

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 18th, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by John Hawes, Vice-Chair.

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

AUDIENCE- Laura Wiener, Senior Planner for Transportation for Watertown, and Moh Sayed, Watertown resident and former Commission member.

GUEST SPEAKERS- 1) Laura Wiener came to speak about the Watertown Square project and get feedback from the Commission. She has been in her job 6 months, and is presenting options to residents and getting feedback about walking, biking, driving and people in wheelchairs. She spoke of planned improvements such as making the crosswalk across Mt Auburn St shorter, making bike lanes on Main St and Galen St., moving the #70 bus stop closer to the #71, putting in metal warning panels on the corners, and removing the median on N. Beacon St. Also discussed was the proposal to close Charles River Rd or make it one way and restricting access to the square. The main goals are to improve the flow of traffic and make it safer for pedestrians. There was a question about the Delta and wheelchair accessibility. She said it was on the T's schedule. Kim mentioned the benefit of a "walk-through" such as was done on Arsenal St. Laura thought that was a good idea. Chair's Report Item F was discussed while Laura was present. There are concerns about Lime Bikes blocking sidewalks, and about Lime Bikes being ridden on sidewalks, one incident causing a dispute on Mt Auburn St. Laura said the agreements with patrons list rules. Also, bikes left in wrong places after a ride is completed are tracked down by GPS and relocated. The town has a one-year contract with Lime Bikes and there are 200 bikes. An email contact for Lime Bikes is Support@limebike.com. Megan suggested that the town could more actively partner with Lime Bikes for public safety, and suggested that the organization could be invited to participate in Fair on the Square.

2) Moh Sayed came to talk about his new comic book and international outreach, and request sponsorship of his Wheelchair Man book 2. He said that next Wednesday 7/25 would be a fundraiser at a law firm for Rim Power, launching his 2nd comic book. He has been travelling abroad visiting and speaking in Kabul at schools, orphanages and charities. He said people with disabilities are looked down on in many countries and he hopes that his comic books will empower them. He said some of the 800 people he spoke to now want to help make schools more accessible. He has plans to travel to Ecuador in August. He was looking for our help with sponsorship.

There was discussion after he left that our purpose is to help the people of Watertown, and that we are not allowed to sponsor other non-profits or engage in marketing. Gayle will consult the town auditor. But we could consider purchasing and distributing some comic

books to places in Watertown, like schools (as suggested by Elan), the library, etc. Kim thought this offered a positive role model. Carol M suggested we encourage Moh to do outreach in Watertown and present in schools. We will discuss more next meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT-

e) There was follow-up discussion about the Farmer's Market. Megan thought that Stephanie was going around each Thursday before it opened to make sure all the stalls were accessible. (Moh before he left said he could go and submit a written report, if we wanted). Kim, Megan and Gayle all thought that the matter is sufficiently resolved.

b) P.O. update- Kim said that our letter written by Elan was sent to the Solusti Foundation.

c) Dog Park update- Gayle said there was nothing new. It is on the DPW summer list.

d) Faire on the Square- Gayle talked to Ann Marie Gagnon of the senior center about the possibility of getting volunteers to help us staff our table. It was thought that would be OK. Carol M suggested that the volunteers could come to our Sept meeting, which will be right before the Faire, to get some orientation. There was discussion about what materials we needed to replenish and what little freebies we could get to hand out such as pens and jar grippers. Kim suggested a one page paper describing the Commission and listing its projects. Gayle suggested having our new intern update our restaurant accessibility list to exclude restaurants that have closed. Carol M will try to get literature from Jeff Duggan at the state Commission. Carol W-B said that being under the same tent as information was good, but that the Faire hadn't provided any information volunteers for a couple of years. Elan could bring special education literature. She said she will be at the Watertown Autism Support Group table and was wondering if we should be adjacent to them. The following Commissioners offered to help at the Faire: Carol M, Lissa, John and Lisa. Megan will try to come for a little while. Carol M will send out a formal sign up. Gayle wondered about an interpreter, and it was decided this would be good. It was moved, seconded and VOTED to spend up to \$500 to cover interpreter and supplies for Faire on the Square.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to accept the minutes as corrected from the June 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 June. Copies of the Treasurer's report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

- 1) Plans Review- John said no new plans, just variances. MAAB turned down the Perkins request about the toilets but approved the stair treads. Perkins is appealing. The 385 Pleasant St project wants deeper kitchen sinks than are allowed by MAAB. The issue was resolved by allowing them put in deeper sinks, which are more popular, but having shallow sinks available for installation in handicapped apartments on request.
- 2) Closed Captioning- Carol M said that the new fiscal year is a good time for brainstorming about finding new funding for the captioning so it is not funded just by us,

which steadily drains our resources. She will talk with Megan and Caption First about possibilities.

There were no reports for Special Ed or Safety and Access.

NEW BUSINESS-

Lisa mentioned that she noticed on the new town website that WCOD agendas and minutes are missing for the months after mid 2017. She will work with Gayle on it.

Kim mentioned that the outside door to this meeting room needs to be fixed for automatic handicap access. Gayle said George is aware. She will mention to DPW that it is a priority. Carol M also noted that the door to the hallway is heavier than it should be.

The next meeting will take place on Sept 19th at 5:30 p.m., an earlier time due to Yom Kippur starting at sundown. There will be no meeting in August.

It was moved, seconded and VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

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