

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 16th, 2022

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

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

GUESTS- Heather McManus, Chair of SEPAC and Nina Cohen, Hosmer parent.

CHAIR'S REPORT-

- 1) Main and Galen St- Kim announced that Elan Rhode has resigned from the Commission and that the position has been posted. She had been working on this task. Kim said we may have to ask DPW for specific locations. Lisa said we need to know which intersections are DPW and which are DCR. Will follow up. John will search for the photos that Elan had sent. Megan offered to help.
- 2) Hosmer Playground- Heather McManus said the largest concern is the lack of swings in the playground for older children. The Hosmer houses the Connections Program which has disabled and autistic students, 23 students from K-5. The playground is physically challenging for autistic children, and the climbing structure is not accessible. SEPAC requested a tour with the architects (also a tour of the Hosmer and the Cuniff). Rachel said that multiple teachers have spoken with SEPAC. Kim asked Gayle to reach out to the school department. They are open to further discussions. Carol W-B said she had gone to the playground that afternoon, and that there were swings in the preschool playground, but just a platform swing and a rocking/swiveling chair for the older kids. Kim asked Rachel to let us know when the tour will be. Some of us will want to go.
- 3) Crosswalk Signals at N Beacon and Louise- Lisa said they are done. There are different types of signals. Maybe we should learn more about them? Kim wondered if there was a list of such signals in the town.

John mentioned that there were no signs on Charles River Rd at the crosswalks, but they will be put in. The path along the river is almost completed. Places to launch boats was brought up. Carol W-B said that there are 2 along the river, one close to the yacht club, and the other next to the Braille Trail. Kim wondered if they were accessible. Carol W-B thought that the one near the Braille Trail was. She was asked to take photos. John will also look into accessibility.

- 4) Canalonga Park- John said it was behind the Sons of Italy on Pleasant St. He sees no accessibility issues in the use of the park, however the 20-30 parking spaces include no handicapped spaces. He wants to see the plan to make sure any changes are ADA compliant. John mentioned the Ryan Skating Rink. There is a ramp to a side door, which seems to be an exit door, and is not accessible. The front of the building is not accessible. Should we go to Parks and Recreation or Planning? Kim said that the front needs to be accessible. John also said there is a river walk that has a gap

between the walk and the bridge, that needs attention. Lisa said to notify DCR. They also need to address accessibility of a Bocce court. Kim will work with John, DCR and DPW.

- 5) DPW Diagonal Corner Curb Cut Policy- The DPW said that it is their policy to place curb ramps within the crosswalk and not do a corner cut. The corner cuts are either old, or there was an obstruction. Kim will work with Rachel to clarify this.
- 6) Automatic Door Openers at Arsenal Yards- John said there are automatic door openers at Marshalls, Old Navy, Roche Bros and Gordons, but not Majestic Seven Theatre. Kim did advocacy with the management of the Majestic and will continue to reach out about the doors and the seating policy (handicapped and companion seats). John said that small stores and restaurants aren't required to have power doors and they don't tend to have them.
- 7) DPW and Trash Removal- Kim spoke of difficulty for her and her husband, who are both blind, to find the trash can after the trash truck comes by. Her husband Brian had a conversation with Greg St Louis of DPW. They can't tell the contractor to treat certain houses differently. Kim thought maybe trash cans could have stickers notifying them to place the cans back where they came from. She will try to get it implemented.
- 8) Update on Marnie Klein and Buckingham, Brown and Nichol school tech project. Kim will meet with her in early December for a project.
- 9) 103 Nichols- Our letter of support was sent out and was well received.
- 10) Follow up about Morris St and Mr Marcus- Mr Marcus researched ADA and PROWAG regulations and made reasonable comments. John said there are no problems with the code, Kim said it was more of a design issue. John said it was not a good situation, and that Eversource and the DPW need to redo the poles.
- 11) Food Pantry Donation Update- Gayle said that the donations have gone to both pantries.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously by roll call to accept the minutes from the Oct meeting. Copies of the minutes may be requested from the city's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office or viewed on the Watertown website document center.

TREASURER'S REPORT- It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously by roll call 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-

- 1) Plans- John said there was another life science building with a garage on Pleasant St behind the old plumbing museum, which will be razed. There are no details on accessibility. John complained to Giddeon.
- 2) Special Ed- Naomi didn't have anything. Rachel mentioned a SEPAC presentation on basic rights. Also, a board member met with the Director of Nutrition about a lunch option free from 8 allergens.
- 3) Safety and Security- Kim said there was nothing new. Naomi mentioned that the DPW put in new sidewalks at the corner of Lexington and Belmont St, but that there are uneven joints between the new and the old. The DPW needs to address this. Kim asked her to write p where the problems are. John said he would take a look.

NEW BUSINESS-

- 1) Carol W-B mentioned that a parent at the Hosmer playground brought up a concern about the playground at the Arsenal Park, which is being renovated. She was concerned about accessibility and “single-use” structures. She was also concerned about the skateboard park, wondering if others besides skateboarders could use it. Kim asked Gayle to request DPW/Recreation/Planning to talk to us about the park. Lisa suggested the Conservation Commission. John said he would look into it. He also mentioned that there are no sidewalks from the Marshalls store into the park.
- 2) Lisa said they finally have a map from the DPW of sidewalk conditions on the town website. She said she’d send out the link. Also, Riverside St improvements are being held up by National Grid. Lastly, she will have a Question and Answer Listening session in the council chamber at City Hall on Nov 29th, talking about charter changes and other topics. Every councilor will have public meetings for discussing issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25p.m.

The next meeting of WCOD will take place via Zoom at 7 p.m. on Wed, Dec.21st, 2022.