

Watertown Commission on Disability June 18, 2008

In Attendance: George Donahue, Chair, Carol Menton, Bob Hall, Kim Charlson, Ann Doughty, Gayle Shattuck. Marilyn Devaney attending following an out of town wake.

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm

Guests: Gail Nordby, grant contractor for Emergency Preparedness working with the Department of Public Health. David Russo, Chair of the Historical Commission.

Announcements from the Chair:

George gave an overview of the May 28th emergency preparedness regional meeting at the Library and introduced Gail Nordby for her presentation.

Gail discussed the activities with emergency preparedness on the local level. FEMA and MEMA want the word to get out that people should not rely on services from the federal or state level to provide direct aid in the case of an emergency. The message they want is for residents to be prepared to manage on their own. At the May 28th meeting the MEMA representative had told the group that each community has responders who should handle emergencies first, then call MEMA as back-up. Watertown Public Health, Police, Fire and Public Works departments have been meeting with the Town Manager on a regular basis regarding emergency preparedness initiatives. Bob asked how this project differed from the Special Populations group that used to meet. Gail said that interest had fallen off by the outside agencies involved, but meetings are starting up again with the focus on agencies dealing with children, the elderly and culturally isolated residents. Gail said that the role of individuals is to be prepared with three days of supplies for the family and pets and have contact information shared with all family members. Local agencies should not rely on the Town to handle everything. Gail showed and described the Red Cross bags that are available for purchase so that each family can have 3 days-worth of supplies packed and be ready to go if needed. Fred suggested to Gail that she coordinate with the Boys and Girl Scouts on anything appropriate for them to work on for badge projects. George and Ann said they would work on this project with Gail.

The emergency shelter for Watertown is the high school. Kim discussed the issue of service dogs being allowed in with their owners, and Bob discussed accessibility issues with the high school. George discussed getting people to register with the E911. Bob and Kim suggested that the Police Department be invited to a future meeting to give an update on the E911 system.

7:55pm - 8:10pm Break

Marilyn excused herself to go to the Nonantum Road Improvement meeting at the Library.

Closed captioning - Carol reviewed the efforts on this project since it's inception by Pam Piantedosi and the previous Cable Access Executive Director. The WCOD had purchased an analog coder and the Cable station had broadcast two school committee meetings and then the project came to a halt when Peter Z resigned. Pam was hoping that she could get sponsorships for the costs of closed captioning of Town Council meetings. Carol had invited David Russo for input on the issue of wiring the Town Council Chamber in the event a closed-captioning system was in place. David said that given the dimensions of the room and the crown molding near the ceiling, wiring wouldn't be a problem because it could be attached to the top of the molding where it wouldn't be seen and wouldn't make holes in the wood or walls if it is placed on existing seams. Carol said that under the ADA, small local cable stations are exempt from closed captioning. Gayle stated that in addition to the exemption, the public can request tapes or transcripts of the town council meetings and that suffices as the required accommodation. Alex suggested that when the Cable Commission contract is up for renegotiation that the next contract with the town require closed captioning. Gayle will find out when the contract is up for renewal.

Chair's Report:

There is a meeting taking place tonight 6:30-9:00pm at the Library regarding the DCR and preliminary designs for the Nonantum Road Improvement Project. Discussion about the Charles River Bridge issue of not being level. George said the history about that is the DCR was given 10 years to make the changes to the bridge by the Architectural Board. That was over 4 years ago. Alex said he will contact DCR - they were supposed to provide monthly updates and the WCOD has never received an update.

Treasurer's Report

Gayle reported the expenses and balance to date. Motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made, seconded and approved.

May Minutes: Bob requested a change of wording regarding the ADA requirement for the agenda item of Title I review of ordinances for disability compliance. A motion to accept the May minutes as amended was made, seconded, voted, moved to approve.

Treasurer's Report was motioned, seconded, voted, and approved.

Faire on the Square on September 27th - George is working on getting a good placement for the WCOD table. Carol said she will talk with Caryl Fox about having a table with COA. Coverage is still needs to be determined.

8:45 pm Marilyn returned to the meeting.

New Business:

Marilyn said that she had an update on the site plan review meeting that was held regarding the corner of Fayette Street and Waverly Avenue; that it is for 18 units with 2 parking spaces for each unit. She asked them to report back to her regarding the handicapped parking spaces.

Special Education:

Fred said that Sarah Ward spoke at a May meeting and it was very well attended. They are going to fund a scholarship for a slot for the Sibling Group.

Carol gave an update on the Labeled Disabled event. It went well and was well attended. She suggested that Maggie Dobin be invited by SPED Pac as a possible speaker.

Bob asked about the accessible parking issue at the high school. The handicap spot is at the bottom of the hill and the accessible door is at the top of the hill. David Leone was supposed to call George to discuss.

9:10 pm motion to adjourn was made, seconded, voted and approved