

MINUTES
Town of Acton
Commission on Disabilities (COD)
May 20, 2014

Members Present

Steve Baran, Danny Factor, Lisa Franklin,
Madeleine Harvey, Cindy Patton

Associate Members Present

Leslie Johnson

Associate Members Absent

Wen Li

Guests

Franny Osman (Board of Selectman liaison)

Call to Order 9:30 am

Citizen Concerns None

RECEIVED

JUN 17 2014

TOWN CLERK
ACTON

Announcements/Updates

- Danny reported that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) grievance procedure outlined in the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) was approved by the Board of Selectmen and signed by the Town Manager.
- We had requested that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator be required to take the Massachusetts Office on Disability ADA coordinator training, but Town Manager Steve Ledoux declined to do so, claiming that his schedule was too busy for him to take the time for this workshop.
- Danny reported that J.D. Head of the Acton School Department still has not filed for a variance on the Lower Fields. The Acton Building Department is following up on this issue.

- Lisa informed us that despite her efforts to speak with someone at pupil services about our presenting information on community living to special needs students preparing to leave high school, no one has yet to take responsibility for setting up such an event.
- Lisa also said that she followed up on Mady's suggestion of our submitting a short report/announcement to The Municipal Quarterly newsletter that arrives with quarterly tax bills, but was told that submissions are only accepted from town departments. Franny reminded us that if we wished, we could submit something via the Building Department.
- Cindy provided a short summary of the State's Work Without Limits Transportation Coordination conference that she and Lisa attended on April 17th. Copies of the minutes from that meeting were distributed.

457 Great Road Complaint

- We discussed complaints from the applicants for the variance at 457 Great Road which were that 1) we had intentionally neglected to submit a comment discussed at a special meeting on April 4th to the Architectural Access Board (AAB) regarding whether or not a special hearing was required; and 2) that COD member Danny Factor had used his relations with the AAB to unduly influence, ex-parte, a decision detrimental to their variance application. The group felt there was no validity to either of these charges (identifying specifics), and assigned Lisa and Mady to report our decision to the Town Manager. As the variance case is still open, we chose not to contact the complainants of our results, as the appropriate next step(s) should be determined by the Town Manager, Steve Ledoux.
- We agreed that in the future, any complaint should immediately be shared with the entire COD, and in this context, reviewed some Open Meeting Laws (OML) pertaining to the handling of this complaint.

COD Brochure.

- We all agreed that the newly completed COD brochure looks wonderful.

- Franny and Danny raised the question of whether Leslie had achieved success with her diligence of portraying diversity in the photos selected (there was further question regarding the identification of sexes in these photographs), but in the end, we deemed the balance to be acceptable.
- Lisa raised the question of people with intellectual disabilities having the right to sign release forms for the photos, as the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDS) believes that individuals no longer have this power once guardianship is assigned. Leslie cleared up the concerns satisfactorily.
- Lisa volunteered to find out from Staples – with whom the Town has an account – the cost of printing up the brochures. Based on the estimates received, we will determine at our next meeting how many copies to print.
- We congratulated Leslie for her excellent work on this project, and Steve for his assistance.

Separate Topic Not on Agenda.

- Lisa informed Sharon Mercurio of the Council on Aging and Laura Ducharme, Town Social Service Coordinator, that we are seeking a volunteer to take Wen Li's seat, and what requirements and realities a volunteer would face.
- We reviewed the issue of filling an associate member seat once Leslie becomes a full member.
- Danny objected to this discussion as he felt unprepared, since this item was not correctly listed under topics to be discussed at the meeting, but had been only listed under updates.
- Mady and others noted that time was of the essence with Wen moving before the end of summer, and that we should not wait an extra month to place our ad.
- Danny replied this would set a precedent, and we could then choose to have long debates over any items listed under updates, even though the idea of updates and announcements is to move quickly through items without sidetracking into long conversations. Given the necessity to proceed quickly on this item, Lisa moved that we take that risk, and Mady seconded the motion. The vote passed 4 to 1, with Danny opposing.
- The ad will be placed in The Beacon.

29 Knox Trail (Concord-Acton Squash Club) Variance. As the applicant for the 29 Knox Trail chose not to attend this meeting, we tabled the issue until our June meeting.

Annual COD Retreat.

- Our retreat will be held on July 9th from 9-3 in the Common House at 25 Half Moon Hill in Acton. There will be a suggested donation for use of the space.
- Many ideas were proposed for the retreat, but given time constraints, we were forced to eliminate a couple of them, although we will discuss them at future meetings.
- Topics for the retreat will be:
 - Trust/team-building (exercise with professionals)
 - Disability issues (broad discussion led by Lisa and Leslie)
 - New Members book (review)
 - Housing
 - Recruitment
- Items for the future (rather than the retreat):
 - Web page
 - Complaint policy

June Agenda. The agenda for our June meeting will include:

- 29 Knox Trail (Concord-Acton Squash Club) variance request, with or without the applicant present
- Number of COD brochures to order
- Discussion on future of the Acton Nursing Service
- How to handle request for a thank-you letter to Senator Jamie Eldridge for co-sponsoring the Alternative Housing Voucher (AHV) budget amendment
- Approval or article or letter to The Beacon on the 24th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) act.

Meeting adjourned

12:45 pm

Documents on docushare

- Transportation Coordination Meeting summary from meeting of April 17, 2014 (sent out by Massachusetts Human Services Transportation Department)
- Variance application for 29 Knox Trail
- Email from Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities and Somerville Commission on Disability requesting that we add our name to a group letter thanking Jamie Eldredge for co-sponsoring the budget amendment to increase funding for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program
- Letter from Massachusetts Department of Transportation and Massachusetts Office on Disability requesting assistance identifying locations in town for holding public meetings
- Recruitment ad for new members (for *The Beacon*)

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Lisa Franklin, Madeleine Harvey, Cindy Patton