

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

**MEETING MINUTES
November 21, 2017**

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

Associate Members Present: Joan Burrows, Franny Osman

Others Present: 3 members of the general public

Call to order: 9:30 am

Citizens' concerns:

- Danny shared a citizen's concern about Access Pedestrian Signals (APS) in Acton. Lisa has had individual conversations with Corey York, Director of Public Works. The matter does not require further attention from the COD at this time.

Announcements

- Mady attended the New England TASH (The Association for the Severely Handicapped) meeting in early November, sitting in on several interesting sessions.
- Lisa noted that our by-laws say all members may vote. Mady and Danny disagree; Mady cited what is stated in Acton's bylaws, but this will be followed up with Jeff Dougan of the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) about state practice. Further discussion was tabled for another meeting.
- Danny has attended housing meetings dealing with Parker Street affordable housing. Nancy noted that there would be open meetings soon.

Minutes

- The October minutes were reviewed and approved with edits.

30th COD Anniversary Debriefing

- Nancy handed out notes she had made regarding the event.
- Members went around the table sharing their opinions about the event.
- The general consensus was that it was an excellent and successful event, exceeding COD's expectations, including a wonderful turnout.

- There was discussion about reimbursement of expenses associated with the event.
- Lea Walton (guest) said that she had taken many photos of the event and would be pleased to share them with us.
- Amanda Bailey, Chair of the Acton Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SPEDPAC) noted that the event was a real tribute to former COD members.
- Nancy stated, however, that she and Joan could have used more assistance in setting up the event. Although Leslie developed flyers, and Mady and Leslie distributed them, the set-up was more involved than originally anticipated, and Nancy wished there had been additional help. There was general discussion about members of the COD taking on discrete projects, and how many other members can or should get involved based on their other responsibilities and time constraints.

Group Dynamics

A strategic planner will be joining a COD meeting in spring of 2018 to assist us with goals and objectives. In the meantime, the group is cognizant of interpersonal issues that need to be addressed as we move forward. Problem issues identified were:

1. Pace and content of meetings
2. Members feeling under-appreciated
3. Repeating mistakes
4. Minutes
5. Updates
6. Quiet members vs. talkative ones
7. Time allotted for guests
8. Executive sessions
9. Agenda

In terms of going forward, Joan suggested we have another separate meeting. Lisa recommended that we wait for the strategic planner. Danny voted to table further discussion, and the group voted unanimously to do so.

Medical Appointment Transportation

- A guest, Dennis Caristi, joined the group to discuss problems he has experienced with getting rides to medical appointments, and issues with dispatchers whom he feels have not been responsive enough, and/or need more training.
- Franny noted that the town is about to get a new van and needs to keep expanding, but that this does not resolve the issue.
- There was considerable discussion around Acton transportation, the improvement in rides, and yet the problems that remain.
- Franny and others are already working regularly on these issues through the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Lisa offered to work personally on this issue with Dennis, as she regularly uses Acton's transportation services, works with the dispatchers, and has had success with the system.
- There was discussion as to whether this is a COD issue or whether it should be left to TAC and Doug Halley, the Town's Transportation Coordinator.
- The following motion was made: COD will not take on this issue. However:
 - Franny will work with Doug Halley and report back to COD

- COD will continue to provide input to Doug via Franny
- The focus will be on:
 - Prioritizing medical appointments
 - Measurable goals to reduce the ride rejection rate to zero
 - Dispatchers becoming more facilitating
- The vote was 3 to 2 in favor and 1 abstention.

Town Meeting Warrant Discussion

- COD agreed on matters we wish to address at the December Town Meeting, should it become necessary to do so. These are:
 - Sidewalk on High Street (COD in favor)
 - Schools: move ahead with feasibility study (COD in favor)
 - Recreational marijuana (COD in favor of temporary but not permanent ban)
- Amanda Bailey noted the importance of the COD's involvement in the school access issue, as there are major problems currently, and it is a "civil rights" issue.
- Amanda and Joan agreed to jointly write an article about this matter for *The Beacon*.

Town Manager Search

- Danny attended a recent meeting on this search. There was no further discussion.

December Agenda

- A tentative agenda was set for December 2017.

Updates/Old Business

- Danny sent around updates prior to the meeting on all access items being worked on by the COD. All are in progress, several being coordinated with Frank Ramsbottom, Acton's Building Commissioner.

Adjournment 12:40 pm

Docushare Items:

- Updates/Old Business (will be added to docushare when possible)
- Nancy Corcoran's handout about issues relating to COD 30th anniversary

Respectfully Submitted
Joan Burrows and Madeleine Harvey