

Minutes
Town of Acton
Commission on Disabilities
March 15, 2016
9:30 am, Town Hall, Room 126

Members Present: Madeleine Harvey, Cindy Patton, Lisa Franklin and Danny Factor

Member Absent: Nancy Corcoran

Associate Members Present: Leslie Johnson and Joan Burrows

Guest: Lori Krinsky, Franny Osman (Liaison for Board of Selectmen), Steve Steinberg

Call to Order: 9:35 am

Citizens' Concern: None

Announcements:

1. Mady participated in the Disability Policy Consortium conference call in March.
2. Mady went to a special session for parents and children with special needs at the First Parish Church of Acton & Stow Unitarian and she gave out the COD brochures.
3. Mady attended the Vin-Fen film festival which portrays people with disabilities.
4. Joan and Cindy are working on the inventory.
5. Lisa will be attending the Acton-Boxborough School Department's visioning meetings for their 5-year plan. There will be 3 visioning meetings on March 24 and another in April and September. Danny made a motion that we should send a delegate, either Cindy or Lisa (they can work it out), 2nd Mady, unanimous.
6. Danny said that there was a proposal by Terra Friedrichs to institute a tax on housing to create more housing available to low income people and people with disabilities.

Board of Selectmen's (BOS) report: Franny attended the CHAPA (Citizens for Housing and Planning) meeting for the homeless and other housing programs. Acton is the 9th most expensive town in the state for housing. Four hundred people who apply for housing don't get it. Leslie also attended this forum. A major part of the program was about homeless families. She also attended a meeting for the referral program for Acton residents to get counselors for mental illness. Lori Kinsky said the referral program used to be on the school's newsletter. March 28 is the date for the town elections. Peter Ashton (running for Town Moderator unopposed) is aware of the disability issues at Town Meeting. There is a new early train and Doug Halley (Director of Transportation) just put in for a grant to help with transportation for the elderly and people with disabilities. The governor is really pushing for towns to work together and regionalize.

Review of February 16 minutes: Mady made a motion to accept the February 16th minutes with corrections, 2nd by Lisa, unanimous.

Updates:

- **Acton-Boxborough Schools (ABS):** Danny still has not heard from JD Head (Director of Facilities for ABS).
- **Town Meeting Accessibility:** Danny e-mailed Peter Ashton (running for Town Moderator unopposed) about the disability issues at Town Meeting.
- **33 Nagog Park:** Frank Ramsbottom (Director of the Building Department) has approved Danny's e-mail to the town.
- **Teamworks:** No progress has been made in building the ramp, but Frank has given approval for Danny to contact Tom Hopkins (Head of the Architectural Access Board (AAB)).
- **Municipal properties/veteran's affairs building accessibility:** Danny needs to contact Andrea Ristine.
- **Kids on the Block (KOB):** Cindy met with Andrew Shen (Principal of the Grey Junior High School) and he enthusiastically approved the program for the new school year. Cindy needs to contact the Curriculum Coordinator for the elementary schools to discuss how to align KOB with the curriculum and what grade levels would be good for the program. We may be able to get donations to the town for Shaun (a new puppet for the skit that deals with mental illness). NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness) might be interested in asking their members for donations. Cindy made a motion that we solicit funds to purchase Shaun, 2nd Lisa, unanimous. Franny will check with the BOS to see if the COD can solicit donations for Kids on the Block. Franny found out that individual members of the COD can ask for donations but not the entire COD.
- **Update on Bylaws retyping:** Bylaws were passed out to commission members.
- **Debrief on the Regional COD meeting:** Lisa said an item of interest was on Title II and Title III which covers accessibility in public facilities and government buildings. The next CAM (Citizen Access Monitoring) training is June 29th and 30th. Bill 1323 is in the House Ways and Means Committee. This bill will align building codes in the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and AAB (Architectural Access Board). The ADA deals with civil rights and the AAB deals strictly with buildings and safety codes. Danny questioned if the ADA would cover employee areas?

Finalize project for mental illness objective: The COD is considering doing a presentation on mental illness. What do we center it around: giving hope to people with a lived experience of mental illness, showing a movie, give the audience some information (myths and facts, famous people with mental illness), and/or putting together a packet of information for the audience? Would NAMI be willing to send a speaker? Mady was questioning if we want to do all this work for a presentation. Leslie is more optimistic about giving a presentation. We need to divvy up the responsibilities. Danny said that Nancy sent him comments about the possible presentations. Nancy wants us to take small steps, a number of short presentations.

Danny said he liked what Leslie said, but would also like to see a moderated discussion. Lisa suggested that we ask NAMI if they want to partner with us for this endeavor. Lori said it needs to be more focused. She said that we need to pick our audience: the stigma of mental illness or education about mental illness. We need to narrow the topic. West Acton Village Works stage area might be a place to do this. Lori said we need to find people who would have experience. Mady said that a presentation is a lot of work like the resource fair. Franny says that a presentation is not as much work. Someone needs to be in charge of oversight. Lisa said that we already voted to find out the needs of people in Acton with lived experience of mental illness. Danny wants us to come up with a few different presentations. Lori said she would like to help. Leslie has some of the key documents needed for a presentation and will come up with types of presentations that are possible and bring her ideas to the next meeting. It was suggested that Bumblebees might be the type of movie to show. People with a lived experience with mental illness is the correct terminology for discussing this group of people.

Town Meeting Warrant articles that the COD may want to address:

Cindy said that article # 17, the Transportation Enterprise Fund, is on the consent agenda, but it may be necessary to speak to this article. Cindy also suggested that we may want to comment on article #25, Community Preservation Program, letter d, Regional Housing Services Program, and letter i, the Nara Miracle Field Sports Pavilion, article #26 which is about the Senior Center Lease and article #31 to Amend Zoning Bylaws about the definition of family. Lisa, Cindy, Joan, and possibly Danny are planning to attend Town Meeting. The following COD members will speak to the articles: Joan will speak to the Miracle Field article #25 (i), Lisa will speak to the Regional Housing Program Fund article #25 (d), article #31, Amending Zoning Bylaws is on the consent calendar but Cindy will speak to it if necessary (with Joan and/or Lisa as back up) and Lisa will speak to article #26, Senior Center Lease. Franny would like the COD to write a letter to Roland Bartl, to thank him for spearheading the article on the definition of family for the zoning bylaw. Danny made a motion to speak to the following warrant items: Community Preservation both d and i, Transportation, the Senior Center Lease and to the Amending Zoning Bylaw's definition of family, Lisa 2nd, unanimous.

Beacon articles supporting Town Meeting access / explaining what

accommodations are available: Joan and Lisa will make sure that the letter is sent in before the Monday morning deadline.

Town BOS elections: Lisa will contact JD Head about adding more handicapped parking at the Grey Junior High polling area for the town and subsequent elections. Is there a similar problem at the Conant School polling site? Cindy stated that the polling booth for people with disabilities was at the front door and not with the other booths in the back of the gym. She also stated that poll workers were overly solicitous and unaware that the special booth even existed. The poll workers are under Eva Szkaradek's (Town Clerk) charge. Lisa will send her an e-mail to see if this situation can be resolved.

Correction to last meeting minutes: Franny may be our liaison for the new fiscal year.

Lisa requested that we purchase posters dealing with the proper language for writing about people with disabilities. Danny made a motion to purchase 5 posters, 2nd Mady, unanimous.

Set Agenda for April:

Set June retreat date

Town meeting debrief

Finalize objectives for mental health project

Tour of inventory

Public relations

Housing proposal

Website update

Updates: ABS, Teamworks, 33 Nagog, KOB, Municipal Properties building

Variance application, 267 Great Road: Steve Steinberg, the applicant, was present. The variance is for the office building at 267 Great Road where curb cuts are necessary to bridge the driveway. The slopes are slightly out of code. The construction was done, but the drying left this problem. The slope is 3% instead of 2%. The only way to fix it is to tear it out and redo it. Frank suggested a variance. Lisa said that the grounds for a variance wording is that the repair is impracticable with no real benefit. Lisa and Joan attended the site visit. Lisa used her wheelchair and found that the problem is with the sidewalk. There was no problem with the east curb cut, but there was a problem with the west one. The cross slope was at 3% pulling and tilting Lisa into the ramp that would have put her into a very busy street. Danny said, with Lisa's experience, that the COD should oppose the variance. Lisa said that she felt the situation was too dangerous. Steve said that he could speak to the contractors. They would only have to rip out the one that is out of code. Danny made a motion to advise the AAB to oppose the variance, 2nd Mady, unanimous.

Motion was made by Danny to keep the Disability Index on the website, 2nd Mady, unanimous.

Adjourn: 12:36 pm

Docushare: Variance application for 267 Great Road
Respectfully submitted, Cindy Patton (Secretary)