

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 15th, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Chair Kim Charlson.

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson, Chair; Steven Corbett, Town Councilor; 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.

AUDIENCE- Chuck Dickenson, World in Watertown, chair of planning committee for the Unity breakfast; Sue Cooter (sp?), also on planning committee; Jeff Holman and George Donahue. Rep John Lawn arrived later in evening.

GUEST SPEAKERS- Chuck Dickenson briefed the Commission on the 14 year history of the Unity breakfast, which attracts 350-400 people. The keynote speaker this year is the head of a mother's group against violence. He asked for financial support for CART service, which had been omitted the last couple of years. He didn't know where the financial support had come from before, but Alex Liazos had arranged it. It was MOVED and seconded to fund CART service for the Unity breakfast on Jan 20th for \$405. But the motion needed to be tabled until our next meeting for procedural reasons. We will vote in March.

CHAIR'S REPORT- Kim gave a final update on the 266 Belmont St variance request. Vera Yanovsky is currently using the space, complying with the decorative fencing recommendation and will formally apply for the variance. Work will take place when construction starts on Belmont St.

And as follow-up on the sidewalk obstruction issue, Kim wrote a letter to the Tab requesting people keep their walks clear for all pedestrians, not just handicapped. Jeff, Jean and Gayle will write a letter to the town council. Jean pointed out that the RMV has an ordinance for not parking on sidewalks. Steve can bring up issues to DPW subcommittee. We will issue an invite again to Gerry Mee to come to a meeting for updates about road construction, dog park, handicapped parking. Carol W-B mentioned the reverse 911 phone call during the last snow emergency that requested people clear off their sidewalks. Kim asked Gayle to send a note of appreciation to the police chief.

Kim announced the official letter of resignation from George D, effective Jan 2nd, which was regretfully accepted. On behalf of the Commission, Kim expressed thanks and appreciation for all his years of work for the Commission. George is working for the town now.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- It was MOVED, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the minutes from the December 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 December. Copies of the Treasurer's report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

- a) Plans Review- John said the Atrium School was applying for variances from MAAB for an existing lift and discharge area with steps that doesn't go to a public way. No action needed. A 300 unit residential building being planned on Arsenal St. will have walkways on either end of the building, and John's feedback was that one side will need a ramp in addition to stairs.
- b) Closed Caption- Stefanie spoke of the greatly increasing frustrations with the system, which are not being resolved. Problems with monitors, encoders, live streaming, video feed, lack of knowledge of Cable station volunteers. After much discussion, it was decided that the Commission needs to directly address the cable board. Steve will contact the chair of the board and talk to the town council president, as this issue reflects on the town council as well. Carol and Stefanie will give him a list of priorities.
- c) Special Ed- Fred said there was a presentation on transition planning. There was a discussion about a proposal requesting funding for the software updates, but no action at this time.
- d) Safety and Access, Art Show- No reports.
- e) Website transition- Gayle said the minutes of meetings are on the WCOD page in the town's website. The Commission website has 2 links- to the minutes and to the dining guide. George D has offered to keep the page up to date as a volunteer.
- f) Art Show follow up- George (as a volunteer) will meet with Watertown Open Studios people, and hopes to continue having art shows in the Coolidge apartments

GUEST SPEAKER- Rep. John Lawn spoke of growing up in Watertown and being elected State Representative in 2011, representing parts of Watertown, Waltham and Newton. He highlighted a project he is working on of saving the Green Pool at Fernald for use by the disabled community. The current plan is to completely close Fernald and turn it over to Waltham when the last 9 residents are placed, so time is of the essence and he is working with advocates and families.

ONGOING BUSINESS-

- a) Riverfront Update- John looked at the plans, and they are progressing. Crosswalks at Irving St were addressed, particularly the need for one vs two.
- b) MBTA Bus Island Delta- George (as a volunteer) is still planning to assess it from wheelchair point of view when the weather is better.

NEW BUSINESS-

- a) Fred said that the Commission will sponsor the showing of the video “Going Blind” at the Watertown Library. Kim said a copy could be obtained from the Carroll Center. Judith will check on room dates for April or May. Carol will help Fred organize the event.
- b) Gayle asked Commission members to talk with colleagues and friends about the open position. There are currently no letters on file.

The next meeting will take place on Wed., March 19th, 7 p.m. There is no meeting in February.

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.