

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 18th, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Kim Charlson, Chair.

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson, Chair; John Hawes, Vice-Chair; Carol Menton; Megan O'Halloran; Elan Rohde; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator; and Carol Wilson-Braun. Absent- Lisa Feltner, Town Councilor. Guests- Mark Deschenes from Boylston Properties, Chris Jones from Carol Johnson Associates, Laura Portney from Prellwitz Chilinski Architects, David Leon from Watertown Housing Authority and Lissa Gifford.

Guest Speakers- Our three guests took turns discussing the accessibility components of the Arsenal Street Project and showed plans and diagrams on a screen. Buildings C and D were discussed, and the challenge of the slope of the property. The sidewalks to the entrances include landscaping, and the grades are all under 5%. There are also stairs, a maximum of 5 in any location. The concrete sidewalks include different tactile input, and there are traffic calming and detectable warnings. Much of the discussion was on handicapped parking for the complex. They said that there were more than the minimum 5% spaces required. We focused mostly on Building C, which doesn't have parking directly attached to the building but in an adjacent garage, yet has some handicapped apts. John was concerned about that, but other commission members were not as concerned. We did request that at least 2 of the street level spaces outside of the building be designated as handicapped for residents. David requested, and the group agreed to, 2 more handicapped parking space at the western edge of Building C near the main intersection of streets. Elan asked how we can make sure there are enough handicapped spaces for Building C, and John said we can ask for further review. The project is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2020.

CHAIR'S REPORT- Kim noted that we haven't met since January, because of our Feb break and the "snow storm that wasn't" in March.

- 1) A citizen was complaining about the accessibility of buses at the delta in Watertown Square. The delta belongs to the state. It was agreed that we need to re-visit that issue.
- 2) Kim recognized our guest Lissa Gifford, who is requesting to join the Commission.
- 3) She discussed progress on an automatic door for the post office on Main St. Kim, Lissa, Lisa and Tony Palumbo met in Feb and drafted a letter requesting the accommodation. It is not known where it should be sent yet. The PO leases from a private owner, which is a trust, making it complicated. Megan suggested including Steve Magoon, but Lisa has been in contact with him.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- It was moved, seconded and VOTED 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- The 1.5 positions for parking enforcement have been filled and we again have increased income for the Commission. It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to accept the Treasurer's Report for January, Feb and March. Copies of the Treasurer's report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

- 1) Plans- John said there is nothing in the near future besides what we just heard tonight.
- 2) Closed Captioning- Carol M. and Gayle reported that there is communication between Helen, Caption First and town councilors about helping to anticipate where the dedicated space for the lines of caption should go when there are power point presentations during meetings so data doesn't get obscured. The recommendation was that the bottom be left blank for caption overlay.
- 3) Special Ed- Elan announced that the Advisory Council will host their annual awards ceremony on 4/25 at 6 p.m. at the public library. They will be honoring faculty and presenting 8 awards for education, care and service for special needs children in the community. The speaker will be at 6:30 and the awards at 7 p.m.
- 4) Safety and Access- Kim said there was nothing new.

NEW BUSINESS-

Gayle said that Lissa Gifford has applied to join the Commission for the remainder of Mo's term. She lives with MS, uses a power wheelchair and wants to address gaps in services for the disabled, such as parking spaces and the PO door. She likes solving problems. After Lissa left the room, it was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to recommend to the town manager the appointment of Lissa Gifford to the WCOD. Kim reminded us that we still have a vacancy, and that it doesn't have to be filled by someone with a disability.

Megan asked John what we should do about representation on the Planning Board since he has resigned. He stated he will still attend meetings for the bigger plans as a representative of the COD.

Carol M. spoke about the Community Mural Project at the Boys and Girls club and how we can help it be accessible. Kim suggested a tactile element to it, not just paint. Carol M. asked about consulting with a Perkins art teacher. Kim said she would share contact info.

John noted Lisa's email about navigation around construction at the Arsenal. People in the Arsenal Apartments are having difficulty.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

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