

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

**MEETING MINUTES  
February 21, 2017**

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

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

**Associate Members Present:** Joan Burrows

**Associate Members Absent:** Leslie Johnson

**Others Present:** Franny Osman (Board of Selectmen [BOS] Liaison), Lea Walton (visitor)

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**Call to Order** 9:35 am

**Citizens's concerns** None

**Announcements**

- Lisa recommended the film *Lives Worth Living* and is checking out copyright information so that it may be shown in town or via Acton Cable TV.
- Franny expressed concern (shared by other COD members) about the sub-standard quality of street and sidewalk plowing this winter. For example, numerous crosswalks were blocked, impeding all of the population, but in particular, persons with disabilities (PWD). If additional equipment is required, we need to know. Franny intends to follow up with Peter Berry, Chair of the BOS, and with the highway department. It was noted that we may need sub-contractors to assist with winter clearance operations, and the Town should put the funds forth for this purpose.
- Lisa suggested that the COD once again donate a subscription of *New Mobility* to Memorial Library, as has been done in the past. The COD voted to do so.

**Board of Selectmen BOS) Announcements**

- Awards have been given to The Discovery Museum and Open Door Theater
- The BOS has included among the April Town Meeting warrants – the granting of handicapped (HP) parking violation fines to the COD, in keeping with the State's recommendation on this matter. (Mady applauded this initiative, but pointed out

that in order for this to work, the Town must first segregate out HP fines from all others, which it currently does not do.)

### **Approval of December 2016 Minutes**

- The minutes were approved without changes.

### **March Agenda**

- The agenda was set for March 2017. (Much of the meeting will consist of the visit of Jeff Dougan of the Massachusetts Office of Disability, whose visit was postponed from February.)

### **Updates/Old Business/New Business**

- Several of the updates were provided in writing by Danny Factor, who could not be present at the meeting:
  - 77 Great Road curb access; Danny, Joan and Building Commissioner Frank Ramsbottom have visited the site and report that the owner plans to take action to establish a curb cut and above-ground signage, and a possible ramp to Atlantic Sea Grill, as well as improved access at the rear of the building
  - 33 Nagog Park still houses the Acton Recreation Department and several engineering employees. It is anticipated that the fall 2017 deadline will be met for the new Senior Center, thus allowing for employees to move out of the 33 Nagog Space, and Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Dept. Director, told Danny that with regard to renewal of community garden plots, she will include wording to indicate that PWD may contact her for special accommodations.
  - Further information will be obtained regarding elevator and restroom access on the third floor of Acton Medical Associates.
  - Danny and Joan will continue to look into the matter of Moodz Salon in West Acton with regard to HP parking; the citizen who raised a specific concern is not an Acton resident, but the issue has been reviewed previously and will be again. (Franny suggested that one of the Acton public transportation rides could help alleviate the problem of access to this establishment.)
  - Joan has continued to pursue the access issue at the Bank of America (BOA) site in Concord. While improvements have been made, there still is no access for persons who use wheelchairs from the ATM into the bank, as the door is too heavy to be opened, and the door does not meet weight requirements to allow for an automatic door opener. The bank therefore does not feel it is required to install one. Should there be a buzzer at the door to resolve this problem, so that a customer could be let in by an employee? Joan will pursue this option and continue dealing with the BOA issue.

- Teamworks: no updates, but Danny and Frank Ramsbottom will continue to pursue the issues at that site, including parking.
- Kimball Farm in Westford was to be inspected for accessibility throughout, but it is not clear if this has occurred yet. Joan and Franny will follow up. The hope was to resolve access issues prior to spring when the ice cream and food operations resume.
- Bridges: Nancy met a new member of the Council on Aging (COA) who is eager to work with her and with Joan on the program. We should write down thoughts about COD's use for Bridges, with an emphasis on middle and high school. Efforts are being made to contact other individuals associated with the program.
- Accessory Apartments: Joan has talked with Planning Director Roland Bartl; he suggested her writing up ideas and suggestions for some press releases following the April Town Meeting, explaining the benefits of allowing separate units. Joan is researching this, contacting other towns about their policies, and will write up public relations, sharing it with Franny and Roland for edits. There was some general discussion on the benefits of converting unattached garages and barns into accessory units. The COD voted on this, unanimously agreeing to "actively pursue the creation of unattached units for accessory apartments for a future town meeting warrant" and that "we are continuing to work on this issue."

### **General Discussion**

- It was agreed that we welcome the visit of Jeff Dougan of the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) next month to help us think about goals, objectives, and more general issues relating to the COD, and in particular, our small commission, now with two members on temporary leave.
- COD members should individually develop lists of constructive ways to use our budget plus any additional income we receive from HP parking fines, if that is approved. Initial ideas included accessible playgrounds, additional transportation for evenings and weekends, a major celebration for opening day of baseball at Miracle Field, and The Bridges program.
- There was discussion about food for the May mental illness program, plans for the COD's 30th anniversary observance, PR regarding access to the April Town Meeting, and choosing warrant articles to address at that meeting, once they become available.

### **Adjournment**

11:40 am

### **Documents**

No documents were distributed

Respectfully submitted by  
Joan Burrows and Madeleine Harvey