

## **Commission on Disabilities (COD)**

Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2020

11:00 am

Virtual Meeting due to pandemic

Zoom Meeting Meeting ID: 523 860 729 Password: 516048

### **Present:**

Full Members: Ann Corcoran (Chair), Joan Burrows, Lisa Franklin, Leslie Johnson, Franny Osman

Associate Members: Pasha Kokis, Jim Snyder-Grant

Others: Director of Governmental Affairs Austin Cyganiewicz

### **1. Opening**

Chair Corcoran opened the meeting at 11:00 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 – none.
- D. Access Report – none.
- E. Selectmen Liaison Report – none.
- F. Report from Austin Cyganiewicz, Director of Governmental Affairs – Mr. Cyganiewicz shared the summary of the completed Transition Plan by email to the Commission. He has a copy of the long report in his office. You can look at it electronically. The plan includes parking improvements outside Town Hall and the library; bathroom improvements in the Senior Center; signage improvements at the Department of Public Works and the Transfer Station. Prioritization has four phases based on public usage. Phase I includes Town Hall and Memorial Library. Phase IV includes some improvements at the cemeteries. A powerpoint and the summary report were presented to the Board of Selectmen. Most of the projects will be included in the Capital Improvement Program. Other sources of funding included grants and the municipal budget.

### **3. New Business**

- A. Discussion of ongoing efforts by Town Staff and local organizations to keep people safe during the pandemic.

Friday mornings, Town Manager John Mangiaratti will hold a virtual “Java with John” on Town Radio 94.9 WAEM, on Acton TV, and available on youtube. He takes questions beforehand and during the live broadcast. Send questions to [manager@actonma.gov](mailto:manager@actonma.gov) .

Resident Marion Maxwell shares a daily email newsletter directed toward seniors but available to anyone.

Mr. Cyganiewicz described the Town pandemic response with regard to public transportation. Serious changes at Town Hall started March 17. Many Town buildings were closed. Town Hall staff started working from home. The Acton Rail Shuttle, Cross Acton Transit (CAT) Bus, and Dial-a-ride 2 van were suspended. (Dial-a-ride 2 and Rail Shuttle had the same driver.) Remaining vehicles are Council on Aging, Road Runner, and Dial-a-Ride 1, all available for day to day trips. If there is more demand, there is a fourth vehicle available. So far, there is decreased demand so the vehicles in use are sufficient. Procedure is to manage the number on the bus at one time to allow social distance. CrossTown Connect includes MBTA as model for procedures for distancing and disinfecting. Ridership has dipped. At this time, the Town encourages “use of personal transportation if possible.” But the Town wants people to know that the service is available if really needed. Ms. Osman suggests Town and Transportation coordinate with groceries to deliver food orders to people so no one who doesn’t drive has to go out by van or ride in someone else’s car in order to shop.

- B. The Commission remembers with sadness the loss of longtime member and chair of COD Mady Harvey. The COD wants to make a donation that recognizes the influence of Mady’s childhood at Camp Hill community, which was designed to include people with disabilities.  
Ms.

**Ms. Osman made a motion** that the COD will in some way contribute up to \$500 to the accessible playground being planned at Jones Field in South Acton, and ask for it to be in memory of late longtime chair of COD Mady Harvey. Ms. Franklin seconded the motion. Commission voted by roll call vote 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Even though Open Door Theater’s “Into the Woods” performance was cancelled, the \$200 we were spending on tickets to the show we will instead spend on facilitating use of the Kids on the Block puppets by Open Door Theater. Ms. Osman made a motion to this effect. Ms. Burrows seconded. The COD voted 5-0 by roll call vote in favor of the motion. The motion passed. Ms. Corcoran will proceed with the details.

- C. Discussion of handbook and website improvement: slow, ongoing process.
- D. Further discussion of the Arboretum project for which Cathy Fochtman attended our February meeting. Ms. Burrows and Ms. Corcoran spoke to Natural Resources Director and Staff Members Tom Tidman and Bettina Abe about ways to build an accessible raised garden. There

could be some memorial plaque but it won't be associated with specific plantings. Ms. Abe described a plan that had cement and rocks but didn't have a way for a wheelchair to get underneath to allow people to touch the plants. Ms. Corcoran suggested planters that are wooden, that a wheelchair can slide underneath. There is more work to be done on the design, but Ms. Burrows would like to earmark the funds to come out of our budget this year. Ms. Osman made a motion that we would spend up to \$500 if needed on the COD's contribution to an accessible section of raised bed at the Acton Arboretum kiosk area. Ms. Franklin seconded the motion. The COD voted by roll call vote 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed. .

## **1. Adjournment**

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