

WATERTOWN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Minutes

July 18, 2012

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kim Charlson at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson; Counselor Steve Corbett; George Donahue; Anne Doughty, John Hawes; Judith Herzberg; Fred Isaacs, Vice-Chair; Carol Menton; Jeanne O'Connell, WCOD Intern; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator. Carol Wilson-Braun was not able to attend.

AUDIENCE ISSUES *takes priority over regular business

GUESTS- Jeff Dougan, Assistant Director for Community Service,
Massachusetts Office on Disability

Ann Harrison, Benefits Volunteer Coordinator, Springwell
Melissa Intress, Specialty Services Manager, Springwell

AUDIENCE ISSUES-

a) Presentation: Jeff Dougan, Assistant Director for Community Service, Massachusetts Office on Disability

Mr. Dougan prefaced his comments with a compliment to the Watertown Commission on Disability (WCOD) noting that the Commission is exceptionally organized and well-run. He said he would like to visit on a quarterly basis instead of yearly. Mr. Dougan presented and explained three brochures as follows.

- (1) "Disability Rights Laws in Massachusetts," a review of fifteen revised and updated topics aimed to inform persons with disabilities and the community at large of changes in Massachusetts Disability Laws and how to comply with the laws. The brochure includes information from or based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990), its amendment (2008) and Titles II and III revised and in effect (March 15, 2012); available online at <http://www.disabled-world.com/disability/ada/regchange.php>.
- (2) A tri-fold brochure on the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) explains the services and programs available that advocate for and advise the disabled and gives contact information for the MOD office.
- (3) A most informative handout titled, "Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II

& Title III Revised Regulations Fact Sheet. The handout includes a two-page summary of nine Fact Sheets and provides the Fact Sheets (Communication – Examinations and Courses – Places of Lodging – Service Animals – Ticketing – Wheelchairs and Other Power-Driven Devices – Detention and Correction Facilities – Overview of the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design).

A key change in the building code laws is that latest standards now disallow use of any other formerly used standard. Further, the Architectural Access Board of the Massachusetts Office on Disability plans to rewrite its regulations and publish an “all in one book.”

Training sessions on the new ADA laws and compliance issues will take place on September 11-12, 2012 in Cambridge, MA at the City Hall Annex from 9am to 4pm; the sessions will be limited to forty attendees. The WCOD will cover the costs for several members to attend. Mr. Dougan will forward a flyer about the training to the WCOD.

- b) Presentation: Improving Access Program, Ann Harrison, Benefits Volunteer Coordinator, Springwell and Melissa Intress, Specialty Services Manager, Springwell

Ann Harrison, Benefits Volunteer Coordinator at Springwell summarized as follows, “We find the need and how to help.” She highlighted a relatively new service titled, “Better Access to Benefits.” Better Access to Benefits assists elders, home-bound elders and persons with disabilities to complete the required and often quite lengthy paperwork to obtain available benefits. The Better Access to Benefits service enhances the many others available at Springwell.* Since January 2012, the program has trained ten volunteers who have visited the homes of fifty-five residents and helped both with lengthy application for benefits and re-certifications verifying eligibility for benefits.

Ms. Harrison introduced Melissa Intress, Specialty Services Manager at Springwell. Ms. Intress spoke of Springwell’s multi-service approach as a federally-designated agency that anyone can contact regardless of age, financial resources or family structure to obtain information and guidance on their particular needs for home or community-based assistance. Founded in 1977, Springwell services eight communities and partners with the Massachusetts Office of Elder Affairs and MassHealth.**

* Adult Foster Care options; Care Connections, which partners with operators or owners of housing for seniors and adults with disabilities to deliver supportive services to everyone in the buildings – described as an “age-in-place” program; Money Management assistance, and other programs.

** Belmont, Brookline, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Watertown, Wellesley and Weston

Ms. Intress listed basic requirements applicants must meet to qualify for most services; included were (1) must qualify for MassHealth Standard or Common Health and (2) needs hands-on care for two or more activities of daily living. The applicant is evaluated both by a nurse and an occupational therapist. For those with disabilities to qualify, (1) the disability must impair activities of daily living or require cuing to perform those activities. She briefly described several programs.

The Adult Foster Care Program – designated for ages sixteen years old and older; mimics a child foster care program; provides 24-hour care; the applicant can move-in with a caregiver or attend day care; a social worker and nurse visit monthly or every other month.

Adult Day Foster Care Program – for ages 22 and older; requires inability to perform one activity of daily living, residence in elder housing or low-income housing; be MassHealth eligible; receive daily help from a designated worker who can follow and assess the person for changes in care needs and is a more inclusive program with less strict requirements.

Other Programs – for the disabled and for caregivers and not based on age:

Healthy Aging Workshops

Powerful Tools for Caregivers – all caregivers

Ms. Intress concluded with a question: Why choose Springwell for services over other agencies? Her answer: “Because, we can age with you.” If a program is not needed, we can provide other services.

Questions from WCOD members:

Q: Kim: Can you speak about the funding?

A: We receive State and Federal funding, some donations and most all programs are MassHealth ones.

Q: Judith: How do people usually hear about your services?

A: From hospitals, doctors, word of mouth and other professionals recommend us to clients.

Fred asked Gayle if a link to Springwell could be on the WCOD website. Gayle said she will find out.

AGENDA ITEMS

CHAIR'S REPORT- Kim

There was nothing specific to report.

MINUTES- It was MOVED, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the minutes for both May 16, 2012 and June 20, 2012 after correction of one edit to each file. Copies of our minutes may be requested from the Town Clerk's office.

TREASURER'S REPORT- Gayle

- (1) Guest Jeff Dougan commented that the Treasurer's Report is impressive. Fred noted that the "bottom line" does not indicate the WCOD's budget.
- (2) Guest Jeff Dougan mentioned that the City of Framingham plans to contact the Watertown Commission on Disability about funding issues and/or procedures. George volunteered to send information to Jeff on how Waltham obtains funds from handicapped parking violations and on Waltham's program to issue violations utilizing private detail officers.
- (3) Gayle stated that the Treasurer's Report is for the end of the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 (July 1 – June 30) not the calendar year (January 1 – December 31). Also, she noted that the interest on the last posted parking fine is not included in this report.

Fred posed a question to Gayle on how to get funds to Elizabeth for the purchase of iPads and iPods. Gayle replied that she spoke with Auditor Tom Tracey who suggested she speak with an attorney at Kopelman and Paige about how best to make the payment. Gayle said she plans to do so.

Also discussed were the final cost to the WCOD for purchase of the iPads and iPods (\$12k for three instead of five of each plus \$2k for the needed software) for the School Department. Judith reminded all that the WCOD was to send Gayle updated files on costs. Once she receives the updated files, Gayle will update the Treasurer's Report with the latest data in "Other Encumbrances", since no purchase order has been generated yet. Fred will send the updated files to Gayle.

It was MOVED, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the Treasurer's report with the edit to be made to "Other Encumbrances." Copies of the Treasurer's report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office.

George will contact Jeff Dougan to obtain the recently published new ADA rules in "Disability Rights Laws in Massachusetts" for use at Faire on the Square. Gayle requested fifty for the Personnel Department.

BREAK – Five to seven minute break. Guest Speakers exited the meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

a. Art Exhibit – Anne

Anne reported that all artists have been contacted. October 15, 2012 is the deadline to submit art. Some artists are associated with Mass Rehab's Artists Taskforce.

Announcements noting the October 15th deadline have been distributed to encourage new artists to participate. Kim asked Anne to contact vendors from last year during the next four weeks or so to firm-up date details, refreshment needs, space needs, etc.

- (1) Kim asked Anne to contact Watertown Open Studios both to re-establish the connection from last year, find out how to get into Open Studios, book vendors, book space, etc.
- (2) George asked if postcards would be used again this year since they are a good way to advertise the Art Show.
- (3) Open Studios has Saturday, November 10 and Sunday, November 11 open.
- (4) The reception is prior to those dates and might be held on November 4th. Anne must check with the Library.
- (5) Postcards with all needed dates will be placed throughout Watertown. Judith suggested placing postcards also at Springwell. George agreed.
- (6) Kim will be in Watertown for the reception but not after due to an extended trip until the latter part of November.

b. Website- George

George reported 69 visits to the WCOD website from June 17 to July 17, 201 most from the USA but some from as far away as Singapore, the Philippines, the Ukraine, Kenya, the Czech Republic, Australia and Germany. The site was busiest at the end of June and on July 6th. In July, there were a few postings to the website. Also, Fred asked for a link on the website to the Massachusetts Commission on Disability.

c. Closed Caption- Carol

Carol said closed captioning is running smoothly. She said since WCOD's contact person Tamara Green left Watertown Community Access Center (WCAC), there is no one at the helm there for the WCOD. Carol asked that any job description for the position include "advanced technical skills" and asked George if a job description could be posted on the WCOD website.

Gayle added that she is already working with John Arasian, Chair of the WCAC, on the job description, which includes knowledge of accessibility issues and cable TV, communications, closed captioning and related technology. Gayle asked all WCOD members to email suggestions about the job description to her so she can include a full range of needed skills. All skills will be discussed with John Arasian. In response to a comment from Carol, Gayle said she discusses with an applicant during the job interview their knowledge of the Communications and Video Accessibility Act.

d. Special Ed- Fred

Fred said it would be good to be able to start the Lending Library (iPads, iPods) in September. Fred commented that his daughter watches a television show called "Push Girls" about thirty-year-olds and the disability challenges they face. Gayle

added she has seen the show; it has good information to pass along to others.

e. Safety and Access- Kim

There have been a few reports on audible signals not working. She has not yet heard back from Jerry Mee (DPW) on the reports. Kim reported that Perkins did produce a trash recycling Braille announcement for the visually impaired for the DPW; the invoice goes to the DPW. Approximately eighty households needed the announcement.

f. Plans Review- John

We need the final decision from the MAAB on the complaint against SuperFitness. Neither Kim nor Gayle has received any final decision on the complaint. Gayle/Jean will check if Building Department has received any decision correspondence.

g. Restaurant Guide Report- Jean

The Completed Restaurant Guide is “on hold” at Perkins for Kim’s review. The Audible Signal Survey project is approaching completion – two large intersections and Watertown Square remain to survey.

OLD BUSINESS-

a. Watertown Riverfront Project Update- Kim

There was no report on the Watertown River Project.

b. SPED PAC Apple Technology Proposal- Fred

There was no report on SPED PAC.

c. SuperFitness Complaint Update, Department of Public safety- John

Discussed above; see item “f” under Committee Reports.

d. Town Council Issues- Steve

There is discussion about Simmons College and Brighton High School using Daley Field (Nonantum Boulevard). Last month, Senator Brown announced this to the Watertown Town Council. The State would need to approve use of the field. Steve added that the approval would necessitate a redo of the field. The discussion is preliminary and the plan is “to watch it.”

NEW BUSINESS-

(a) UCPA Documentary: Shooting Beauty, Possible Screening in Watertown- Carol

Last year at the Museum of Fine Arts, Carol viewed a documentary film series that she would like to bring to the Watertown Library in November 2012 to coincide with the Art Exhibit. Carol will research the procedure to do so and will return to the WCOD with costs. Fred suggested renting the Belmont Studio theatre on Trapelo Road.

(b) Faire on the Square (September 22, 2012, 10am – 4pm)

Kim called for volunteers to help at the WCOD table and to “stuff bags” with informational materials to hand to those who visit the table. On September 19,

2012, the evening of the next WCOD meeting, members will meet early to stuff informational materials into give-away bags for distribution at the WCOD table at Faire on the Square. Pizza will be served.

Between George and the Personnel Department, we should have 100 bags left over from last year. George will contact Jeff Dougan for a supply of the latest ADA materials to add to the bags. Anne's postcard on the Art Exhibit will be included, and George will ask others to donate materials/items as well. Personnel will store the materials and the stuffed bags until the Faire.

Gayle will make sure WCOD is registered for a table at the Faire.

Carol said that anyone can schedule interpreters to be at the WCOD table. Usually, we have three interpreters at the table. Carol will speak with Gayle and Jean about the process to schedule interpreters; Jean can work on a draft schedule for coverage to be finalized at the September meeting.

Kim will look for volunteers to act as guides for those who are blind or visually impaired attending the Faire on the Square who might like to walk around the Faire but need assistance.

(c) Emergency Evacuation Training- George and WCOD Members

As Gayle receives information on the training, she will inform the WCOD.

At Perkins, Mary Salvucci is involved and wants the WCOD to be aware that the Town of Watertown will be part of the training. As George receives information on the training, he will inform the WCOD.

Q: Judith: Who is the training for?

A: Gayle: It is responder training.

Q: Judith: Can WCOD members attend?

A: Kim: Yes. I plan to attend as part of the Perkins Evacuation Team. We can invite city leaders to a WCOD meeting to present training information and any city emergency evacuation plans. Since the training is in August, we need some information on it as soon as possible. It is a good idea to have WCOD members present at the training.

Gayle will send Kim any information he has or will obtain on the training as soon as possible.

George reminded the WCOD that it began a similar project several years ago to evaluate “public works” and what might be needed in an emergency evacuation situation (signs, street markings, access for van-chair to drop its ramp, provide a list of observations, etc.). WCOD members agreed it best to be proactive on emergency evacuation plans.

(d) Handicap Parking Spaces- WCOD Members

George spoke with Nancy Scott (former Zoning Dept. employee) about where handicapped parking spaces are located in Watertown. Her statement to him was, “We don’t know where handicap spaces are.”

Steve (Town Councilor) added that if the Handicap spaces are municipal ones, the Town should provide updates on the spaces and the WCOD can include “private HP spaces.” Steve said DPW or the Police might know where the HP spaces are located.

Kim asked Gayle to email DPW to say the WCOD is interested to know the number of and location of all HP spaces. Gayle said both Police and DPW are involved in that the two parking enforcement police officers ought to know the locations of HP spaces, and for maintenance of the HP spaces, the DPW ought to know HP space locations. Kim suggested the WCOD compile a list of HP spaces and do our own evaluation/observation of them and take any issues to the DPW.

(e) SuperFitness- John

We have received correspondence from the State on the original complaint, but to John’s knowledge, there has been no final decision correspondence. The Building Inspector is responsible for correct construction of buildings and properties and all ADA compliance to ADA regulations.

It was MOVED, seconded and passed unanimously to adjourn at 9:07 p.m.

These minutes are recorded and respectfully submitted by Jean O’Connell, WCOD Intern.