

## Watertown Commission on Disability

February 18, 2026

**In attendance:** Kim Charlson, John Hawes, George Donahue, Naomi Ridge, Rachel Kay, Carol Menton, Cindy Wentz, Megan O'Halloran, Jay Terminiello, Stefanie (CART)

**1. Audience Issues (takes priority over regular business)**

None.

**2. Chair's Report**

*A. Update on Waverly-Belmont Street Intersection from Wayne Chouinard - Kim*

No update.

*B. Update on Francis Food Mart, Next Steps - John*

We will continue to monitor, but do not need to keep on the agenda.

*C. ADA Signage as Recommended by the KMA Report - Jay*

DPW recently got a sign-making machine, so that should start soon. We are also working to get braille signs updated at City Hall.

*D. Snow Removal Manager's Exemption Process, Affirmation Vote from WCOD - All*

Snow removal ordinance was enforced during recent storm with 69 fines. Jay will send link to exemption form.

*E. Arsenal Park Amphitheater Path Surface (on hold for spring) - Jay*

On hold until spring.

*F. Accessible Entrances at City Hall - John*

This also falls under the KMA report/updating signage.

*G. Walker Pond Accessibility Recommendations - John & Jay*

Accessibility is high on agenda.

*H. Follow-up Path Issue Behind Halfway Café (waiting for feedback from Tom Brady) - Jay*

Waiting on information from Tom Brady.

*I. DPW Trash/Recycling Disability Sticker (waiting for feedback from Tom Brady) - Jay*

No update this month.

*J. Update on Arsenal Street Sidewalk Issue Discuss Options Outlined by Tom Brady - All*

Lisa sent an update: she asked the budget council committee to address the safety concerns on Arsenal St at their meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February. She also discussed this with the DPW meeting with the council on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February. Councilor Piccirelli assured Lisa that a report will be produced with needed safety and sidewalk improvements.

Naomi recalled that we would need a tree hearing regardless of what is proposed. The Commission can write a letter for the tree hearing.

*K. Automatic Doors for Watertown's New High School - Jay*

Jay has reached out to a school contact for more information.

*L. Connalonga Park & River Path (waiting for feedback from Tom Brady) – Jay*

Waiting on response from Tom Brady.

**3. Acceptance of Minutes for December Meeting - Discussion/Vote - Rachel**

We will do this with February meeting at the March meeting.

**4. Treasurer's Report - Jay**

Jay does not have access yet, but nothing has been spent since donations in December.

**5. Committee Reports - Ongoing Business**

*A. Plans Review - John*

None

*B. Special Education Update - Rachel*

Special Education Review has been released. Rachel will send to Jay to distribute. We will invited the Special Education Director to visit this spring.

*C. Safety and Access - No Report*

On hold until spring.

**6. New Business**

*A. Skip the Stuff Ordinance*

Lisa sent information from the Rules and Ordinance Committee that has recommended a Skip the Stuff ordinance to the full City Council. The first reading could happen as soon as February 24. One goal is to not have anything additional in a takeout bag unless you ask for it, putting the onus on the consumer. This would be an option online. The purpose is to reduce the waste stream. There is a concern about safety and ease of serving for the disability and senior communities, and education would be needed for servers and customers. Lisa sent some suggested language enabling the restaurants to offer stuff (rather than requiring customers to do all the asking) that we might want to add to the ordinance.

John thinks this is a laudable goal and we should support it. Megan agreed with this as a holistic concept. Kim confirmed we support the environmental goal, but we want to acknowledge the customer service aspect.

Naomi moved that we send a letter to the council about adding the language. Megan second. Motion passed 8-0. Kim and Lisa will develop a letter.

B. Cindy went to a meeting with Liz Aeschilman with Community Conversations. Cindy talked about including people with disabilities within all conversations. Liz would like to have someone from the Commission to talk about this. Cindy would not like to be the person since it sounds very abstract. Kim will reach out to Liz and ask how we can help.

C. Cindy went to a presentation from the Mass Office on Disability for CoDs and it was excellent. Cindy will send along more information.

D. Cindy has put in two ADA requests and is awaiting a response. Would the commission would be interested in seeing a log of ADA requests with personal information redacted? Naomi recalled that Laura from 3-1-1 could compile that information, but Cindy is also looking at official complaints for the city. We are interested, and Jay will investigate further. Perhaps we can share this on a quarterly basis. Jay noted that people reach out routinely, so it will be necessary to develop a tracker.

E. Kim and Jay went to the City Manager training for Commission chairs and staff liaisons. They want all commissions to have operator procedures and guidelines. Kim will work on this over the next few months to come up with a draft. This will be helpful for new chairs or staff.

F. Naomi noted that we have quite a bit of money in our accounts. We tend to give to the same groups every year (the library, the Unity Breakfast etc). We should share the information with the community so more groups can reach out. Kim will add this to the agenda for the next meeting. Carol noted this is an opportunity for outreach to be intentionally educational.

G. John observed that the walkway from the library toward Church Street that is covered with three feet of snow to access the crosswalk. We should emphasize that the city as well as private citizens need to address that. John requested Jay follow up on this. Kim suggested calling 3-1-1: John will do that tomorrow. Kim noted that 3-1-1 is now available via text.

## ***7. Adjourn***

Next meeting - March 19, 2026 at 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM - Via Zoom