

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

**MINUTES  
November 23, 2016**

**Members Present:** Madeleine Harvey (Chair), Ann Corcoran, Lisa Franklin

**Members Absent:** Danny Factor, Cindy Patton (Vice Chair)

**Associate Members Present:** Joan Burrows, Leslie Johnson

**Others Present:** Franny Osman (Board of Selectmen [BOS] Liaison)

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**Call to Order** 12:10 pm

**Citizens' Concerns**

- Lisa noted a call she had received about a smoking issue at Sachem Way. She referred the individual to the appropriate authorities.

**Announcements**

- Dawn Bentley, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services for the Acton-Boxborough (ABS) Regional School District, wrote to Joan about a possible meeting with one or two COD members to discuss what ABS is doing to help students in the aftermath of recent high school suicides. (Two members agreed to meet with her.)
- Franny spoke about free transportation and other issues around the "Opt Outside" program on the Friday following Thanksgiving, which were to include activities and refreshments at NARA Park, The Discovery Museum and the Acton Arboretum.
- Danny was planning to get notes to the Architectural Access Board (AAB) for their November 28th hearing regarding 33 Nagog Park, in regard to an ongoing extension of a variance application.
- The AAB sent a letter to COD stating that the Women's Club had met all of its responsibilities in making their historic building accessible, including a lift to the upper floor, and was commended for its efforts.

### **Board of Selectmen Updates**

- Franny noted that discussion continues about possible use(s) of the Morrison Farm property, but that no decisions have yet been made.

### **Other General Discussion**

- The COD discussed whether or not to go forward with its annual social event on December 4th, in view of personal issues facing several members. It was decided to do so, but to keep the event simple.

### **Change of Agenda Format**

- It was agreed that in the future, updates will be presented at the end of the meeting. This is taking up too much meeting time, and will likely be shorter if discussed towards the conclusion of the meeting, allowing more time for the issues at hand each month.

### **Minutes**

- Minutes of the October 18th meeting and special November 4th meeting were approved with minor corrections.

### **Mental Health Program**

- Leslie gave an update on the mental health program the COD will be presenting in the spring. She now has two speakers lined up for this event, and the room is booked at the Acton Memorial Library. The COD has yet to agree to a title for this event, and figure out how best to publicize it.

### **Resource/Newcomers Guide**

- There was brief discussion about where to distribute these guides.

### **Updates**

- Danny is continuing to handle the 33 Nagog Park issue
- Municipal Properties, no update
- Windsor avenue sidewalk issue awaiting builders to complete construction
- Teamworks awaiting a full architectural review (AAB and architect already onboard)
- Kimball Farms, no update
- Accessory apartments, no update, but something we want to keep on our radar screen for future town meetings or whenever the issue arises again
- Concord Bank of America access issue, no update

### **COD Awards**

- It was noted that COD used to occasionally present awards to citizens or groups helping our cause. We have an individual in mind for the next one; it was decided that we should present this at the COD's 30th anniversary in summer (as well as any others we deem appropriate).

### **Suicide Prevention**

- There was a very brief discussion/debriefing about the COD's special suicide prevention meeting in early November, and the fact that one or more members had been attending other special meetings about this issue presented by the Town.

### **Objectives for 2017**

- The COD decided against making a decision on specific objectives for the coming year. In part, this had to do with the fact that key members of the commission were absent, and we felt that this major decision must be made by the whole group.
- Mady (and others) also questioned whether we need to have specific objectives each year? We still have 2 holdover projects from years past, as well as a large upcoming project (i.e., Kids on the Block, the mental health program, and COD's 30th anniversary celebration), and we do not have enough people "in the trenches" to do the work. Various members of the commission have work obligations and/or are dealing with serious personal and medical issues; taking on new projects each year is overwhelming and results in one or two people doing the lion's share of the work. Our main duty is to be responsive to the community and help in all the ways we can, not necessarily put on annual programs.
- Ann suggested (and all agreed) that we should hold a special meeting to discuss these matters; we need a leisurely discussion about our philosophy and thoughts on how to proceed so as to come to agreement and avoid burnout of individual members.

### **December Agenda**

- A draft agenda was set for December

### **Kids on the Block**

- No discussion, other than an agreement to continue to move forward with this project if possible.

### **Adjournment:**

2:20 pm

Respectfully submitted by  
Joan Burrows and Madeleine Harvey