

Watertown Commission on Disability July 15th Meeting Minutes Amended

Attendees: George Donahue, Chair; Marilyn Devaney, Chair-for-the-meeting; Kim Charlson; Anne Doughty; Bob Hall; Fred Isaacs; Alex Liazos; Carol Menton.

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by Commission Chair George Donahue.

Roll Call

Guests were Police Chief Edward Deveau, Lisa Weber from the Task Force for Artists with Disabilities, and a group from the United Cerebral Palsy program consisting of: Elizabeth Bardaz, Emily Berheide, Vanessa ??, John Donnelly, Chris Krim, Kerri Miceli, and Cathy Culkin.

Police Chief Deveau spoke in response to our letter about people parking on sidewalks. He stated that there is a shortage of parking spaces in Watertown. The police respond to complaints and will address flagrant violations. However, some streets don't have curbs. Palfrey St. now has them.

Kim Charlson asked about disability sensitivity training for officers. The academy does that but officers don't get refresher courses. The police should identify themselves when they come up to assist blind people.

Kim Charlson asked if people are self-registering with enhanced 911 as disabled? People can just call the dispatcher at 617-972-6500 and give the police information for the enhanced 911 service. You can also tell them that you will be away and they will check your house.

We formed an ad-hoc committee: Kim Charlson Chair, with members Alex Liazos and Ann Doughty to encourage people to register for enhanced 911. Bob Hall asked why the handicapped lifts at the police station are locked. There was some discussion of aging equipment.

There is a 2 hour parking limit throughout the town. While there is some enforcement along bus routes, enforcement is really complaint driven.

Chief Deveau pointed out that the police take the name and number of a person reporting a problem, but those are kept confidential by the police department and not divulged to anyone involved in the complaint.

Councilor Marilyn Devaney requested the Police Chief to give consideration to Palfrey Street residents; due to the new curbing the backs of their cars are extending out to the sidewalk. She noted that they are getting ticketed now.

United Cerebral Palsy. Elizabeth Bardaz introduced a large number of clients and workers from United Cerebral Palsy which has a center next to the Post Office in

Watertown Square. They have been there for 27 years. They serve 30 individuals who are physically disabled but cognitively high functioning. They travel along our streets.

4 representatives of their disability awareness group made a presentation: Chris Krimm has lived on his own since he was 22; he is now 43. He said that the light cycles need to be longer to allow the mobility-impaired to cross streets safely.

Karen lives in Dorchester and is a poet and artist.

Cathy Culkin wants to see more electronic doors and higher buttons.

John Manning wants to see longer light cycles, particularly across from Watertown Savings Bank on Main St. He was struck by a car there in November 2008.

CVS is making their aisles more accessible and needs to keep them clear.

How about a disability awareness day?

Artists with Disabilities Task Force—Lisa Weber from Mass. Rehab.

They publish an annual calendar showcasing the work of their artists. They will be doing a show at the Allston Public Library. They have story tellers and poetry readings as well as graphic arts. There is a group called Tune Foolery comprised of musicians with disabilities. They have an ongoing art exhibit at Spaulding Rehab.

They are based out of Boston and the group is 6 years old.

We suggested the Watertown Library and the Arsenal Center for the Arts as possible exhibition sites. We also recommended Faire on the Square.

Chair's report - George Donahue

We discussed the Faire on the Square. We have 2 volunteers already. 2 more volunteered. We will mobilize teenagers to help with the setup and teardown.

[This may be more difficult than it appeared. Raymond has a Scout event that weekend. Emily is recovering from mono. But I'll see what I can do. - Fred Isaacs]

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 17 2009 meeting.

Special Ed Report—Fred Isaacs

Fred will ask the schools to encourage the parents of kids with disabilities to inform enhanced 911.

Closed Captioning—Carol Menton

Carol is talking to Gayl Hardeman from Florida to get more expertise on the actual cost of doing Town Council meetings. An estimate is that at \$500 per meeting and 21 council meetings per year plus 3 special meetings that it would run about \$12,000 per year. Perhaps \$15,000 is a better rough estimate.

Kim Charlson reported on Safety and Access

A quiet month. The changes are finished in the landing by the river.

Old Business

Kim Charlson reported that The Watertown House of Pizza had gotten their menu brailled in Greece at the Athens Lighthouse for the Blind.

New Business

Ann Doughty raised the idea of providing loans to store owners who want to make their businesses more handicap-accessible.

Alex Liazos stated that contact with the United Cerebral Palsy organization is a good thing.

We decided to stick to our published schedule and not have an August meeting.

The next meeting is September 16 and Alex Liazos will be chair.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by Fred P. Isaacs