

**Watertown Commission on Disability
November 17, 2010**

Attendees: George Donahue, Chair; Kim Charlson; Fred Isaacs; Alex Liazos; Carol Menton; Gayle Shattuck; Carol Wilson-Braun

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm by Chair George Donahue.

Roll Call.

Guests

Elisabeth Schaefer, Director of Student Services, Watertown Public Schools.

Disability Awareness Education

We began with a discussion with Elisabeth Schaefer of the new disability awareness education program that our commission, the SPEDPAC, and the schools have all joined in bringing to the Watertown public schools. The teacher training has begun. Our commission has been asked to suggest presenters on the various disabilities. The presenters' role is to speak to the children about what life is like with a particular disability. Parent volunteers are also needed to help with the classes. The materials costs for the course will be somewhat higher than anticipated because we will need additional sets due to the way the courses are scheduled.

It was moved, seconded, and passed with 6 ayes, no nays, and 1 abstention (Fred Isaacs, because he is an officer of the SPEDPAC) to add up to \$1000.00 to our previous grant of up to \$7500.00 (for a total of up to \$8500.00) to fund the disability awareness education project as proposed by the SPEDPAC and the Watertown Public Schools.

Minutes

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to accept the minutes of the October 20, 2010 meeting as amended to remove all references to Carol Menton who had not attended the meeting. Copies of our minutes may be requested from the Town Clerk's office.

Treasurers Report - Gayle Shattuck

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to accept the Treasurer's report. Copies of the Treasurer's report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office.

Special Ed Report—Fred Isaacs

On December 2 Beth Lloyd will give a presentation on assistive technology for computer usage. The meeting will be 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM at the Cunniff Elementary School Library.

Our meetings have been well attended; we seem to be running around 20 people per meeting.

Safety and Access

There is a lot of construction but we have not had complaints about it impeding people.

Audible locator tones are being added to new poles as they are installed. Mostly they are on poles in Watertown Square. We would very much like to have a map of Watertown Square showing the poles with locator tones so that we can check on them.

Alex sent e-mail to the DPW about the low hanging tree branches. The DPW replied that they would deal with them in priority order. The zoning office deals with privately owned trees. However, complaints to the DPW seem to work, regardless of the categories.

The DPW trimmed the trees near the Stop and Shop despite the fact that they are privately owned, citing the ADA.

We should publicize the town's website problem reporting and tracking system as a way of letting the town know about this sort of problem.

We should invite someone to one of our meetings to discuss trees.

Closed Captioning Update

We had e-mail from Tamara from the cable channel. We will do 2 more test runs in December with an eye to going live in January. We will also need to do a presentation on this to the Town Council.

Dining Guide - George Donahue

We are ready to send our four explorers out. We have a list of restaurants from the health department. Their reports are due at our next meeting.

Commission Web Site - George Donahue

Our website was down. George has renewed our subscription. The SPEDPAC calendar has been posted to it.

Disability Access Training - Carol Wilson-Braun

It was a good training course. The first day was devoted to a discussion of the ADA and the history of accessible design. The second day was spent actually doing a survey of the Chelmsford Town Hall. They had a number of interesting tools including a gadget to measure the force needed to open a door and digital levels. They measured ramps and railings; they checked the clearance around toilets and measured the grab bar height. It was two days well spent. Massachusetts has stricter regulations than the federal ones. The building at 10 Warren Street has one part funded by Massachusetts which follows the Commonwealth's standards and another part funded by the federal government which follows the federal standards. It's interesting to compare the two parts of the building.

Community Gardens

We have been asked for suggestions on making potential community gardens accessible. Raised garden beds and wheelchair-width gravel paths were suggested. This Old House did an accessible garden which featured raised beds with larger plants towards the middle. Shows are available on the Internet and other resources should be there as well.

December meeting.

Our normal December 15 date conflicts with the High School Winter Concert and

will mean that Carol Wilson-Braun and Fred Isaacs will not be able to attend. We decided to move the meeting to December 8. There will be a seasonal celebration at that meeting.

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn at 8:22 PM. These minutes are respectfully submitted by Fred P. Isaacs.