

MINUTES
Town of Acton
COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES (COD)
August 16, 2016

Members Present: Madeleine Harvey (Chair), Ann (Nancy) Corcoran, Danny Factor, Lisa Franklin

Members Absent: Cindy Patton (Vice Chair)

Associate Members Present: Joan Burrows, Leslie Johnson

Others Present: Franny Osman (Board of Selectmen Liaison)

Others Absent: Kevin Antonelli (Volunteer)

Visitors: Betsy Kristl, Cheryl Snyder, Lea Walton

Call to Order 9:30 am

Citizens' Concerns :

- A tenant/landlord situation was followed up by Frank Ramsbotton, Acton Building Commissioner.
- Lea Walton - following up on a meeting with Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) - suggested that the Town sponsor a workshop here next spring. Perhaps other COD commissions could join us and help finance the program.
- Betsy Kristl would like to have a dog park in Acton, which she suggests would be good not only for the dogs, but for owners seeking socialization. She will return to our next meeting to discuss this further.
- Franny said that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) would like input on the Morrison Farm barn and house. There was discussion about the buildings and the land, and the possibility of raised garden beds, as well as seeking general information on use of the area.
- Joan noted numerous access problems at Kimball Farms in Westford. Although this Kimballs is located in an adjoining town, many Acton residents go there regularly. Joan contacted the Westford COD and spoke to Ray Clark, who will follow up on her concerns. She also noted that the Littleton commission has only two members who are sisters, and wondered whether our group might be able to help them.

Minutes Review :

Minutes of the June 16th COD retreat and June 21st meeting were approved with minor corrections.

Announcements

- Franny assured us that the electronic voting proposal would be voted on at the fall Town Meeting.
- Danny continues to work with Frank Ramsbottom on a curb cut variance at 267 Great Road
- Danny will be following up with the appropriate person(s) about the elevator signage at the Municipal Properties building (red house adjacent to Town Hall).
- The Resident Isolation to Engagement (RITE) group - run by Acton's Health Department Director, Sheryl Ball, is regularly attended by COD members Madeleine Harvey, Leslie Johnson, and Nancy Corcoran. Franny Osman usually attends as well. They will provide the COD with more information about the group via sharing of minutes etc.
- The Kids on the Block (KOB) project has run into obstacles, as the original puppet group has gone out of business, and other groups are trying to fill the void via social media. Various contacts have been made, but we are unable to get the actual scripts that are to be used, and have had issues with contacting the appropriate individuals at the junior high school. Joan and Lisa have taken over this project and are doing their best to move forward with it. A vote was taken and the group approved to continue with KOB.
- Franny reminded us that early voting will be an option in Acton this November. Lisa and Joan noted that the polling facilities need to be re-visited with an eye towards access.

COD Elections .

COD annual elections will be held at the commission's next meeting in September. Madeleine, Cindy and Leslie have all agreed to continue in their present positions if elected.

33 Nagog Woods

A short continuation of previous discussions took place regarding accessibility at 33 Nagog, where the Recreation Department and two personnel from engineering still have offices. Danny will be contacting Mark Hald (Assistant Town Manager) for another site visit to further discuss details.

Mental Illness/Mental Health Presentation

Leslie, with assistance from Lisa and Joan, will have an outline of this program at our next meeting. The presentation will be held in the spring, but we yet to find an appropriate date. There was discussion about the main objective(s) and ideas for this program.

September Agenda

The main topics for next month's agenda were agreed upon.

COD's 30th Anniversary

The Acton Commission on Disabilities is approaching its 30th anniversary, and we are considering ways to observe the occasion. It was agreed that this event deserves celebration (many Massachusetts towns do not have COD commissions, or have small ones that are not officially recognized by their cities and towns). But we further agreed that rather than applaud ourselves, we would like for the Town to acknowledge our commission; we need to give this further consideration and have asked Franny to raise it with the Board of Selectmen.

File Cabinets and Storage

We spoke briefly about this issue; where our files are currently located, use of the closet in the Town Hall lunch room, etc. Cindy and Joan have worked diligently to organize the commission's files over the past few months.

Transition Plan

All Massachusetts cities and towns are required to have a "Transition Plan" (federal regulation) and there is a fine if these plans do not exist or are out-of-date. Some portions of Acton's plan have been revised in the past couple of years, but others have not. We need to review the plan again and bring to the attention of the Town Manager the need for other portions to be updated so as to meet federal regulations. (The COD portion is up-to-date as of 2014, as are those of the Conservation Commission.)

Adjournment 12:40 pm

DocuShare Items : None

Respectfully submitted by
Joan Burrows and Madeleine Harvey