

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 26th, 2018

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

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson, Chair; Lisa Feltner, Town Councilor; John Hawes; Carol Menton; Megan O'Halloran; Elan Rohde; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator; and Carol Wilson-Braun. Absent- Lissa Gifford.

Guests- Aneise Ruggles, Exhibitions Coordinator and Roberta Miller, Executive Director of the Mosesian Center for the Arts. Also Kathy Button and Chuck Dickenson for the Unity Breakfast, and Laurie Garden, President of Friends of Project Literacy.

GUEST SPEAKERS- 1) Aneise Ruggles spoke of the goal of the Mosesian Center for the Arts to be more inclusive of differently abled audiences for their programs and performances. She highlighted the T coil in use in the theater and signing for some performances. They are always looking for more ways to be more accessible and ways to engage audiences. Their current project is called "Please Touch the Art" and includes tactile art and art by low vision artists. There is a Braille component and an audio component. They are developing resources to help people navigate the space in the Center. They came to request funding in the amount of \$5000 for personnel for the exhibit and the Braille production. They are also getting funding from businesses like Sasaki foundation. They were favorably received by the Commission, including the comment that this will have residual benefits beyond the current project. They were told the Commission will vote on their request next month.

2) Kathy Button and Chuck Dickenson came to talk about the 19th annual Unity Breakfast which will take place on Jan 21st. The keynote speaker will be Rassan Hall, of the Racial Justice Program of the Boston chapter of the ACLU. The honorary host will be Officer Tony Physic, and the program will have the usual essays by middle and high school students, the Watertones from WHS and Hip Hop dance team from the Boys and Girls Club. They are getting grants from several sources, but were asking for funding for CART service. Laurie Garden said that students from Project Literacy were guests last year and will be this year, and spoke how CART was beneficial for their understanding of what was being said, as many of them were learning English as a second language. Chuck said they would advertise the possibility of a sign language interpreter, but none was needed last year. Carol M suggested giving a 2 week deadline for determining interest.

CHAIR'S REPORT-

1) How Dog Park- John and Gayle sent an email to the Traffic Commission. A HP space had been approved last January, but the space needs to be coordinated with the curb cut. There has been communication with Sgt Sampson, and their next meeting is 11/28. Lisa will attend and follow up.

- 2) Launch of Mt. Auburn St bus priority lane project- John noticed that there were still problems for the busses getting through Mt Auburn St to Rte 16 after Star Market. Will Brownsberger is also addressing problems such as the synchronization of the lights. Lisa said the bus riders are happy.
- 3) WCOD re-appointments- Gayle said Megan, Carol M and Lissa's terms are renewed. The WCOD page is updated on the website.
- 4) Holiday Donations- Gayle said they are in progress and should get to the recipients in Dec.
- 5) DCR Bridge at the Dealtry Pool- Lisa said that Will Brownsberger was waiting to follow up, but wasn't hopeful. The bridge was expensive. The problem is that most people cannot view the river from the bridge, due to the way it is constructed.
- 6) John brought up the automatic doors for the Mosesian Theatre. They lease the building from the town, but are responsible for improvements. They wanted to ask us for funding, but we fund programs, not physical improvements. They will look for alternative funding.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to accept the minutes as corrected from the Oct 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 Oct. Copies of the Treasurer's report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office. Carol W-B asked about funding for closed captioning, which is turning out to be a big part of our budget. The system isn't quite ready for sponsors. Helen from Cable will be invited to our next meeting. Kim thought it would be a reasonable request to ask the Council to split the cost. Various sources of funding were discussed, such as the state (Lisa will look into), and Mass Office on Disability. Carol M will contact Cambridge COD and the state office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS- a) Plans- John said nothing new, Lisa mentioned a new affordability zoning ordinance for assistive living b) Closed Captioning- see above. c) Special Ed- Elan said nothing new. Carol M requested a calendar of events for them. Elan said that the Commission hasn't funded anything recently, and that the group hasn't used the last funding amount that was given to them. The group has gone through 6 leadership changes in the last 4 yrs, and she is not directly involved anymore. She said it is hard to contact parents due to privacy regulations. She was asked to reach out to the group on behalf of the Commission. We will try to invite the leader of SPED PAC to a future meeting. d) Safety and access- Kim spoke of the challenge of who does upkeep for the Braille Trail. It has been looking ragged, and a rope was broken. She has spoken to DCR, and has gotten volunteers from Perkins, but the work has to be coordinated.

NEW BUSINESS- Lisa reported that the sidewalks adjacent to the construction at Arsenal and Irving are not in good shape. The developer Greystar is not around any more. John said that DPW has to keep after them, or the Planning Office.

The next meeting will take place on Wed. Dec 19th at 7 p.m. We will have food at 6:30.

It was moved, seconded and VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

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