

**Minutes**  
**Town of Acton**  
**Commission on Disabilities**  
**April 19, 2016**  
**9:30 am, Town Hall, Room 126**

**Members Present:** Madeleine Harvey, Cindy Patton, Lisa Franklin, Nancy Corcoran and Danny Factor (arrived at 10:00 am and left at 11:05 am)

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

**Guests:** Kevin Antonelli, Cheryl Newey, Franny Osman (Board of Selectmen Liaison) and Lori Krinsky

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**Call to Order:** 9:35 am

**Citizens' Concern:** Carolyn Kiely wrote to Mady for information about helping to care for her 45 year old cousin. Her immediate need was how to navigate Medicare. Members were able to give her several resources to help with the situation. A friend of Mady's was looking for information to help her care for her son. Information about resources was given by the COD members.

**Announcements:**

1. Thank you to Joan and Cindy for working on the inventory.
2. Thanks to Leslie and Joan for working with Lori Krinsky to make a summary of available resources for persons with a lived experience of mental illness.
3. Mady also announced that a good source for help can be a telephone call to 211. They have many resources to share about disability issues.
4. Mady reminded the members that our first self-education session on mental illness will be held on Wednesday May 18<sup>th</sup> at the Town Hall, room 126 from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.

**Board of Selectmen's (BOS) update:** Franny is going to the May 3<sup>rd</sup> Statewide Mobility Conference dealing with transportation. She said that we need to get the information out about the fixed-route bus. Franny also announced that the next Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) meeting dealing with transportation is on May 26 with the location to be announced later. Acton is applying to become a Complete Streets Community. The town has to make a plan to get \$ 40,000 from the state's Metro Area Planning Council. The application must be in by June 2016 and the work must be completed by June 2017. The Rail North-South Link meeting was very successful.

**Review of March 15 minutes:** Mady made a motion to accept the March 15 minutes with corrections, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lisa, unanimous.

**Updates:**

- **Acton-Boxborough Schools (ABS):** Lisa and Cindy are going to the school's visioning meetings. Danny was interested if the code changes can actually be done.
- **33 Nagog Park:** Danny said that his letter to the town needs further revision. Did we check to see if there is an accessible bathroom on another floor? We need to maintain that the variances are not about the elevator, the handrail and the automatic door. Danny said that the letter will be going out before the next meeting. The lease will be up on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July.
- **Teamworks:** Danny talked to Tom Hopkins (Director of the Architectural Access Board (AAB)) who is going to look at the wording to see what Teamworks needs to do to bring it up to code. He will inform the COD about what changes may be necessary to meet the codes. The ramp is still not built. Plans were already approved so the ramp should be built. Danny will stay current on this matter.
- **Municipal properties/veteran's affairs building accessibility:** Frank Ramsbottom (Director of the Building Department) spoke to Tom Hopkins and not all the information signs on how to use the lift are in braille and there should be a Handicap Parking (HP) spot. He will work with Cindy and Frank on this.
- **Kids on the Block (KOB):** Cindy said there has been no progress. She still needs to contact the Curriculum Coordinator for the elementary schools.

**Determine June Retreat Date:** The June retreat will be held on Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup> from 9 am – 3 pm. Lisa will sign up for the conference room at Windsor Green. Franny will also reserve the Common Room on Half Moon Hill.

**Town Meeting review / evaluation:** Lisa spoke to article 17 about funds for transportation. The captioning was very helpful. There is still no improvement on standing to vote. We need to keep working on this issue. Nancy said that we should talk to Peter Ashton about issues that still exist. There is also a problem with using tellers to count votes. When we have to use tellers they should be organized before the Town Meeting begins. Our position is that there should be no hand raising which can be a problem for some people. Danny is sending Peter Ashton an e-mail thanking him for the advancements and other possible issues.

**Mental illness project update / planning:** Leslie said that they are interested in having NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness) do a presentation called "In Our Voices", but NAMI is already giving a presentation in Acton in the fall of 2016. The event will focus on the stigma of mental illness and will also serve as a fund raiser. Perhaps we should wait to give our presentation until next spring (2017). Joan, Leslie and Lori collaborated in making a summary of available resources for those with lived experience of mental illness. This is not an exhaustive list. The summary was e-mailed to COD members. NAMI may want the assistance of the Acton

COD. We need to spend some time in self-education. Nancy said that perhaps we should send an individual to their next meeting to see if they would like help or to co-sponsor with their event. If the purpose is to raise money this might be an issue. Lori said that perhaps we should contact other boards in Acton to spread the word around to people who might be interested. Lori had an idea about looking at the Wakefield High School's website with resources for their students. The first page is a list of resources in town. It also provides connections to counseling, referrals to counselors, crisis management and mental illness. Our goal is about out-reach. Should we have a film or just a discussion about mental health issues? At the presentation, we could hope for more people but if we reach one person that is our goal of out-reach. What would be the best draw? Lisa says listening should be what this event is about. Lori says perhaps we should design a referral website. Nancy said that the website is good, but she also said that a short film with food and drink provided would give the bridge to people with lived experience of mental illness to talk about some of the issues. Leslie said that there are resources out there that could be very helpful to families if they knew that they exist. For example, there are Club Houses across Massachusetts. There is a Club House in Burlington and they send a van to Acton to pick up people who cannot drive. Lisa said that we need experts at the presentation. Mady agreed that a short film and discussion would be good. NAMI holds a support group at St. Mathews every two weeks. Lori's concern is that people would come for answers and if there was no one at the presentation to answer their questions there could be a problem. Lisa said that we should advertise that this is for people to come together for a discussion. Leslie has the information to get the conference room at the library. Lisa moved that we continue to support Leslie as she develops a gathering for a film and open discussion, Nancy 2<sup>nd</sup>, unanimous. Ted talks may be the way to go because they are short.

**Tour of files / file cabinet / COD storage:** COD members toured the file cabinet and the closet where COD materials are located.

**Housing proposal before Acton Housing Authority (COD involvement):** Danny said that there is an idea that Terra Friedrichs is supporting. What if there was a 2% tax for housing? There are waiting lists of low income people (below \$50,000) for housing in Acton and 28 % of people with disabilities are in or below the poverty level. There is no firm proposal to endorse. Lisa said that the tax already exists. Danny said that it doesn't already exist. There are empty condominiums and finding the money for the town to be able to make those condominiums available to people with disabilities could use the money from this new tax. The Housing Authority is about renting. Acton is trying to be more inclusive. Nancy said that the ability of people in Acton to continue living in Acton should be important.

Danny left at 11:05.

**Public relations article(s) / photos on variance:** Moved to the next meeting so that Danny can be involved in the discussion.

**Set Agenda for May:**

Prepare for the June retreat

Check summer quorum and summer activities

Mental illness project

Public relations around variances

Updates: AB Schools, 33 Nagog Park, Teamworks, Municipal Building, Kids on the Block

**Website discussion:** Lisa said that she could be the contact person to decide if referrals were accurate. Matt Frost (information technician for the town of Acton) said that we should put our referrals and important documents on docushare. The website master is on contract to the town. If the town changes contractors we might lose important information. Lisa will call 211 to see if they really are a good resource. Cheryl said that she has looked at several websites and ours was the best. Kevin and Cindy will work with Matt Frost on docushare and the website.

**Adjourn:** 12:35 pm

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Patton (Secretary)