

Commission on Disabilities (COD)

Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2020
10:00 am
Acton Town Hall, Room 126

Present:

Full Members: Ann Corcoran (Chair), Joan Burrows, Lisa Franklin, Leslie Johnson, Franny Osman (on phone, so did not vote);

Associate Members: Peshia Kokis, Jim Snyder-Grant

Others: Visiting Residents; Director of Governmental Affairs Austin Cyganiewicz

1. Opening

Chair Corcoran opened the meeting at 10:00 am.

2. Regular Business

A. Shared Concerns (timely issues not on the agenda, formerly “Citizens Concerns”) – none

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – none

C. Announcements –

1. Ms. Franklin noted there will be a State House event March 12th from 11 to 1 that gathers people with disabilities statewide and their legislators and is a good networking event. Ms. Franklin encourages COD members and others in the public to attend.
2. Representative Jen Benson has resigned and there will be an election for her seat in March.
3. Ms. Osman reported continued work on the “Making the Connections” pilot program. Mr. Cyganiewicz and Ms. Osman attend the Steering Committee meetings in Sudbury for the program.
4. Town Meeting Improvement Committee will meet Jan. 22 at 7:30 pm.
5. The Town Manager will honor and thank Joan Burrows as COD founding member, in his newsletter this month.
6. Ms. Corcoran thanks all COD members for great work at the Meet and Greet Staff event in December, and other hard work.

D. Access Report –

1. Jim and Joan discussed the issue of access to a veterinary hospital with Building Inspector Frank Ramsbottom. Mr. Snyder-Grant visited the site. There were three issues: parking slope, ramp gap, and a slight narrowing around the building. The owners assured the COD they would help visitors by arrangement when the appointment was made. The Mass. Office on Disability approved the plan quickly,

- before the COD had time to weigh in. There was a discussion of who receives copies of variance requests and who weighs in on the issues. It was noted that in the past, everyone on the COD received the variance requests so were kept in the loop. Variance applications go both to the Building Inspector and the state.
2. Discussion of Middlesex Bank plans for Quill and Press site. Some question of rear path. Access and bike parking appeared correct. Ms. Franklin made a motion that the COD stay in communication with the Planning Department on this site. The COD voted 4-0 (Ms. Osman not voting remotely) in favor. The motion passed. Mr. Snyder-Grant will visit Kristin Guichard in Planning to discuss the design of the walkways.
 3. An individual complaint about a condominium building at 209 Great Road was followed up by Ms. Burrows, Mr. Snyder-Grant, and Ms. Kokis. The management said the building is old and “grandfathered” to not require ADA accessibility, but the COD members felt that lighter doors, more convenient parking, and a railing would be reasonable accommodations. It was noted that the Fair Housing Act and the Mass. Bill of Rights require reasonable modifications and reasonable accommodations. The Fire Chief has been contacted and it was suggested to the residents that the Independent Living Center can be contacted and may be able to help. Mr. Snyder-Grant wrote a letter requesting assistance from the Mass. Office on Disabilities in talking to the building management.

E. Selectmen Liaison Report – none. Liaison not present.

F. Report from Austin Cyganiewicz, Director of Governmental Affairs: Acton did not receive the state ADA grant but took ideas for next year (applications in the fall). There were many more applications than funding available. Director of Public Works Corey York will soon complete the Transition Plan. Mr. York will hold a public forum on the topic. There were fewer riders this month to the shopping center, could be weather related. It was noted that because Kmart is closing, trips to stores in Hudson and elsewhere will be especially important to some residents.

3. New Business

- A. Ms. Franklin made a motion that COD provide transportation to Open Door Theater’s March 29th performance of Into the Woods. The COD voted 4-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed. Ms. Corcoran made a motion that the COD pay \$200 for tickets to this performance. The COD voted 4-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.
- B. February COD activity will be a horticulture event with former Recreation Director Cathy Fochtman. Ms. Corcoran will contact Ms. Fochtman. Discussion of COD helping improve Acton Arboretum.

4. Adjournment

At approximately 12:00 noon, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.