

**Watertown Commission on Disability
149 Main St
Watertown, MA. 02472**

Minutes for May 19th, 2010 meeting

Attendees: Carol Menton, acting Chair; Judy Herzberg, Alex Liazos and Carol Wilson-Braun. **Guests:** Elisabeth Schaefer, Director of Student Services for Watertown Public Schools; Myrto Flessas, a Watertown school volunteer and parent of a disabled student; and Laine Tulipano, Special Ed teacher at Carroll School and parent of a disabled student.

The meeting began at 7:02 p.m. with a roll call. Since there wasn't a quorum tonight, many agenda items were deferred, and no votes were taken. New Commission member Judy Herzberg was welcomed. General housekeeping items were reviewed by Alex Liazos and guests introduced.

Discussion and vote on April minutes was deferred until June.

Treasurer's report was deferred until next meeting for discussion and vote.

Our guests presented a proposal by the Watertown Spec. Educ. Parent Advisory Council for disability awareness training for Watertown Elementary School teachers and then 3rd -5th grade students during the 2010-2011 year. The program is called Understanding Our Differences and has been running in Newton for the past 29 years, with the goals of increasing understanding and respect for disabilities. Three sessions would include a talk about disabilities, a hands-on session for mobility, perceptual problems, etc, and a speaker with a disability coming to the class. The members of WCOD thought it sounded like a very good idea and that the commission should be able to help with funding and speakers. This will be reviewed and voted on at the next meeting. I will try to attach the proposal to the minutes.

Sub-committee Reports and Updates

Safety Access and SEPAC deferred to June due to the absence of Kim and Fred.

Closed Caption- A brief history was explained to Judy to bring her up to date. Carol M stated that progress is being made on making the town government/town council accessible to all. Tamara, director of the cable service at WHS has been very helpful. We are working with the cable board and with Stephanie. There are many delays and "snafus". The plan is to start live captioning on June 8th or soon thereafter.

Old Business

Discussion on monthly TAB column, led by Kim, deferred to June.

Tone Locator List- Alex Liazos. Alex is having difficulty getting the DPW to come up with a comprehensive list. Kim is working with Gerry Mee, and is the contact for blind residents. Another ongoing, unresolved DPW issue from Alex is low tree branches.

General Discussion

Judy wanted to know what other large issues and areas WCOD addresses, so the members who were present spoke about the following topics:

Dispersal of money from the budget for special computer equipment for the library, Perkins, Watertown TAB for the Deaf, support of community projects concerning disabilities; informational table at Watertown Faire on the Square, access for voting by blind people, accessibility in the library, the 5 year study currently being conducted by the library, town exemptions for the ADA law that have to go through us, accessibility in town restaurants and public buildings

Judy proposed that at least one member from WCOD attend the WPS Disability Awareness Training. Alex thought maybe we should all attend. Judy was wondering about people parking in handicapped spaces at Boston Sports Club. Alex said that Watertown police are allowed to ticket private spaces (voted by town council).

Judy asked if we have any connection with colleges to get students involved in disability issues. Most colleges and universities have "service learning" programs. This could be on the agenda for next month.

Alex said we should invite different department heads once a year to WCOD meetings- police, DPW, town counselors, Eric for computer and veterans' issues. Question from Alex to Kim: how accessible is the website?

The meeting ended at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Carol Wilson-Braun,
Substituting for Fred Isaacs, Secretary.