

Watertown Commission on Disability

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 20, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. By Kim Charlson, Chair.

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson, Chair; Counselor Steve Corbett; George Donahue; John Hawes; Judith Herzberg; Fred Isaacs; Jeanne O'Connell, WCOD Intern; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator and Carol Wilson-Braun. Unable to attend: Ann Doughty and Carol Menton.

Guests- Jerry Mee from the DPW, and later, Elisabeth Schaefer from WPS and Elan Rohde, Co-Chair of SPEDPAC.

AUDIENCE ISSUES- Jerry Mee gave updates on several DPW projects potentially affecting disabled residents. 1) The Road Program has scheduled reconstruction of Waverly St this summer from Main St. to Orchard St. The thick layer of asphalt will be stripped and traffic calming crosswalks installed of red brick thermal plastic. The grade of the sidewalks will be changed, especially in front of the middle school, which will be lowered. Carroll St. will also be done. Mr. Mee wanted assistance from the Commission to get word out about the construction. Other projects include Union, Boyd and Hawthorn streets. All intersections will have handicapped ramps with "tactiles", the textured mats. They will install monitors and weather sensors in some intersections. They plan to alternate road projects with traffic control projects each year, as the budget allows.

2) Single stream recycling will start Aug 6th. Every household will receive 64 gallon black trash and green recycling totes. The tops of the recycling totes will be embossed either GREEN or RED for the different weeks of collection. Condos will have to be dealt with individually. People have been complaining already about having to take them back in at night. Commission members expressed concern about elderly and disabled maneuvering the totes. Jerry replied that they are on wheels and easy to move, and that the town cannot make exceptions. The senior center has expressed its intention to help people with this. Residents' current bins and trash cans can be dropped off for recycling. Bins will go to schools to be used for recycling. Every tote will be linked to an address by serial number. Bulk items will still be OK for trash and placed beside the totes. Totes have been shown to deter animals. Kim suggested that the DPW print flyers in Braille and distribute them.

3) Audible Signals- Irving and N. Beacon is still not working. They are looking for a new vendor for traffic audible signals. The audible signals from a new supplier will have different wiring and should work better. The Grove and Greenough

intersection needs to be well lit. Major work is being planned there by the DCR. There is concern about no audible signal at Lexington and Main. That section of Main St. is controlled by Mass Highway Dept, but Watertown would like to resume control over that section. Mr. Mee would like a letter from WCOD and DPW to the Mass Dept of Highways to ask that the intersection be updated with audible signals. The DPW also wants one clear lane and one bike lane along that section of Main St. Kim will prepare a letter and work with Gayle and Jeanne.

Discussion continued about the recycling totes after Mr. Mee left, and it was stated that there are issues concerning the elderly and disabled being able to manage the totes. Kim stated that in Miami, people can register a waiver. There have to be accommodations.

CHAIR'S REPORT- There was no Chair's report.

ACCEPTANCE of MINUTES- Minutes from the May meeting were distributed at the June meeting, so a vote was deferred until next month.

TREASURER'S REPORT- The format was changed. There are totals for "Debit" and "Credit" columns, a balance from the previous fiscal year, "purchase order encumbrances" and new, "other encumbrances without purchase orders" (future approved expenses).

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

A separate discussion then took place concerning Making Healthy Connections- a peer mentoring program for youth, with social and arts programming. We will continue our commitment to fund access for disabled children in Watertown. The amount we gave last year wasn't used because eligible youth with disabilities couldn't be identified from Watertown for the program. We will roll over last year's amount, and it was decided that George should write a letter of intent to them. If they still don't find anyone, they'll need to come before us to discuss this. More publicity is needed. This program should consider a Metrowest program instead of going into Boston. That may be more successful. It was noted that the high school is currently doing a social network for kids after school.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

a) **Art Exhibit-** Kim reported for Ann that information was distributed to all exhibitors from last year. Ann wants more referrals. There is time to work on post card invitations.

b) **Web Stats-** No report

c) Closed Captioning- Kim stated that closed captioning is working well at present.

d) Special Ed Update- Fred said that the annual awards meeting was in April instead of May. There was a big speaker in May (Sarah Ward on Executive function), but attendance was down. June was the planning meeting for next year.

e) Safety and Access- Kim reported that notifying DPW about signals through their website was working well.

f) Restaurant Guide- In progress. Jeanne will give a report next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS-

a) Waterfront Update- The DCR identified a large chunk of money \$80-150 thousand to be released after this fiscal year. Kim was at the meeting for the accessible Braille trail. The funding is solid. There is \$200 thousand pledged from private supporters and WCOD.

b) SPED PAC- Elisabeth Schaefer from WPS and Elan Rohde, SPEDPAC co-chair discussed their funding request. The proposal seeks a commitment from WCOD of \$9000 for speakers and costs for 3 years (this includes reimbursement for refreshments at \$40/meeting). They stated that this would allow them to plan for the future. The amount would be disbursed when receipts are submitted. The commission suggested a 2 year proposal.

It was MOVED, seconded and voted with one abstention by Fred to authorize \$6500 over the next 2 school years to SPEDPAC for their speaker program and refreshments.

The next proposal was about the Apple Assistive Technology Lending Library. A funding commitment was requested to establish a school-based lending library of 5 ipads and 5 ipods for each of the 5 schools in Watertown, for a total of \$28,000, including protective cases and Aps for the devices. They are intended to be used by kids and their parents to try out at home who may not be able to afford the equipment otherwise. The program would target special needs students. They were asked how many children were in each of the schools, and commissioners expressed concern that schools were of different sizes, and were assured that the devices would be shared between schools. It was suggested that 3 of each device be funded for each school as a trial. It was also recommended to apply to Watertown Community Foundation when they see that the program is successful and want it to grow more. This falls more in line with other recent projects of WCF.

It was MOVED, seconded and voted with one abstention by Fred, to fund \$12,000 for hardware and \$2000 for Aps for 3 units each of ipad, and ipod for 5 schools, for the Apple Lending Library, contingent upon disbursements of funding.

c) Superfitness- The defendant proposed minimal changes of leaving a door unlocked and putting up signs, and will make a van space. We will wait to hear a resolution. There was a question about the amount of accessible parking, but that is up to the building inspector.

NEW BUSINESS-

On the agenda was a UCPA Documentary screening, but this is postponed until next meeting because Carol M. was not present to discuss the idea.

The next meeting, we will have 2 speakers: Jeff Dougan from the Mass. COD, and Ann Harrison from Springwell talking about their Nutrition Awareness program and services for the disabled. The next meeting will be on July 18th at 7 p.m.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

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