

Minutes
Town of Acton
Commission on Disabilities
March 17, 2015

9:30 am, Town Hall, Room 126

Members Present: Danny Factor, Madeleine Harvey, Cindy Patton, Lisa Franklin

Associate Member Present: Leslie Johnson

Associate Member Absent: Karen Troy

Guests: Franny Osman (Board of Selectmen Liaison), Kevin Antonelli, Myra Zuckerman

Call to Order: 9:30 am

Citizens' Concerns: None

Updates: The variance on 100 Nonset Path was accepted. Danny is making contact with J.D Head and Frank Ramsbottom to follow up with the schools about access issues. There are two new building inspectors Brian McDonald and Norman Franks. The schools are looking for a new Director of Pupil Services. The public meeting date is March 23, 6:30 pm to 8:45 pm at the Acton-Boxborough Regional Junior High School library.

Announcements: Lisa talked to Jeff Dougan about the new director of the Massachusetts Office on Disabilities (MOD). Jeff asked that we send him a letter detailing how we have interacted with MOD in the past. Lisa has the letter written but it is not printed. She described the content of the letter. Motion by Danny to approve letter, 2nd Mady, Unanimous

Board of Selectmen's report: None

February Minutes: The minutes were accepted with corrections.

COD policy re involvement in individual complaint cases: Danny spoke with Jeff Dougan (MOD) about what the involvement of COD's should be in individual cases. Jeff said that the COD should have more of a resource mission. COD's do have the right but not the necessity of being involved. Lastly, if there is a situation of discrimination the state board, Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), should be contacted. The individual can be encouraged to call the MOD that can give some level of help in filing the case. If the case has broader applications the MOD can join with the citizen in bringing the issue to the MCAD. Lisa said that the history of the COD policy was not to get involved unless there is an incident that repeats. COD already gives advice to citizens. We are an advisory body for the town. That could put us in between the individual and the town. Franny mentioned this to the Economic Development Committee (she is the Board of Selectmen liaison). Franny's job is to:

educate, give advice and listen. Motion that the COD policy be that we consider all options mentioned by Jeff. 2nd Lisa, Unanimous.

Citizen's complaint follow-up re Willow Books, 279 Great Road: Myra Zuckerman joined the conversation about the specific incident. She felt that she really went overboard in her response when the event happened, so she does not want to pursue this further. Myra spoke about the letter from Willow Books store owner, Dave Didriksen, and responded to the content of that letter. Myra and the owner have had past differences. Her questions are where can you take autistic children, and where are the resources to help autistic children? Myra has decided not to go to the store anymore. Lisa said that there are situations where it is not about disabilities. Danny's opinion is that it is a disability issue. He was concerned about what the COD should do. He said that there should have been a different way of handling this. There should have been education about the issue at the time. Danny would like to see a letter written to both Dave and Myra explaining our position. Lisa said that a business does not have to be a place to bring children. It is not a place to spend time. Myra said that they almost always bought something. Mady thought that she could have spoken to the owner ahead of time. Leslie said that there are points on both sides and supervising two autistic children can be stressful. The resources of the COD can help people feel less isolated and give suggestions about resources to help the person build a network. Mady wondered if this would have been a problem with children in general making noise. Franny felt that this did not happen immediately. It was something that had built stress over time. Cindy added that businesses are not necessarily a place of recreation for children. Danny is concerned that Myra has reflected about this situation, but Dave Didriksen still feels that he did nothing wrong. Motion made by Lisa that this was not a disability issue. 2nd Cindy, 2 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. Motion that the COD address autism as a self-education topic sometime in the future. 2nd Mady, Unanimous. Motion by Danny that the COD write letters to both sides explaining what would have been a better way to handle this situation. There was no second.

Resource Fair: planning and progress updates:

- The COD will recommend questions that the videographer should ask the resources at the fair. Members were asked to e-mail questions to Kevin.
- Leslie made a great flyer. She will add "if you have questions contact Lisa Franklin at ...". Mady and Leslie will distribute the flyers. If you have any further ideas of placements contact Mady.
- Cable TV will be putting information about the fair on scroll and will be videotaping the fair. Kevin will stay in touch with the cable station to make sure that this is happening.
- Ads have been placed. Danny will be putting an ad in the Beacon next week. Danny will put the event on Facebook event page next week. The event notice will enable you to send word to friends about the event. People can also sign up for the event.
- Kevin is doing name tags.
- Physical layout was discussed. Danny will call about getting more tables from the schools. It was stated that this should be a last resort.
- Franny suggested that we send a group e-mail to resources stating who the resources are who that will be at the fair and inform them that a videographer will be taping the fair. Cindy

volunteered to do this. Please send Cindy e-mail addresses of contacts stating who will attend the fair. This needs to be done by March 29.

Progress Chart: There were no updates. The progress chart will be attached to the minutes.

Town Meeting:

Access Issues: It was suggested that we should have a sign-up for the 2016 Town Meeting of those who would like closed captioning at the Town Meeting. We should also have the sign-up at the fair. Danny will make up a sign-up list. Eva Szkaradek and Don McKenzie were invited to this meeting. Don was not able to come and Eva declined to come.

Danny will ask Eva if there will be signs for the reservation on the seats for the mobility impaired and about the requested table.

Warrant Articles: Franny talked about the importance of the Transportation Enterprise Fund (Warrant #19). Cindy suggested that articles 4, 9, 18, 19 and letters F, G and J of article 24 may warrant endorsement by the COD. The articles were discussed and Danny motioned that warrant articles 4, 9, 18, 19 and 24 should be endorsed by the COD, 2nd Lisa, Unanimous. Danny said that we should write a letter to the Beacon about these articles. 2nd Lisa, Unanimous. Cindy will e-mail the list of articles to everyone. COD members will speak to the following articles if necessary: Leslie 19, Danny 9, 18 and 24, Lisa 4 and 9. There was a discussion about article 40B, Acton Housing, and if it should be given COD endorsement. There was a motion to endorse 40B by Lisa, 2nd Danny, 2 abstentions. 1 in favor, 1 against. The motion did not carry. Motion by Lisa that the letter to the Beacon be only on transportation, 2nd Mady, Unanimous. Kevin offered to write the letter with Franny's assistance. Lisa will write a letter to the Beacon, dictated by Danny, about accessibility issues at Town Meeting.

Recruitment (Steve Baran Replacement): Volunteer Coordinating Committee's representative says that there is a strong candidate for Steve's empty seat.

Agenda for April meeting:

Town Meeting assessment
Progress Chart
Resource Fair
Steve's Commemoration

Street Light at 323 Central Street: Danny summarized Rajiv Madan's issue about a street light that is not working. Danny e-mailed R. Madan and Taryn Sundberg and Municipal Properties about the situation. The light has been fixed. Danny would like the COD to do a fact finding to find out why it took so long to fix this light. Danny made a motion that there should be a verbal conversation with Municipal Properties. 2nd Lisa, Unanimous. Lisa will do this.

Remote Access: Moved to May meeting.

The annual retreat will be on Tuesday, June 9, from 9 am to 3 pm.

Adjourn: 1:05 pm

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Patton (clerk)