

Watertown Commission on Disability

June 17, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Alex Liazos, Kim Charlson, Anne Doughty, Fred Isaacs, Carol Menton, Marilyn Petitto Devaney, Bob Hall

Vincent Piccirilli- District C Town Counselor, **Steve Magoon -** Community Development & Planning Director, **Greg Jones -** Massachusetts Mentor, **Chris Demos -** Resident and new owner of Watertown House of Pizza

Steve Magoon came to seek input for a home consortium report. He is required to reach out to the community and assess housing issues experienced by disabled residents. Discussion followed regarding the need for more accessible housing in general; accessible housing needs differ (i.e. someone with low vision has different needs than someone in a wheelchair).

Greg Jones of Massachusetts Mentor gave a presentation. He agency provides community-based services to people with developmental disabilities. Mr. Jones provided Program Brochures which will be available at the Personnel Office. An in-depth presentation will be made at the Watertown Free Library at 1 p.m. on June 24th.

Mr. Chris Demos would like suggestions for making his business accessible. He was shown a copy of the accessible dining guide and the WCOD website where he can look at the entire 2006 document, given an Accessible Business Guide. It was suggested that he put his menu in Braille or large print and have it on his website, train to staff during orientation so that they are comfortable with disabled customers. He would like to put in an automatic door opener but because of the expense that may take awhile. ADA Business and Technical Assistance Center is a good resource for Chris. Bob suggested he look into the tax benefits for accessibility.

Minutes: It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2009 meeting.

Treasurer's Report: It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the Treasurer's report.

Committee Reports - Fred talked about the years of service the SPED Community has received from Suzanne Gervais, President of the Massachusetts Association of Special Education Parent Advisory Councils. She's stepping down. Federation for Children with Special Needs will take over. SPEDPAC presented an award to Laurie Thomas, the out-of-district placement coordinator who is being laid off by the school department. SPEDPAC will be developing next year's programs.

Closed Captioning - Carol talked about the closed captioning meeting with the Cable Access Board on June 2nd. "We've agreed that captioning needs to happen." To do it right, Cable Access Board would like to do the cable news first because it is a scripted program and will be easier to do.

Bob Kaprelian stated that there is equipment that needs to be purchased. The other program they would like to target are the Town Council meetings. "The costs are still a work in progress". Jerry Field of the Cable Access Board has outlined the steps, work flow plan, evaluate equipment and then determine the costs. Bob is recommending that the technical costs be the Cable Access Board's, but the operating costs be the responsibility of the WCOD.

Gayle said she had been in touch with Cambridge COD and they don't do closed captioning of City meetings because local cable companies are exempt. This is why we are not finding another community that has already done local cable closed captioning.

Town Counselor Piccirilli talked about the Town Council's support for accessibility and that the Town Council Chamber will be upgraded, so this is a good time to be talking about closed captioning.

What's next: determine the cost of CART services for town council meeting coverage and get WCOD support for the operational cost.

Kim Charlson - gave a follow -up on the Saltonstall Braille Trail event - it went well. She would like to recommend a Braille plate on the monument that says what the present plate says. She'll get a price for a Braille plate and would like WCOD support it at the next meeting.

The next meeting is July 15th. Guest speakers will be Emily Berheide of UCP and the task force for artists. Marilyn will chair the meeting.

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.