

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 19th, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Fred Isaacs, Vice-Chair.

ROLL CALL- Lisa Feltner, Town Councilor; John Hawes; Fred Isaacs, Vice-Chair; Carol Menton; Jeanne O'Connell; Gayle Shattuck, and Carol Wilson-Braun. Absent- Chair Kim Charlson and Megan O'Halloran.

Guests- George Donahue, former Commission member; Mohammed Seyed, new Watertown resident; Tricia Regan; and Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development and Planning, and Assistant Town Manager.

GUEST SPEAKER- Steve Magoon said he was here to answer our questions. The Commission had wondered about our role in the plans review process, with John asking if we might have input later in the process at the time the more detailed plans are submitted to the building inspector. Steve thought the whole process was going well and valued John's presence on the planning board. He thought the window for feedback in the building permit review was short for obtaining our input. John suggested limiting it to larger projects. George said that the plans comply with MAAB. Carol W commented that John provides a valuable role on the Commission. John suggested the tool of "crowd sourcing" for feedback on projects, and Gayle said that her office fields complaints and passes them on to us. Lisa brought up safety issues and accessibility concerns for pedestrians during construction and coordinating communication with the public. Steve responded that the DPW is the primary coordinator, along with the police and building departments.

CHAIR'S REPORT- Fred brought up 2 proposals for vote. It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to give \$1500 to Watertown Prosperity to fund their snow shoveling program. It was also moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to make a donation of \$1500 each to Watertown Food Pantry and St. Patrick's Food Pantry.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT- We will delay voting until next month on the treasurer's report until corrections are made for several items concerning CART which were unclear.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

1) Plans Review, and Safety and Access- No reports.

- 2) Closed Captioning- Carol M reported that captions did not show up on re-runs of the council meeting on cable. Apparently all the company needs to do is flip a switch. Carol will email Helen and cc Gayle.
- 3) Special Ed- Fred has a copy of their calendar. On Nov 30th there will be an open meeting about special education in Watertown, moderated by Leslie Leslie from the Federation for Children with Special Needs.

NEW BUSINESS-

Mohammed Seyed (Mo) spoke of his new non-profit RimPower, an advocacy group for people who use wheelchairs, and a project of creating a comic book Wheelchair Man. He also plans to work with assistive technology for people in wheelchairs. He spoke of his attempts to fundraise and reach out to children ages 8-15 in Watertown who use wheelchairs to give feedback on his book, which focuses on peace and resilience. His friend Tricia Regan wanted help in contacting the schools. Fred gave them the Special Ed calendar with contact info, Carol M mentioned David Leon, who has a daughter who uses a wheelchair, and also invited Mo to make a formal request for funding to the Commission. Lisa mentioned the Watertown Cultural Council for funding requests and Fred mentioned the SciFi organization for funding.

Carol M gave a brief summary of the Faire on the Square. Fred, Carol W, Carol M and her friend Aurora staffed the table. We need to look at renewing some materials, and finding a theoretical 2nd box. One visitor mentioned that the new dog park is not accessible for wheelchairs. Lisa said the DPW is addressing that.

There followed a discussion on accessibility in the community. Tricia reported a lot of overgrowth on Pleasant St. Carol W wondered how to make homeowners aware of problems with overgrown trees and bushes. Lisa mentioned that the Dept of Development and Community is hiring a new code enforcement officer for zoning issues. Also the town councilors and the tree officer could address. Carol M mentioned that the Commission helps follow up on disability complaints. Lisa mentioned the See Click Fix app that the town has.

It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on November 16th at 7 p.m.

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