osman and Mr. Factor were assigned to draft and file a placeholder citizens petition in case the Planning Board did not submit their own ADU warrant item. There was a misunderstanding between Mr. Factor and Ms. Osman that resulted in Mr. Factor creating a citizens petition with included language (requiring of a special permit) that Ms. Osman did not agree with, and Mr. Factor also made a drafting error allowing ADUs to be built up to 2000 square feet, an error that can be rectified with a passage of an amendment from the floor. The idea of requiring a special permit, rather than the units being “by right” was discussed. Visitor Terra Friedrichs spoke in favor of the regulatory aspect of special permits. Most special permits are granted. Meanwhile, they provide a chance to for an abutter to oppose a unit in a oppose a neighbor’s unit if the abutter is uncomfortable. It was decided that Ms. Osman would speak in favor of the issue at the Planning Board that night, with no comment on the special permit vs. by right decision.

Ms. Osman made a motion that we support the Planning Board bringing the issue to Town Meeting. Ms. Corcoran seconded the motion.

Mr. Factor spoke in favor of people with disabilities, not the Planning Board, making decisions that would affect those people. Ms. Osman felt the by-right accessory dwelling units support people with disabilities the most. Assistant Planner Robert Hummel said the special permit process takes a few months to get through.

Ms. Osman clarified the motion to read as follows: “COD agrees on the concept of allowing people to have detached ADUs. Some of us are for special permit, some not.” Ms. Corcoran seconded the motion.

The Commission voted 3-0, with one member abstaining. The motion was approved.

#### **10. Access Coordinators’ Report:**

Discussion of Gould’s Plaza and Ace Hardware handicapped parking signage not being above ground. Mr. Factor made a motion that the COD support Acton Building Commissioner Frank Ramsbottom contacting the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (AAB) about both businesses not being in compliance with the the AAB code, calling for Frank taking action with the AAB as he sees fit. The Commission 4-0 to approve. The motion was approved.

#### **13. Adjournment**

At 12:42 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 January 2019