

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, Nov 20th, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Kim Charlson, Chair.

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

Audience- Katherine Button.

GUEST SPEAKER- Kathy Button, a member of the World in Watertown and the Unity Breakfast Planning Committee, came to request funding for CART services for the breakfast in January. She said that this coming year would be the 20th anniversary of the Unity breakfast, and it would take place on Jan 20th 2020! The speaker will be Jonathan Lewis, a senior non-violence trainer at the Univ of RI, and there will be the usual essays from Middle and High Schoolers, entertainment from youth hip hop artists and a choral group. She emphasized that Project Literacy participants appreciate the CART service, and that this event is Watertown at its best. They are trying to broaden their invitation to more people. The commission will vote next meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT-

- 1) Kim announced that there will be a public meeting of the Watertown Square Traffic and Pedestrian Improvement project at the Grousbeck Center at Perkins on Tues Dec 3, at 7:30 pm. Lisa said 3 options are being considered. More info is at Watertownsquareimprovements.com.
- 2) Watertown Pedestrian-Bicycle Plan Update- Lissa said that a consultant, McMann, was chosen, who wants to hear from people of what needs improvement in Watertown. She said there was no mention of wheelchairs and that there needs to be representation. Lissa asked for photos and info to be sent to her, then she will forward. John wondered about a plan vs details, and a lengthy discussion followed about coordination of this effort. The town already has some programs in place, such as the DPW's annual Roads Program (including sidewalks) and Safe Roads to School. It was felt that the consultant needs to reach out to and convene the stakeholders, such as the Senior Center, the public schools, Watertown for All Ages, and others. The Town Manager, Laura Wiener and the DPW need to be involved. There will be a public meeting on Jan 28th at the library to solicit public input. Besides giving our own information, a variety of people need to be invited. We should include the town manager and the council in our emails about this and copy Gayle. Gayle will invite Laura to our next meeting, and possibly Matt Schuman.
- 3) Watertown Square and Coolidge Square Parking plan update- no news.
- 4) Pantry Donations- The 2 Watertown pantries will receive the checks by next week.

- 5) Acquisition of Table cloth for WCOD at events- Gayle will ask the purchasing dept for info. Kim will look into a Braille tablecloth. John asked about a tent for the Faire. Kim asked Carol M to inquire at the Marshall House.
- 6) Kim said that she is the unofficial “go-to” person for the Braille Trail, and Perkins is responsible for its upkeep and has a formal agreement with DCR. There has been vandalism recently. Kim asked how do we capture the story of the Braille Trail and answer questions about it? Perhaps a video with public/private partnership. She sent out an email to different organizations asking for help with funding, and may also ask the WCOD for funding. She asked who should collect the money- us or Perkins? Gayle will investigate what it would mean for us. Lisa said we could mention this project on our webpage.

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

TREASURER’S REPORT- Gayle said that a letter went out last week to the town council with a request to look at the FY’21 budget, in terms of funding captioning for the council meetings. 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.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

- a) Plans- John said that Buckingham, Brown and Nichols school is looking at buying the parking lot on Grove St used by Mt. Auburn Hospital and using it for playing fields. They would coordinate it with the town. This would be an arrangement like Simmons and the DCR in Brighton. Lisa said that BBN presented it to the council, but the town wasn’t very interested. She said this should move forward because of development pressures.
- b) Captioning- no report
- c) Special Ed- Naomi will be a Special Ed liaison to help with reporting. She needs to develop contacts. Naomi attended a community meeting about a new high school, and said that the current one is not ADA compliant. She said the new HS needs to be an Inclusive Space, not just ADA compliant. The first signs are positive, as the architect talked about Universal Design. The architect is also working on the elementary schools. The School Committee is supportive.
- d) Safety and Access- Elan and Kim. Elan said she submitted a request for repair of the audible signal on the NE corner of Main and Waverly. The person at the DPW said the request was filed with the vendor. Megan said she submitted a ticket several months ago and nothing has happened. A lengthy discussion followed about responsiveness and accountability by the DPW. John said it was unacceptable for the town not to check the signals on a regular basis. We need to talk to Laura Wiener, Planning, DPW, Mark Sideris, Public Works committee. Lisa will bring this up at the next public works meeting. Lisa said that Jesse Myatt is the assistant superintendant of the DPW, and to cc the town manager and Laura Wiener. Kim said to contact them again and add her name.

John mentioned on a different topic that nothing has been done about the platform and the bench at How dog park. Elan spoke to Watertown resident Desiree Forte at the Faire on the Square who said the same. It may need to wait until warmer weather now.

NEW BUSINESS-

John talked to Caitlin Browne from the WPL who encourages everyone to fill out a survey on the WPL website about their strategic plan. Their group will meet the 3rd Wed of every month.

Naomi mentioned the construction work being done on Belmont St and that diverted traffic moves down Nyack St at high speeds. She emailed Sgt Sampson who basically said an officer was there to monitor. She said 30 mph is too fast for side streets and wondered if the town had looked at 25 mph. Lisa said this was brought up a long time ago to the traffic commission, with people wanting speed bumps, traffic calming. Kim said we could discuss this in the future.

It was moved, seconded and VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Wed. Dec 18th at 7 p.m. There will be holiday refreshments at 6:30 p.m.