WATERTOWN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY
Meeting minutes

Wed., Nov. 28th, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. By Chair Kim Charlson.

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

GUESTS- Brian Coppola, Tom Gilbert and Anna Petrie, Intern at Church of the Good Shepherd.

AUDIENCE ISSUES- Anna stated that she was just here to listen. Brian Coppola wanted to speak on issues relating to the audible signals at Watertown Square, near Perkins and the Arsenal mall. He was a Perkins student from '70-'85. He said they have audible signals, but not vibrating audible signals. Tom Gilbert stated that some of the buttons are broken. Brian wrote to the DPW in May and had no response, and then tried to reach Gerry Mee by phone with no success. He was coming to the Commission for help with this problem. He stated that Watertown should be an example, and that this will lead to improved technology and increased employment. Kim asked Brian to send his letter to the commission and that we will work with the DPW on a phase-in plan for Watertown Square and Perkins intersections. Tom Gilbert had 2 questions. First, why the bus stop was changed from in front of the bank where a direct connection was available from #70 to #71. George responded that traffic patterns had changed, and re-routing the bus through the delta would have added 10 mins. Tom also asked how to keep people from parking in the bus stops. He wanted to know if town police could help the T police so buses can remain accessible. Kim directed Gayle to send an inquiry to the police. Fred mentioned it could be a revenue source for the town.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- It was MOVED, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the minutes from October. Copies of the minutes may be requested from the Town Clerk's office.

TREASURER'S REPORT- Gayle reported that there was no written report this month due to trouble "proofing it" to Munis. There were errors in the format. She verbally summarized the report and will provide a written report in Dec, and then it will be voted on.

CHAIR'S REPORT- Kim will start a draft of the year-end report, and will have the draft by next meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

a) Art Exhibit- Anne stated that she estimated 100-150 people at the reception. Several patrons asked to purchase works of art. Watertown Open Studios was held a week later. Our exhibit was received well. She bought a card for thanking Amy Lambert from the library. The exhibit will close by the end of the week. Anne asked artists to pick up their work or it will be moved to town hall. Kim spoke of our appreciation of the work Anne has put into the art exhibit the last 2 years.

b) Plans Review- John talked about 192 Pleasant St, which is 14 unit 2-bedroom condos. He said the plans looked fine, but wanted to bring up a proposed gravel walkway, not a formal part of the plans, which is steeper than 1:10, due to lack of space. There will be a railing on the building. It may need to come before MAAB. We'll have to sign off if there is a variance from the state, which may be needed legally. Commission members decided there was no problem with the walkway. John was directed to tell them that the WCOD supports the variance.

c) Special Ed- Fred stated that the Nov. meeting was on basic rights for IEPs. The lending libraries are up and running, and working well. He will have a usage report next meeting. Kim had a question about publicity and credit for support from the Commission. Fred will talk to SpedPac.

d)Safety and Access/Emergency Preparedness- Kim heard of a complaint about Mount Auburn and Summer St. southwest corner audible signal still not working. The next Emergency Preparedness meeting will be 12/6 8:30-10 a.m. at the police station community room. Jeanne is reaching out to the state. E911 coordinator will be invited to come to the January meeting.

e) Closed Captioning- Carol M. stated that they are still working on a back-up plan for when Stefanie is unavailable. Valerie Papas notifies Stefanie of the meeting and provides agendas. Stefanie will notify Valerie if not able to attend town council and Valerie will notify the councilors. They are waiting for WCA to hire an Executive Director before moving forward. Once a director is in place, we can think more about a back-up person and move forward with a plan. Fred asked about what has happened when the technology didn't work. Stefanie answered that it worked well for 6 months and doesn't know why there are glitches now. Steven said that changing channels caused problems, and that there are cable station "man-power" issues. Stefanie remarked that she discovered that apparently missing captions were imbedded in the DVD for replay.

f) Webstats- George reported that from Oct 27-Nov 26, there were 42 visits and no postings. 896 for the year, with 693 from the US. Visits are trending down. The web policy sub-committee (Kim, Carol W-B and George) will review resources and communicate before the next meeting. He reminded us that individuals can sign up to receive notifications for meetings and events.

g) Restaurant guide- Kim reported that the guide is being proofed by her, Jean and George. The finished booklet is almost ready and the Braille file is ready to go.

After discussion, it was decided to print 300 copies, fewer than last time, because people are more likely to look online now. We'll do publicity when it comes out. Kim wondered how to organize the website. George will use a master file and it will be cross referenced using key words.

ONGOING BUSINESS-

a)UCPA documentary- Carol M reported that the tentative date for the showing is 2/28 from 6:30-8:30 at the library. She was given approval to set up interpreter services for the event, including set-up and planning with the UCPA people and the event itself. Up to $600 was authorized for this event at the Sept meeting.

b) Watertown Riverfront Project- Kim heard from Jon Hecht that the project is not included in the DCR budget for this year, which is disappointing. There will be a community meeting to decide the next steps.

c)Social Service Coordinator position- No updates. Anna P. stated that there would be a community meeting on 12/11 at 5:30 to support the position. [At town hall?] Fred asked if this position was separate from the veterans' affairs, and Gayle said yes.

NEW BUSINESS-

a) Open Meeting Law: Review and Discussion- Gayle said the open meeting law covered how, when, where to post an agenda, and what should be in an agenda. Off-line discussions shouldn't take place, including email discussions on subjects. Fact finding is OK, but decision making is not OK, because it is outside the public arena. Our approved minutes are good at being filed with the town clerk. Fred said that the tone of this law is less harsh, that we are to try not to make a mistake. Steve said it was still strict- people have to err on the side of being open and public. George brought up his concern for the website. No blogging. Asked what should be posted. He will talk to Mark, to remove contributor and subscriber sign-up. Gayle said postings go one way- from the town out.

b) Discussion and vote for donation to two food pantries again this year. It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to donate $1000 each to the Watertown Food Pantry and St. Patrick's food pantry. Gayle will make arrangements and Kim will send letters.

c)List of handicapped parking locations- There was a desire expressed to meet with parking enforcement officers. Gayle will ask them to come to a meeting. They will be asked about bus stop violations. George will address this on one of his cable programs.

d)Other- Fred spoke to the community garden people and is trying to get them to come to a meeting. George stated that they need to bring a written proposal for funding for their project. Kim said to let us know when they will come. George brought books for each commission member Laughing Allegra by Anne Ford about raising a child with learning disabilities. Kim asked about the DVD captioning project by the historical society that the commission helped to fund. Carol M said she has a DVD and will bring it in Dec. Gayle said we are still waiting for their final bill. Carol M said she'd remind them.

The next meeting will take place on Wed. December 19th. Two commission members have a conflict that evening, so it was suggested that the meeting be held from 5-7 p.m. Carol M. will check on availability of interpreters for the different time.

It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:08 p.m.

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