

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 18th, 2022

The meeting was held by Zoom online and called to order at 7:06 p.m. by John Hawes, Vice-Chair, as Kim Charlson was unable to be present due to technical difficulties.

ROLL CALL- Lisa Feltner, Town Councilor; John Hawes; Carol Menton; Megan O'Halloran; Naomi Ridge; Elan Rohde; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator; and Carol Wilson-Braun. Absent- Kim Charlson, Chair, due to technical difficulties.

Guests- Rachel Kay, resident; Sarah Nechamen from Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC); and in place of Peter Centola, Ernie Thebado, Asst Director of Watertown Recreation and Bill Furtado, President of Youth Baseball, Softball and the Challenger Program.

GUEST SPEAKERS-

- 1) Sarah Nechamen shared what DPPC does and is involved in. They are doing outreach throughout the state about abuse issues of disabled persons, age 15-59, by paid and unpaid caregivers. They have a Hot Line, where cases are triaged, to detectives at State Police for criminal investigations, Investigators for civil investigations, and Sexual Assault Response for direct support. They make recommendations to support the victims and to prevent future abuse. They also offer free training for Mandated (and non-mandated) Reporters. Their number is 1-800-426-9009, and for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, use VRS or 711. They work with Dept of Children and Families, who work with children under 17, and Executive Office of Elder Affairs, which works with people aged 60 and over. Sarah's email is Sarah.Nechamen@mass.gov
- 2) Watertown Recreation- Ernie Thebado said he has been with the department for 13 years. They work with youth sports agencies. The project they came to talk about is a special needs playing field, which has been discussed for years. To see what it is like, Acton has a field called Miracle Field. Cost and location are still being discussed. Bill Furtado spoke of Challenger, which has been in existence since '89 and in Watertown since '13. 37-40 communities in MA have Challenger leagues. It provides adaptive baseball for children with special needs. There are 30 children up to age 22 taking part, with many adult "buddy" volunteers. They want to provide an environment structured for their disabilities, and have been using Bemis and most recently Victory Field, neither of which are ideal. Their hope is to build a mixed-use field somewhere in Watertown, for T-ball, wiffle ball, veterans, etc. John expressed concerns that turf fields are "heat sinks", and Carol M wondered how to volunteer. Lisa wondered if the field would accommodate bicycles. Bill said they are working with DPW, but can't do it without volunteers and town sponsors. The program is free to participants. The website is WYBB.org

CHAIR'S REPORT-

- 1) Gayle and Carol M interviewed several candidates who applied to be on WCOD, and recommended Rachel Kay. It was VOTED unanimously by roll call to accept Rachel Kay as a member of WCOD (We forgot to Move and Second, but everyone was OK with it). Rachel will formally join us next month after formal intake by the Acting City Manager. She has worked with the schools on behalf of her elementary aged son, and looks forward to broader work.
- 2) Path Behind Library- Naomi said that no changes had been made yet.
- 3) Letter of Support for Michael Lara for 103 Nichols Ave.- John got a call from Mark Krackiewicz from Community Preservation Committee, and there are concerns about the soil at that location. A report was sent to Gayle and Kim. Lisa reported that Michael Lara is holding off the proposal until the next funding cycle. This item will be tabled for now.
- 4) Watertown Square Delta- Tactile pads need attention all around the Delta. Elan commented that Main St (Rte 20) is treated differently due to being a state road. The other parts need more work. Elan asked if the sidewalks and curbcuts on Main Street were MA State highway jurisdiction given that Main Street is also Highway 20. John suggested that we table the discussion concerning the delta until the next meeting.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously by roll call to accept the minutes from the April meeting. Copies of the minutes may be requested from the Town Clerk's Office.

TREASURER'S REPORT- It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously by roll call to accept the Treasurer's Report for April. Copies of the Treasurer's report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

- 1) Plans- John said that 148 Waltham St, the old Sterritt Lumber across from Bemis will become life sciences. The plans look OK on the outside, however no floor plans have been submitted yet.
- 2) Special Ed- Naomi reported that SEPAC (Special Ed Parent Advisory Council) is planning a training on 5/24 at 6:30 pm for parents with children transitioning out of the school system, which must happen at age 22.
- 3) Safety and access- nothing more than what was already said.

NEW BUSINESS-

- 1) Lisa reiterated that the electronic bulletin board near Not Your Average Joes should be turned 90 degrees to be more pedestrian friendly. Gayle will message DPW.
- 2) Lisa said she has been getting complaints about the Mt Auburn St/Summer St intersection, about cars turning right from the DD parking lot, and stopping over the sidewalk, which is unsafe for pedestrians. DPW is looking into it. There is a faded white line painted just before the sidewalk. Is there a "No turn on red" sign?
- 3) Gayle read a thankyou note from Caitlyn Brown at the WPL.

- 4) John said he noticed that the Mosesian Center had Waltham COD listed as a donor. Lisa said they would be coming to WCOD for help with projects again this year.
- 5) Carol W-B said she would be away next month. Gayle volunteered to take minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

The next meeting of WCOD will take place via Zoom at 7 p.m. on Wed, June 15th, 2022.