Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 19th, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. by Chair Kim Charlson.

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

Audience- George Donahue and Rachele Natale.

CHAIR'S REPORT-

a) A draft of the Annual report was completed by Gayle, combining personnel and WCOD. Report due by 3/31. She will send it to us for feedback.
b) New commission member- Rachele Natale is being recommended by Gayle and Judy to fill George Donahue's term until it ends on Nov 1st. She has attended some meetings, brought an issue before the commission and helped with the Art show. It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to recommend to the town manager the appointment of Rachele Natale to the Commission.
c) Curbside parking article- Jeff introduced his article and comments were requested to be sent to Jeff or Gayle by the end of the week so it can be finalized and sent to the Tab for publication. Judith suggested a photo to go along with it. Jeff said the next article he will be working on is about disabled veterans in Watertown (Iraq, Afganistan, Vietnam), what they are going through, resources and services available.
d) Special presentation- Kim presented a plaque to George Donahue for many (15?) years of service on the WCOD. She said it was largely because of him that we have a strong reputation.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT- Gayle said there had been a thank you from the Watertown Senior Center for the automatic door. People are very grateful. We are spending more than we are receiving this year- $50,000 vs $11,000, so may need to pay more attention to our budget. Kim said we had more large expenditures this year. It was MOVED, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the Treasurer's Report for January. Copies of the Treasurer's report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

a) Plans Committee- Jeff reported an email regarding Grace Chapel giving more detail on the stairs. Kim and George reported that Grace Chapel is seeking variances for HP bathrooms and stairs. Gayle said that variance relief was granted to Atrium School for a wheelchair lift not being accessible to a public way. The courtyard level is accessible.
b) Closed Caption- Steve and Judith went to the hearing. Carol M., Fred and George provided written comment. Steve wanted the cable company to identify a contact person and make sure we get what the community needs. Cable access is important, and we need accountability and upgrades. Captioning, communication and collaboration have improved. Stefanie met with Helen, the new Community Access director, Nick and the town manager. They discovered that the encoder was the part of the process not working properly, and this has now been fixed. Stefanie cautioned never to touch the reset button- to turn it off and restart. Now we can address other towns' inquiries. Cambridge, Marlborough and other towns have contacted her. Kim asked Stefanie and Helen to outline basics to give to Gayle to send out to other towns. Thanks to Steve, Mark Sideris and the town manager for helping to finally get resolution on this problem. Kim gave kudos to Stefanie for being tenacious for getting through this.
c) Website transition- George said that "bad behavior" software catches spam. He recommended that a sign be posted referring to the town website for WCOD agendas, minutes and dining guide. The next time we do the dining guide, we can get information from the licensing board. It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to redirect the page from WCOD.org to the Watertown town website WCOD page. A searchable guide will now be the only thing on the WCOD website.
d) Art Show- George stated that the building used by Turtle Studio is being demolished and they can't help organize or participate in Watertown Open Studios this year. Kim asked Rachele and will ask Jean to pursue future plans and direction for an art exhibit. The library or Coolidge apartments can be a location and should be booked before long. George will continue to be involved.

ONGOING BUSINESS

a) It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to fund the cart service at the MLK Unity breakfast on 1/20 for $405.
b) Watertown Riverfront Project- Kim said a check was sent to DCR, and now they can go out to bid. The project is moving forward with meetings about pedestrian lights at the intersection of Irving St and Charles River Rd. Steve attended and said there were compromises. Dan Driscoll the DCR representative has been engaged and helpful.
c) Presentation of "Going Blind" at the library. Judy reserved the room for Wed Apr 23rd. Kim will get the film, Judy will set up and do the welcome and Q and A session afterward. Jeff will put an announcement in the Tab. It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to authorize up to $1000 for the "Going Blind" movie on 4/23, refreshments, and ASL interpreter.
d) Comprehensive Plan- Steve said they will have a draft in 4-6 wks to present to town council.
e) Delta concern- We will still send George out as a volunteer in the warmer weather.

NEW BUSINESS-
Carol M was wondering whether the new housing and building developments were hiring people with disabilities. Community planning and disabilities will be discussed at a future meeting. Judith and Steve will research.

The next meeting will take place on Wed., April 16th, at 7 p.m.

It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.

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