

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 18th, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:19 p.m. by Chair Kim Charlson.

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

Guests- Vincent Piccirilli, town councilor, and Jeff Holman, WCOD intern. Guest speakers Rep. Jonathan Hecht and Sen. Will Brownsberger.

AUDIENCE ISSUES- Vincent Piccirilli spoke of sidewalk obstruction issues, such as cars parking on sidewalks, particularly around Putnam and Hosmer Sts. We need to re-visit police enforcement of no parking on the sidewalks. Residents of Mt. Auburn St. have started storing their trash and recycling totes on the sidewalks, which is also illegal. Police can issue warnings first, then can impose a \$25 fine. George recommended an op-ed piece for the paper to educate the public in the importance of keeping sidewalks clear for pedestrians, strollers, wheelchairs. It is unsafe to go out into the road. It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to send a letter to town council about the parking situation and our position on the obstruction of sidewalks. It is important that sidewalks not be blocked and to encourage enforcement.

CHAIR'S REPORT- Follow-up about the variance reconsideration request for 266 Belmont St. John said the town council requires property to be restored to its previous condition when the concerned person moves away, or else the next buyer would have to argue again for a variance. It will be an issue in this case. We can recommend pavers (instead of asphalt) and a fence. John and Kim will write a letter in response and in agreement with Mike Mena.

Kim brought up a request to sponsor the accessibility component of the town inauguration ceremony. It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to support accessibility for the January inauguration ceremony, including CART and Braille programs.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- It was MOVED, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the minutes from the November meeting as corrected. Copies of the minutes may be requested from the Town Clerk's Office. Kim requested that the calendar be changed slightly next year. She requested that no meeting be held in July instead of August due to her travel plans. It was agreed.

TREASURER'S REPORT- Gayle said that the money went through for the social worker. There were thank yous for the food pantry donations. Kim said that Watertown Riverfront Project funds will be collected soon from donors. It was MOVED, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the Treasurer's Report for November. Copies of the Treasurer's

report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

- a) Plans Review- George said that the Grace Chapel variance application was being formally submitted.
- b) Closed Caption- Carol will talk about it next month.
- c) Special Ed- Fred said that SpedPac voted to ask us for a grant of \$2500 to fund updated apps for ipads. Proposal will formally be presented next month. A speaker last month talked about chrome browser extensions and apps, text to speech and speech to text assistive technology.
- d) Safety and Access- no report.
- e) Website Update- George added one new restaurant- Edamame.
- f) Art Show wrap up- George said that next year it will be included in Able Arts. He will propose to the commission that we pay the entry fees of disabled artists.

GUEST SPEAKERS- Rep. Hecht updated the Commission on a bill he filed to provide guidance to cities and towns about onstreet parking with placards. He is proposing that 5% of onstreet parking be HP accessible. Public vs. private areas were discussed. He is working with Sen. Brownsberger on another issue of keeping the Green pool at Fernald open to the disabled community. The rest of the Fernald campus will be turned over to Waltham when the last of the residents have left. Jon reported that the MBTA Ride fares are being decreased to \$3 after an impact study.

Sen. Brownsberger gave an overview of his work. He partners with 8 state reps in his territory concerning infrastructure: MBTA, park improvements, Fenway, esplanade, the riverfront project, Daly field and accessibility issues.

ONGOING BUSINESS-

Much of it was already discussed this evening. There were still questions about curb cuts and accessibility of the bus island delta. George will check it out and we will discuss next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS- Will be carried over until January. Gayle received a letter from Gayl Hardeman, owner of the CART company hired to provide captioning for the political debate at the library in Oct. There were difficulties due to no internet, and CART could not be provided. It was agreed that the CART writer should be paid. It was agreed also that there should be training and problem solving at the library for next time.

The next meeting will take place on Wed., Jan.15th, 7 p.m.

It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:13 p.m.

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