

**Town of Acton
COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES (COD)**

**MINUTES
September 20, 2016**

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

Associate Members Present: Joan Burrows, Leslie Johnson

Others Present: Kevin Antonelli (volunteer), Franny Osman (Board of Selectmen [BOS] liaison)

Visitors Present: Ann Chang (League of Women Voters Chairperson), Cheryl Snyder (visitor), Lea Walton (visitor)

Call to Order: 9:30 am

Citizens' Concerns: None

Announcements:

- Ms. Harvey presented information on handicapped parking (HP) fines and how this is handled in the town
- Ms. Harvey spoke briefly about developments within the Resident Isolation to Engagement (RITE) group which has been meeting for the past year, with representation from several COD members
- Ms. Burrows mentioned that she had written to WCVB TV objecting to a story in which the term "wheelchair bound" was used. She promptly received positive feedback from them.
- Ms. Corcoran discussed the proposed site for the Senior Center, explaining some of the reasoning behind the new location, and she urged members to vote on this issue at the special town meeting in October.
- Mr. Factor explained that the Camp Acton, adjacent to the Spring Hill Conservation Land, is to be made accessible, and perhaps COD should conduct a site visit. The area (Camp Acton) is also open to town residents.
- Ms. Burrows attended the Acton schools Vision meeting on September 15th, and spoke briefly about that. This discussion will continue at our next meeting.

Board of Selectmen (BOS) Updates: None

267 Great Road Variance Update. Mr. Factor asked Ms. Franklin and Ms. Harvey to comment on their site visit to the 267 Great Road curb cut in early August, They discussed their impressions, and we were told by Mr. Factor that Frank Ramsbottom (Building Commissioner) confirmed that the new grade meets requirements. This issue is now resolved and Mr. Factor will write letters to the appropriate individuals to say that they are now in compliance.

Minutes Review. August minutes were reviewed and approved.

League of Women Voters Presentation. Ms. Chang discussed the upcoming special town meeting on October 5th, and early voting for the November general election. Electronic voting is on the agenda for town meeting, which is an issue the COD has long been advocating for. Ms. Chang and Ms. Osman pushed for transportation to Acton Town Hall for early voting, which will be taking place over the course of 11 days, beginning on October 24th. It was pointed out that there are four important ballot questions, which Ms. Chang reviewed with us. We were reminded that these questions can be found online, and that we should acquaint ourselves with them before going to the polls. Mr. Factor inquired if there is a paper trail for electronic voting. Ms. Chang said that had not been discussed, but that it could be requested. Ms. Franklin asked if all voting locations have “Auto Mark”, which has features for both visually and hearing impaired individuals. Ms. Chang said she would check. The group also mentioned the value of the free move microphone at town meetings.

COD Elections.

A motion was made by Ms. Corcoran to accept the slate which had been presented at the last meeting. The vote was unanimous, with the outcome as follows for the next year, effective immediately:

Chair: Madeleine Harvey
Vice-Chair and Secretary: Cindy Patton
Treasurer: Leslie Johnson
Interim Secretary: Joan Burrows

Updates

- Teamworks has now complied with the order to build an accessible ramp, but other issues remain. Mr. Ramsbottom and the Architectural Access Board (AAB) may have to take further action.
- 33 Nagog Park continues to house the town’s recreation department and two members of the engineering department. The hope is that all remaining town employees will be able to vacate the property by September 2017 or September 2018 at the latest, but we discussed remaining issues that need to be addressed. A special meeting may be required to discuss a continued variance request.

- Mr. Factor and Mr. Ramsbottom are following up on the elevator instructions issue at the Municipal Properties site.
- There was some discussion about the house and barn at Morrison Farms, the need for restrooms that are accessible to persons with disabilities (PWD), and that the town is continuing to solicit and collect ideas for use of the property, and in particular, the house. As the Rail Trail will be going by this property, there is added need for adequate facilities. The RITE group has already begun plans for raised beds in the community garden, and accessible paths. COD voted to delegate Mr. Factor to send a letter to the selectmen with their suggestions.
- The issue of COD's 30th anniversary was tabled for another meeting.
- Ms. Walton reminded the commission about the importance of the Personal Care Assistant (PCA) program which is being threatened by the state to halt all overtime for PCAs. A rally was taking place in Boston simultaneously with the COD meeting, but individual members were intending to call the appropriate number during the break to indicate their support for continued overtime.

Town Meeting Warrant. In preparation for the special Town Meeting on October 5th, the COD reviewed a draft version of the warrant and decided on issues which they will support at the meeting, and who will speak to those issues. The COD endorsed three warrant items: 1) electronic voting; 2) the Senior Center; and 3) accessory apartments.

Kids on the Block (KOB) Program. Ms. Burrows and Ms. Franklin have both put considerable work into researching ways for COD to start a KOB program in Acton. This has been more complicated than anticipated, as the original organization is no longer in business, but Ms. Burrows and Ms. Franklin have been able to locate and talk to several individuals who are knowledgeable about the program and willing to assist us in our efforts. These include the assistant superintendent for students and special education director at the junior high school. Junior high students are needed to help run this program. Ms. Burrows and Ms. Franklin (with assistance from Ms. Patton who has worked with the KOB program in the past) will continue their efforts to bring this program to fruition in 2017. Ms. Franklin pointed out that while we have not yet been able to actually get this program up and running, we have met our objective of doing all the necessary research, locating the puppets, etc.

October Agenda. The committee decided on the main topics for next month's agenda (which will include a review of our 2016 goals and objectives, and preliminary ideas for those we may wish to undertake in 2017).

November Social Event. A date and site were chosen for COD's annual social event.

Mental Illness/Health Event. Ms. Johnson, who has been designated by COD to direct this program, provided the committee with an update. She has met with several committee members as well as other individuals to formulate the program, which will take place on May 8, 2017 at the Acton Memorial Library. The title of this event will be:

Listening to Mental Illness. While the commission had originally agreed that part of the program would be the screening of a “TED Talk,” Johnson has learned of a local person who identifies as having lived experience with mental illness, and it was agreed that it would be preferable to have a live person doing the presentation, followed by a Q&A period in which that individual would be available to answer questions and participate in a discussion. Johnson will make contact with this person and continue with organizing the program, with help from other committee members as necessary. She is also working on a mock-up for a flyer, and has been collecting pamphlets from various organizations for distribution at this event.

Adjournment 1:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by
Joan Burrows and Madeleine Harvey

Docushare items: None.