

**Watertown Commission on Disability
January 19, 2011**

Attendees: George Donahue, Chair; Kim Charlson; Councilor Steve Corbett; Ann Doughty; Judy Herzberg; Fred Isaacs; Carol Menton; Gayle Shattuck; Carol Wilson-Braun

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

Roll Call.

Guests

Tamara Green, Jonathan O'Dell

Closed Captioning - Carol Menton.

We overcame many technical roadblocks including needing to acquire a digital encoder. Stephanie does the work transcribing; the digital encoder takes the output and processes it so it can be added to the video. We would need to have a separate monitor in the Council chamber to be able to see the closed captioning. Breaks for the captioner should not be an issue; the councilors need some, too. Closed captioning decoders are already required by law to be in all TV sets. 8.2% of the population has a significant hearing loss. Older people tend to have more hearing loss and they also tend to be more interested in local politics. There are older people who can't travel to council meetings. The closed captioning will help more people get involved in town government.

Broadcast TV must provide closed captioning, but cable access is not required to. We may be the first in the state to do so. So closed captioning is good for the town, good for our commission, and great for the cable access channel. We plan to premier it for the next Town Council meeting. We have drafted a press release.

Congress and the State House have closed captioning. We are following in their footsteps.

Gayle will talk to Mr. Driscoll and Mr. Sideris tomorrow to get the green light for the first closed captioned Town Council meeting.

Stephanie will try to set up a pool of 3 or 4 CART transcribers.

The cable access channel will send press releases to the Globe, the Herald, and the Watertown TAB.

We will also try to involve the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

We're ready to go on Tuesday but we need an official okay.

Dining guide update - George

George needs to do his share of restaurant visits; he will give what he can't do to others. Then he will update the web site. We can do pictures on the web site, but he will try to keep the dining guide simple and in large print.

The visits are visual checks to confirm information that Kim's intern got by phone.

If a restaurant claims that you can order via the web, please try it to make sure that it actually works. We can put links on our web site to restaurants which support web ordering.

We could recruit and pay an intern to do some of this. Human Services programs at community colleges in Massachusetts require 200 hours of internship. We could pay a stipend. Gayle will look into this; the question is whether we can legally pay a stipend from the fine money. Pay might provide additional motivation for an intern to do a good job.

Web site - George

We had the most traffic in September and December and at the beginning of the year in January, February, and March. We had 600 unique visitors; the majority were from the U.S. 47 % came from the town website. It will be interesting to see if closed captioning produces more web site hits. We will have links from our web site to closed captioned videos of Town Council meetings.

We need to find more ways to be out there and to make people more aware of us. For the months in which we don't have meetings, we could have a forum with a speaker.

Martin Luther King breakfast

Funding for the breakfast has decreased. We discussed paying for the CART recording since the breakfast is a community event.

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to pay \$351.18 for CART costs for the Martin Luther King breakfast.

In the future we should appropriate money to do this in December, since we customarily pay for CART transcription at community events.

Goals and Objectives for 2011

Become more visible.

Sensitivity training for town employees? Fire, police, town hall, DPW workers. May want to look into doing it; it's been several years since we last did it. Do we want to open it up to the public? Last time we had a professional do it, but we also had a commission member present at each session. We could use the WSB room at the library for a Saturday training session. We should repeat this every few years.

How about doing this as a series of workshops? Lecture style doesn't work. Need 20 or 30 people max. We could have guest speakers.

In the past, Wendy Randall facilitated a workshop for us.

February meeting

We decided to meet on February 16 to brainstorm and to discuss goals. This will not be a normal commission meeting.

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn at 9:00 PM.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by Fred P. Isaacs.