

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 20th, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chair Kim Charlson.

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson, Chair;; John Hawes; Fred Isaacs; Carol Menton; Jeanne O'Connell; Megan O'Halloran; Christine Russo- Intern; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator; and Carol Wilson-Braun. Absent- Steven Corbett, Town Councilor, who was at another meeting.

Guests- Jill Martin Clements, Supervisor of Adult and Reference Services and Kerry Conkey, Teen Librarian, both of the Watertown Public Library.

GUEST SPEAKERS- Jill received a request for ASL films from a patron with a deaf son. Just having them captioned wasn't enough because English wasn't his first language. The Minuteman Library consortium does not have films in ASL. Jill compiled a list of films for a total of \$570.55 in consultation with Deaf Inc. They are requesting \$800-1000 to purchase the titles that are popular. Some are independent films, some not easy to find. Gayle asked if other libraries could share this endeavor, and Jill said she would encourage others to purchase titles for themselves that are popular. Kim mentioned Accessible Services of the Minuteman Consortium. Jill has an aide who wants to make a promotional video for the library. Megan asked if there were videos for children, and Carol M responded that Gallaudet has a program called "Shared Reading Saturdays", a series with signing for families with babies.

Kerry spoke about accommodating and welcoming intellectually and cognitively disabled groups. She wants to start a biweekly "Library Insiders" program for disabled populations through Inclusive Services, to help them feel more comfortable and confident using the library. Game days and internet classes will be offered. She has talked with aides from UCPA. Carol M. encouraged them to talk more and have focus groups. Kerry is asking for \$547.38 for supplies to start this program. We will discuss both of these requests further and vote next meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT- Kim discussed "detectable warnings" at Watertown Square, which are the reddish textured rectangles on the sidewalks at intersections that indicate the ramps. Many need maintenance, and are worn down or missing. The DPW needs to address this, Gayle will follow up. Kim wanted volunteers to investigate the intersection, and Megan offered. John offered to check out Arsenal going toward the malls. Jeanne reminded the Commission that this info is on the survey that was done in the past couple of years. Kim stated that the blind population has difficulty reporting things online to the DPW. She said she will present findings by a staffer walking from Arsenal to Perkins via Irving St, and also a walking path update.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT- It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to accept the Treasurer's Report for April. 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 that the Greystar project will be reviewed tomorrow night. Eight of the 14 required units were in the worst locations, in his opinion, and he asked them to make a change, which hasn't been done yet. The apartments should be located a reasonable distance from the elevators. John wants to see drawings when they go to the building permit stage, as there are more details shown. He will discuss with Steve Magoon.
- b) Closed Caption- Carol M reported that Helen said it was too soon to meet with us and the town council room was still being re-wired. The town auditor is helping to set up the project for remote cart. Caption First will advise. Kim asked Gayle to find out the timeline from Tom. If Helen can come next month, Kim requested that a speaker phone be set up so we can also include Pat Graves of Caption First in Colorado.
- c) Special Ed- Fred reported that Ellen Braaten spoke on the 14th on the topic of bright kids who encounter difficulties (Executive function disorder). Kim said the head of Watertown Special Ed will come on to our meeting June 17th. We will talk about what happened to the Understanding our Differences program, and other Special Ed issues.
- d) Snow Removal Hearing Update- Jeanne said there were 27 comments from people and 3 town councilors were there. An ordinance was defeated three years ago when WCOD proposed it. Jeanne said that there were many opinions pro and con, with issues including amount of fines, lack of enforcement, cost, hardship on some residents, absentee landlords, etc. The new middle school volunteer program was mentioned, had a good start and is being refined. Tickets given may be from the inspectional dept as opposed to the police. There will be another meeting and the town council will continue to talk about it.

ONGOING BUSINESS-

- a) Planning Board- John said they have approved design guidelines/universal design to go to the council. More language needs to be included about universal design.
- b) Watertown Riverfront Project- Kim said they've reached out to her about signage. John said that the walks are being adjusted to correct inclines, and that work has started on crossing signals.
- c) Handicapped Parking- Gayle noticed a new handicapped parking sign behind CVS.
- d) Comprehensive Plan Update- John said the town council and planning board met 2 weeks ago. The planning board reviewed and approved and sent it to council.

The next meeting will take place on June 17th at 7 p.m.

It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:23 p.m.
These minutes are recorded and respectfully submitted by Carol Wilson-Braun, Secretary.