

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 15th, 2023

The meeting was held by Zoom online and called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Kim Charlson, Chair.

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson; Lisa Feltner, City Councilor; John Hawes; Rachel Kay; Carol Menton; Megan O'Halloran; Naomi Ridge; Gayle Shattuck, City Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator; and Carol Wilson-Braun.

Guests- Phil Schaeffing, Stantec Urban Places; and Gideon Schreiber, Asst Director of Planning.

GUEST SPEAKER-

Phil Schaeffing came to talk about the Watertown Outdoor Space Recreation Plan (OSRP) and the ADA Self Eval, and to get feedback from the Commission.

Watertown is making improvements to parks and open spaces and make them more accessible. Stantec was selected to help work on the Comprehensive plan but also to update the OSRP. He said that communities often update the 2 at the same time. They are working with the city Recreation Dept and the Conservation Commission.

Both plans are in draft format and they have been obtaining feedback from public meetings. The results will be published on the project website on this Friday. And on Thurs 3/9, there will be a public meeting at the library about the plans. He invited us to attend.

Phil said there were 17 site visits, 16 under care of Parks and Recreation and one (Arsenal Park) under Conservation purview. General recommendations were made, in the areas of site/facility access (accessible entrances and paths), play areas (inclusive and accessible) and other recommendations like parking (entrances, curb cuts and ramps). He wanted feedback from the Commission on its priorities.

John was wondering about funding and thinking it may be limited. Kim spoke about the importance of getting feedback from the community about their priorities. Lisa mentioned that the Community Path has problems, which the survey did not reflect. Kim asked for the COD to be kept informed of future updates. Gideon expressed appreciation that we have a town councilor on the Commission. Kim brought up the need for an accessible boat launch along the river and said we have invited the DCR to our next meeting. Gideon agreed that part of accessibility is the distance to get to places. Lisa thought that Irving Park should have been included. Gideon said that the park is classified as a "delta", but should probably be changed. Phil emphasized that we are working with a "living" document.

Phil went through all the sites, one by one, and got feedback from the Commission, particularly the rankings, which he wrote down. The main priorities of the Commission were the following:

- 522 Main Street, accessible walk way to sports areas.
- Bemis Park, accessible walkway to activities, play structures
- Casey Playground, widen entrances and upgrade paths where possible.
- How Park, widen entrance. Curb cut at accessible space. Walk to basketball court low priority.
- Saltonstall Park, add accessible spaces near entry to park.

(Thanks to John H for this summary)

A final report will be generated by Stantec at a later date.

The meeting ended at 9:06pm. The rest of the items will be addressed in March.

The next meeting of WCOD will take place via Zoom at 7 p.m. on Wed, March 15th, 2023