

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 20th, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 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; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator; and Carol Wilson-Braun. Absent- Jeanne O'Connell.

GUESTS- Audience members Rachel Natale, Yoni Dvorkis and Vera Yanovsky, and Jeff Holman. Guest speakers Daniel Barton on behalf of Grace Chapel; Craig Moody, Facility Director for Grace Chapel; Mike Mena, Watertown Zoning Enforcement; and Danielle DeMoss, Social Services Resource Specialist with Wayside Youth and Family Support.

GUEST SPEAKERS-

- 1) Daniel Barton spoke about the variance being requested for Grace Chapel, which is renovating a church on Main St. They have put in an accessible entrance with power operated door, an accessible bathroom, and a wheelchair lift from the lower floor to the main level and with all the renovations they have surpassed the 30% threshold and now have to make the entire building accessible. The problem is a small balcony above the sanctuary that is used only for overflow seating and would be extremely difficult and prohibitively expensive to make accessible. They are requesting and hoping to receive a variance in late December. They wanted input from WCOD on the variance request. After discussion, it was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to support the Grace Chapel variance. John Hayes will write a letter of support.
- 2) Vera Yanovsky summarized her situation and reasoning for requesting a reasonable accommodation request for placing a driveway in a part of the front yard of the house that her condo is in. She has a disability that is documented by doctors, and is expecting a baby in the winter and currently has only street parking. Mike Mena said the variance is needed only because a required buffer is not possible. They also need to coordinate with the Belmont St. improvement project. After discussion, it was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to accept the request for reasonable accommodation at 266 Belmont St. for installation of a one-car driveway.
- 3) Danielle DeMoss is a social worker with Wayside, and among other things she helps to run an after school program at the Boys and Girls Club for children with emotional and social needs. She is also working for the town now. Her role includes supporting community members, connecting them to resources and following up. The position with the town will focus on adults to age 60. Referrals come from a number of sources. Kim asked about

getting information out to disabled populations and said she would be pleased to consult with her.

CHAIR'S REPORT- Kim first offered congratulations to Steve, who won re-election to Town Council this month, and there was applause from the Commission. Kim said she still needed to write a letter to the Highway Division about the need for audible signals at Main and Lexington streets. She received a letter from an orientation instructor for the blind concerning problems crossing at that intersection and at the pedestrian light at Charlesgate Manor, also on that stretch of road.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT- It was MOVED, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the Treasurer's Report for October. Copies of the Treasurer's report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office. Fred asked if the school i-pad expenses were paid, and Gayle confirmed that they had been.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

- a) No report for Plans Review or Safety and Access.
- b) Closed Caption- George stated that the cable station had a fire a few months ago and that a lot of equipment was ruined. There has been nothing online since. Stefanie stated that live streaming has not been working online because of Comcast. It is working on television. Carol M will follow up. Kim asked Gayle to communicate with cable.
- c) Special Ed- Fred said there was a speaker on anxiety in children at the last meeting. A SpedPac speaker will speak on funding software updates for the i-pads at the next meeting.
- d) Website Stats- Many of the visits were for the dining guide. 2013 minutes are being placed on the town website by Gayle. George stated that most commissions are linked to their town websites. It was MOVED, seconded and passed unanimously to downsize the WCOD website to have only the static dining guide, linked to the town website and maintained by the commission.
- e) Able Arts- Rachael Natale commented that the reception was standing room only and fun for all. Kim said she heard positive feedback and gave thanks to George, Jean and Carol M. The information booklet was great. Everything will be taken down on the 22nd. George stated that part of the Watertown Open Studios took place in the auditorium in his apartment building. He wants to see WCOD and Watertown Open Studios work together next year. The Commission could pay the \$35 entry fee for disabled Watertown artists. Six of the 17 artists this year for Able Arts were from Watertown. Kim asked George, Rachel and Carol M. to put together a projection of the cost. This will be discussed further.

ONGOING BUSINESS-

- a)Waterfront- Kim said the planners are working with a neighbor who is concerned about the potential noise from a locator tone of the signal at Irving St.

- b) HP Parking- Gayle met with Ed Baptista and Gerry Mee about the priority of HP spaces near the old registry. George reported that signs have been replaced in the CVS lot. Kim asked Gayle to have Gerry Mee come back in Jan or March.
- c) There was no report on Comprehensive Plan.
- d) MBTA Bus Island Delta issue- John and Kim recommended referring the issue to the T. George will pass it along. We will invite local politicians to talk about the T. Jon Hecht will come in December. Will Brownsberger can come in January, and Kim suggested John Lawn.

NEW BUSINESS-

- a) Kim encouraged the Commission to make another food pantry holiday gift. It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to authorize a holiday gift of \$1500 each to Watertown Food Pantry and St. Patrick's Food Pantry. Gayle will follow through.
- b) Gayle introduced Jeff Holman, our new intern, who is a PoliSci major interested in civic administration.
- c) Kim announced that three members, Steve, Carol W-B and herself, have renewed terms starting 11/1/13.

The next meeting will take place on Wed., Dec. 18th, 7 p.m. There will be food.

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.