

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 16th, 2019

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

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

Audience- Caitlin Browne, Assistant Director, Watertown Public Library, and Erik Christensen, Project Manager for McGinley, Kalsow and Associates.

GUEST SPEAKERS- 1) Caitlin Browne spoke about a grant for \$29,000 that the library is receiving from the Mass. Office of Disability. They are supposed to match \$5000, and are getting \$2500 from their capital campaign and were requesting \$2500 from the WCOD. Their plan is to install automatic door openers for several rooms (teen's, children's and the Watertown Savings Bank rooms) and also to expand the patio outside for w/c access. They also want to replace the staff room lock with one that can be opened with one hand. In discussion, John mentioned that the ADA and MAAB do not require automatic door openers inside. It is a service improvement to the public. Lisa said that the project about the lock was under the ADA and Kim noted that it was a "reasonable accommodation" for an employee, not a service, and should be the town's responsibility. The library needs to complete the grant by the end of June. We will discuss further and vote at our next meeting.

2) Erik Christensen spoke about the renovation project at the Mt. Auburn Cemetery, focusing on their chapel, columbarium and administration buildings. There is a massive exterior restoration project, but they are also trying to make entrances and access to the chapel more accessible through ramps and a possible elevator. They also plan to lower desk counters, etc. The detailed plans sounded good to the commission. It was moved, seconded and VOTED to authorize John to send a letter via Kim and Gayle to MAAB tomorrow supporting their proposals.

CHAIR'S REPORT-

1) CVS Parking lot accessibility issues brought up by Lissa – John said there were several problems around the parking lot- obstructed sidewalks and trash debris. Lissa had spoken to the CVS manager about the loading area for truck deliveries and how it interferes with access to the store when a truck is there. The manager spoke to the DPW and isn't getting anywhere. Gayle put in a service request for each problem area. Lisa and John recommended bringing it to the attention of the Traffic Commission, town engineer, DPW, police, town manager and Community Development. Kim suggested a letter listing out the problems. John will write a letter and send the draft to Gayle and Kim. On another matter, Lissa is still talking to Bank of America about an automatic door.

1) Kim had 2 concerns from a blind resident. There is no audible signal for pedestrians at Warren and Lexington Sts, and it is not known why. Elan suggested we should just make a request to the traffic commission. Kim will write a letter. Lisa suggested for Sgt Sampson to visit the site. Also, there is no detectable warning at Main and Lexington Sts. The state put in an audible signal, which is unfortunately set back from the intersection, and the crosswalk is also offset. It is not known if our request should be with the town or the state.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT- Gayle will reach out to the police dept about parking enforcement revenue, as it is still decreasing. It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to accept the Treasurer's Report for Nov. 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 nothing is new at present. At the Arsenal Project, the residential tower is being changed to office and lab space. There will be a community meeting on the 30th.
2) Closed Captioning- Carol M said she is researching other cities and towns regarding funding for captioning. Kim asked Carol M. to share info as she gets it. Lisa was asked about the town's timeline for a budget, and said it was being worked on now, finished in May and vote in June. Megan suggested an agenda item in March to discuss funding. Kim said we should discuss strategies too. Gayle will look up the total we spent last year. 3) Special Ed- Elan said that Kathleen Desmarais, Director of Student Services, will come and talk to us next meeting about student coordination for WPS, including Special Ed.
4) Safety and Access- Lissa asked Elan if she had gotten a response from the Salusti trust, and Elan had not, about possible power doors for the post office building. John said it was discretionary for them. There was discussion of other means of encouragement. Kim suggested a letter to the editor of the paper. Carol M suggested writing our senators. Gayle stated that if they did a lot of renovations, they would have to include accessibility, but that still wouldn't include a power door. Lissa brought up the problem of the power door access to the room we use in town hall. Maintenance is working on it. It needs a new computer chip.

NEW BUSINESS- Megan saw an advertisement on social media for a workshop on keeping your child or adult with a disability safe, sponsored by Watertown police and Cambridge Dept of Family Services. It was generally agreed that it would have been nice for us to have been notified about it, as a courtesy. Gayle will talk to the police.

The next meeting will take place on Wed. March 20th at 7 p.m. There is no meeting in Feb.

It was moved, seconded and VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

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