

WATERTOWN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY minutes for Wed. Nov 16, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kim Charlson at 7:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson, Chair; Councilor Steve Corbett; George Donahue; Anne Doughty; John Hawes; Judith Herzberg; Fred Isaacs; Carol Menton; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator and Carol Wilson-Braun.

Guests- Mark and Pat Hunt from Hunt Stock.

AUDIENCE ISSUES- Mark and Pat Hunt are from a small image production company, working with still photography and video, specializing in representing the disabled population, showing accessible homes, lifestyle concepts. They are looking for recommendations for models and locations. George suggested pictures of blind using walk buttons for intersections. Carol M. suggested photos showing use of a videophone and other technology for the deaf. Carol asked about their motivation, and Pat mentioned market demands, and Mark said advocacy was important to him.

CHAIR'S REPORT- Kim deferred to George, who said he was working on the year-end report for 2011 due in January. He will forward it to Gayle and Kim then the commission. Minutes are on the website going back to '09.

MINUTES- Fred said October minutes are not ready yet. He will send them out soon. Carol W-B will be taking the minutes from November onward as the new secretary.

TREASURER'S REPORT- Report for October was presented. 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.

Gayle reported that Walter the intern was not here tonight due to another death in his family. The budget was explained to John, who is new on the Commission. We have covered such projects supporting the community as disability education in the public schools, closed captioning local cable broadcasts of town council meetings, and helping to cover the cost of the Open Space Study, which made recommendations to bring parks up to code. Steve mentioned that the Watertown Master Plan being worked on will include open spaces, and didn't know that WCOD was involved in that study. The Planning Board will be involved, and John is involved with that.

In continuing the discussion about the Planning Board, George stated that the Site Plan Review has been sending blueprints to him as chair, but that they can now go to John, who understands them better. John said that the Planning Board has meetings where various town departments are represented- Fire, Zoning, building

inspectors. In the new year, the Commission will invite a building inspector to come to a meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

Art Exhibit- Anne spoke with Amy at the library who said many people are viewing the exhibit and commenting positively. Exhibitor Bob Donnelly sold his clay donkey sculpture. The exhibit will be dismantled on Tues 11/29. Gayle will look into having a town hall or library custodian to help.

Website- George reporting that Walter was helping to find articles and updates. George then reviews and posts them. Everyone is invited to send articles to George. Can include advertisements for events, photos, etc. Google stats gives a picture of use of our website.

Closed Captioning- Carol M visited Watertown Council on Aging to promote closed captioning. Technology update from Stephanie: There is still a problem with reliability. At the last council meeting, the encoder cable had been misplaced causing quite a bit of consternation. There are still problems with the cable. The cable station needs to have an adequately trained person on this system. Steve will ask Tamara to schedule a meeting with Stephanie and Jack Woodland. George stated that a simple trouble shooting protocol is needed. It would be good to have a test text just before the meeting.

Snow Update- Judith stated that a letter from WCOD supporting a snow ordinance was approved and went to the last town council meeting. Steve said that the Public Works sub-committee will meet on Tues 11/29 and will discuss it. He will gather documents and make an outline before the meeting to get the discussion going. He said the idea of an ordinance will be controversial. The first step is a policy decision. It is an obligation. Then do education. Newton had no fines the first two years. Focus was on education. Fred said it will be important to recognize people doing a good job.

Special Education- Fred. There was a meeting on basic rights for children on Ed plans in November. In December, someone from the Family Connection will speak on Mass Health- Navigating the System, which is the only way to get Children's Behavioral Health Initiative services. Elizabeth talked more about the "needs improvement" rating by the DOE. It is due to a statistical skew in the data. Some kids on ed plans are not showing enough improvement.

Safety and Access- Judith stated that mapping the auditory signals in intersections is a bigger task than anticipated. Walter has been helping her. It should be done by Feb. George said the information can be placed on the website. There should be a place on the data sheet to highlight problems with signals.

Gayle spoke of the Dining Guide, saying that Walter was close to finishing, by year's end. He is completing surveys not done. George tries to keep the dining guide on the website updated. We will hear more at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS- (There was no Old Business). George will continue to try to find guest speakers. Jeff Dougan from the Mass COD will come for an update. Susan Welby from the Epilpsy Foundation was recommended. Carol M. wants BCIL to come. The Council on Aging was suggested. She talked with Audrey Childs of the Watertown Historical Commission about captioning a DVD on an oral history of Watertown, and will ask her to come next month to present the project and request funding. Kim said Gayle sent out an invitation to the Grousbeck Technology building open house at Perkins on Dec 11th from 1-2:30. The annual holiday concert will follow at 3 p.m. Kim said we need to think of ideas for using our funds- perhaps one-time donations to community organizations or projects. George said we'll rotate who we give to each year. The Watertown Food Pantry was suggested. Gayle will talk to Carol Fox from the Food Pantry. We will suggest that our donation should be targeted for people with disabled people in their family. Kim suggested we give \$1000. There are two pantries in Watertown, so we will give \$1000 to each. Other recipients could be Springwell or Beaver Brook Step.

It was MOVED, seconded, and passed unanimously to make donations of \$1000 each to the Watertown Food Pantry and St Patrick's food pantry, to be used in as much as is practicable to benefit individuals and families with disabilities.

Next meeting is Wed Dec 21st and will include food, which Gayle will arrange.

It was MOVED, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn at 8:38 p.m.

These minutes are recorded and respectfully submitted by Carol Wilson-Braun, Secretary