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Town of Acton Commission on Disabilities
Minutes June 14, 2013 West Acton Baptist Church 150 Mass. Ave.

Members present: Danny Factor, Lisa Franklin, and Wen Li
Guests : Steve Baran, Liaison COA; Katie Green, Liaison BOS; Madeleine Harvey; Cindy Patton; Jason Denoncourt and Mike Kunz, variance applicants for 100 Nagog Rd.(Documents on Docushare: Variance application for 100 Nagog Rd).

Citizens 'Concerns: Someone from the School Board had approached Danny about accessibility. She was unable to be present today, and Danny is not sure if her concern was as an individual, or as Town government. He will follow up and invite her to a future meeting possibly in August. Jim Snyder – Grant from a town committee, wants to do a survey on accessible recreational trails. We agreed that we couldn't know if we can assist with this, or if we have time for it, until we hear from him. Danny will invite him for August.

Volunteers We agreed that using volunteers to be of direct service to PWD in town was not a wise idea due to the prevalence of abuse in vulnerable populations. This does still leave the need of those who fall through the cracks. Wen mentioned Care.com a website that matches possible employees seeking jobs with those looking to hire someone. The organization does background checks on those answering job openings. As this still leaves individuals needing help, but unable to pay. Steve said the Council on Aging has volunteers sign some sort of release form. He agreed to invite Sharon Mercurio, Director, the Council on Aging, and Laura Ducharme, Town Social Service Coordinator, to the first of our meetings they can both attend. We also discussed the needs of the high school volunteers to do a task that is fulfilling, not just busy work. We'd like to involve students with special needs in volunteer work (not necessarily just ours).

COD Housekeeping We talked about all the little things that need to be done continually to keep the Commission working effectively, and talked of simply dividing these up amongst ourselves in September rather than vote for officers. The town does expect to have a few individuals identified by titles (chair or co-chairs) but otherwise deciding who is responsible for what is up to us. Danny is keeping the list and any further ideas will be submitted to him. Cindy suggested the idea that the minutes be kept by alternating people during the meeting, and assembled and edited by a designated person later, in order that note takers have a chance to participate and not feel overwhelmed by the speed necessary to keep pace for the whole two hours.

Minutes from May 14, May 28, January 15, and January 7 were all approved with amendments and corrections. It turns out that there was only one meeting in December, so we are now completely up to date with our minutes.

Finances : We approved to spend \$70 for the rest of the fee due to the West Acton Baptist Church (Lisa made an error about the cost of the room the first time we voted). Danny will write them a check and we will reimburse him from our funds. We also approved \$106.15 to reimburse Deanne for the food provided for lunch. (sandwich platter, fruits, and vegetables from Roche Brothers)

100 Nagog Road

Cindy and Lisa visited the site with Mark Barbaradoro, Building Inspector of the Acton building Dept. The owner was unable to meet us at the last minute due to traffic. Applicant is renovating vacant office building. Parking lot has raised island in the middle the slope and the cross slope of route from island

to entrance are off by a few degrees in several spots. We recommended approval of the variance with additions of a smoother surface path en route provided and up to four HP spots located closer to the entrance and the more level routes.

Education Topic: We decided to use "Independent Living" (philosophy and movement) as the subject that we will learn more about and teach to the wider community. Katie suggested that we use the first part of the year to research and share, and the second half to present activities to the public. Danny offered to discuss the current state of The Olmstead Act. We felt that the topic keeps coming up, covers many other issues, and is something Deanne and Lisa seem to know about (We'd like to benefit from Deanne's expertise while she is still here)

Website : We discussed a lot of items we'd like to display on our website. Mady reminded us not to have too much, and that the important thing was for a new person to be able to read it and get a clear idea of what we are all about and what we do. She was not able to get this sense when she first read our present website. Danny drew up a sketch of what the web page should look like, but Wen told us that it was more effective to leave the web designer the freedom for that, and that there is usually a set template that they work with. We assigned Wen the task of meeting with Katelin Downer of Acton's IT Dept to see if she is the person to do this, or if we should look for a volunteer to do this. Lisa mentioned that it was very important to make sure that our site would be compatible with voice reader programs. Lisa will check with the Mass commission on the Blind to see which program is most commonly used.

Special Town Meeting: The reserved seating was very helpful. There were two pieces of equipment which had inadvertently been left on two of those seats, but were removed immediately when this was pointed out to the meeting volunteers. This was an exceptional meeting, in that it required secret voting by ballot. Ballot boxes were placed on the level where there was reserved seating for people with mobility issues and the one reserved wheelchair space were located. The League of Women Voter volunteers did their usual excellent job of being sensitive to access needs, and asked each individual seated in the reserved row if they would like to go to the ballot box, or have the box brought to their seat. There were several citizens who expressed appreciation for this option. The discussion part of the meeting continued to be difficult for some during the hand raising vote as we did not have sticks to increase visibility. Katie mentioned that Janet is arranging for a small meeting between Lisa, Deanne, Eva and Don rather than have to try to discuss this with the entire Board of Selectmen. Katie reserved the right, on our behalf, to have time on a future BOS agenda if this initial meeting does not resolve current concerns. Katie will attend this small meeting when it is scheduled.