

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, Sept 18th, 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; and Carol Wilson-Braun. Absent- Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator
Audience- Bob Shay, from Watertown for All Ages.

GUEST SPEAKER- Bob Shay from Watertown for All Ages, spoke of their Transportation Initiative for Seniors study. They received a grant from Tufts for \$9,900 and are applying for a follow-up grant. They have used an advisory committee and focus groups in gathering information, and have consulted with other communities. They have catalogued all transportation options in Watertown, including walking, and have found that most people do not know where to look for information. There are needs identified for affordable, accessible transportation. Springwell has info on transportation. Recommendations include increasing options and making transportation more affordable. Their plans are 1) do a pilot with Lyft and an organization called Go-Go Grandparent (which allows people without smart phones to call a number to arrange rides) in which rides are subsidized, 2) expand the advisory committee, and 3) continue info sessions and make info materials available. A paper summarizing the Study will be attached to the minutes.

CHAIR'S REPORT-

- 1) Faire on the Square- Carol M said that Gayle gave her materials to display at the Faire. The Mass. Office on Disability will also send materials. Carol M will obtain and provide car visor cards for deaf drivers. She will email a sign up to Commission members for the Faire.
- 2) How Dog Park- John said they are supposed to put in a path and a bench.
- 3) Athena Park- nothing new
- 4) Watertown Pedestrian Bicycle Plan- Lissa said their next meeting will be on Oct 7th. The vendor will be there and Lissa will present disability questions.
- 5) Watertown and Coolidge Squares Parking Plan- Lisa voted to recommend the planning dept work on implementation and then bring it back to the council. It is available online. Lisa also mentioned that Lime Bike won't continue past this next spring. They are transitioning into scooters. Concerning scooters, we need to prioritize public safety. MA legislature is looking at rules and limits, such as requiring helmets and prohibiting scooters on sidewalks. A question is whether they should be parked like blue bikes.
- 6) Kim said that Gayle forwarded a letter from a family of an autistic blind child who had experienced difficulties trying to enroll at Perkins. Kim checked into the situation and said

Perkins was ready to enroll the child and she had offered to work with Watertown in getting the child accepted.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT- John has been looking at income vs expenses. We need to talk to the council about sharing the cost. Megan suggested asking them to take over the entire expense, as we cover our own CART, and for other non-profits. It was the consensus of the Commission to ask the town to cover the captioning. Kim will draft a letter to the town council and the town manager and get feedback from Lisa then the Commission.

It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to accept the Treasurer's Report for Sept. Copies of the Treasurer's report may be requested from the town's ADA Coordinator in the Personnel Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

- a) Plans- John talked about 166 Main St and an office building at 85 Walnut St. Not many details available. Input will be given at the building permit stage. Lisa said that plans for 85 Walnut will increase green space, but she also said it has the same landscape architect as the Irving St park, which has some problems. Kim asked if there was any value to having someone from planning board come talk about their process. People agreed, so she will invite Gideon or Steve Magoon for Oct or Nov to discuss about accessibility in the process.
- b) Closed Captioning- no report
- c) Special Ed- Elan will get calendars and special ed info to include at the Faire.
- d) Safety and Access- Kim discussed the new roundabout on Common St and John mentioned the stop light at the Handy Spa and the new one at Spring St. It is believed they have audible signals.

NEW BUSINESS-

Lissa is asking for a bid on installing PO automatic doors for less than \$6000, and is interested in a fundraising effort for that. Carol M suggested that Lissa contact Kathryn Clark for help. Lissa was encouraged to write a letter at the request of the WCOD and run it by Gayle.

It was moved, seconded and VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.
The next meeting will be on Wed. Oct 16th at 7 p.m.