Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, Sept. 16th, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Kim Charlson.

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

GUESTS- Ken Woodland from Watertown Prosperity Inc., and Danielle DeMoss, Susan Flint, Will Twombly and Tony Palombo to talk about the Social Service Resource Specialist position.

GUEST SPEAKERS-

1) Ken Woodland reported on the shoveling initiative that Watertown Prosperity started this past winter, stating that it had been successful beyond their expectations, and that they were hoping to expand the funding so more residents could benefit. They got 60 volunteers from the Middle School and serviced 100 residents and facilities. The students were assigned residents close to where they lived and they were responsible to keep the walks (and in some cases cars) shoveled all winter, and received community service credit, a small stipend and a pizza party at the end of the winter. They are hoping to get high schoolers involved as well next year, who will be allowed only community service credit. They are asking for continued monetary support, which will go toward shovels, salt, stipends and pizza. The Commission will discuss this next month. Fred asked if local Boy Scout troops would be invited to participate. Ken hoped so.

2) Social Service Resource Specialist- Danielle DeMoss is a social worker who is working 20 hrs for Watertown. She spent the first year laying the foundation and the 2nd year building on that foundation. Over the past 2 years, through August, 544 residents have been served. The top needs are housing, fuel/utilities, and mental health. She assesses the ability levels of clients in addition to their needs and helps with referrals and connections. Tony P. thanked the Commission for its support and spoke of a $25,000 matching fund through the town by Harvard-O'Neil Charitable Fund, for which they are looking for help from Perkins, Watertown Savings Bank, Watertown Foundation and us. Will T. emphasized that this service targets the 18-59 demographic, for which there is a gap in services and funding. They are working toward sustainable funding by the town for the 4th year, and making the position full time. Susan F. reminded people that this is a free service for clients. Kim said the Commission would discuss the funding request in Oct.

CHAIR'S REPORT- Kim said there was nothing new to report.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT- There seemed to be no update in the treasurer's report since the last meeting, so discussion of the report was postponed until the next meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

1) Plans Review, Closed Caption, and Safety and Access- No reports.
2) Special Ed- Kim said that Dr Brian Rachmaciej has resigned.

ONGOING BUSINESS-

1) Watertown Riverfront Project- Kim said that people are walking on the trail. The formal dedication will be in the spring when everything is completely done.
2) Parking and Comprehensive Plan- No reports.

NEW BUSINESS-

1) Kim acknowledged that Steve is stepping down from the Town Council. He will be deciding about continuing on the Commission.
2) Kim reported that she went to the meeting in Boston concerning Uber and Lift. She said that they provide more alternatives for the disabled than just taxis. None of the services have many w/c accessible vehicles.
3) Faire on the Square- Will take place on Sat. Sept. 26th. Jeanne volunteered to set up a schedule for commission members to volunteer to staff the Commission table.

The next meeting will take place on October 21st at 7 p.m.

It was MOVED, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:57 p.m.

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