



Commission on Disabilities

Minutes

Tuesday, October 18, 2022, 10 am

Virtual Meeting at <https://actonma.zoom.us/j/94313570425> .

Members present: Franny Osman, Lisa Franklin (co-chair), Leslie Johnson
Associate member present: Melissa Wingfield
Select Board Liaison: Jim Snyder-Grant
Town Manager's office: Austin Cyganiewicz
Visitors: John G., Minhua, Paul

Announcements: November Council on Aging **van trip to the Registry of Motor Vehicles** has been rescheduled to a different time than previously planned.

Public concern: Broken overhead **lighting** at 23 Davis Rd. entrance has not been fixed. Management either does not answer or says they don't have time. Members suggested talking to tenantsupport@actonma.gov and bringing in the Health Department and Fire Department; and to let the Disability Law Center know.

Public Concern from last month about the **Ace Hardware door** seems to be unfounded. Building Commissioner Tom Moberg and Lisa Franklin checked it out and it is working.

Adaptive Bikes: Leslie reported that the Acton Area Adaptive Bike Coalition continues to work with Joyce from Pedal Power to order a new Delta bike—with \$600 coming from the COD as per Sept. 2022 meeting, and the rest from the Recreation Department. The Recreation Department also has the side-by-side bike that was donated.

Transportation: \$5000 coming from the Making the Connections program (multiple towns, hosted by Sudbury, funded by Mass. Community Compact program. Awaiting news on the Mass. Development grant. To use the additional taxi money, the Town will work with Rides by Joanne again and any other taxi company available. Ugapost Taxi of Acton was just granted a license by the Select Board.

Statewide news: Lisa asked Franny to share the Making the Connections info and other programs that add options for people with disabilities, as the statewide Independent Living ___ monitors transportation efforts and shares it with the federal partners. CODA didn't meet this month. Paul Spooner, the Executive Director of the

Metrowest Center for Independent Living and a stalwart disability activist, died this month.

Select Board Liaison report: There have been long conversations about the **Woodlawn Chapel accessibility** project. There was money for part of the fix in Community Preservation funds last year. This year, the Cemetery Commission is applying for CPC funds for design of the outdoor access. **The Select Board had no objections.** The plan is to use Chapel and Cemetery funds for the next steps inside, which includes moving an organ and building the accessible bathroom. Lisa suggests contact with the Center for Human Centered Design.

Approval of Minutes: Lisa moves, Melissa seconds, we accept minutes from **September 2022.** 3-0 approved.

COD Membership: There will be two full seats open in June, 2023 as Joan wants to become an Associate and Franny will leave formal membership.

Roles on the COD: In November, we will vote on the following slate: Pesha Kokis as chair, Lisa Franklin as co-chair, supporting Pesha.

After a visit with a friend at **Emerson's psychiatric wing**, member Leslie had questions about why the walls were so industrial and depressing and the décor so lacking in warmth. John mentioned that pink walls are supposed to be calming. Lisa moved, Franny seconded, to have Leslie, representing the COD, have a conversation with Emerson about the décor, focusing on the why rather than presenting opinion, acknowledging that we may not know the details of their decision-making. The COD voted to approve this approach, 3-0.

Lisa reported having been asked by a woman who wanted help with moving items to storage, **for a letter stating she had a disability.** This was needed only because she wanted to have school volunteers do the work the school required this letter. Our philosophy has been that it is the individual, not professionals, who determine if they have a disability. However, Franny moved, Melissa seconded, and the COD approved 3-0 that Lisa will write a light letter to Melissa Dempsey at the schools saying that our philosophy is that we don't decide who does or does not have a disability.

Spurred on by a request by the Town of Sudbury to see the **dining guide** COD created in the past, we discussed the question of updating the guide or not and in what form, if so. Some of us thought it would not be worth the work. No one wanted to follow this discussion with a full revision of the guide. Some thought we should work with Economic Development Director Julie Pierce-Onos to recreate it and in the process of asking stores and businesses what they do to be welcoming and accessible, we would be educating, celebrating, and advertising them. If they do nothing toward accessibility, the questions might spur them to do something. It was mentioned there are good apps to look up businesses and restaurants and their accessibility. Franny moved, Lisa seconded, 2-1 vote passed, that we will talk to Julie about reaching out to businesses.

Respect in listening: We reminded ourselves to really listen to others at our meetings, to stay on topic, respect others, talk about a decision or a thing and not about a person, don't roll eyes, don't interrupt, don't end with anyone feeling bad.

Adjourned 11:44 am.

Notes respectfully submitted by Franny Osman

Acronyms:

CODA Commission on Disabilities Association (Mass.)

COA Acton Council on Aging

ER Emergency Room

TAC Acton Transportation Advisory Committee

SMOC Southern Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc.

Minutes submitted by Joan Burrows, edited into template by Franny Osman