

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, Oct. 18th, 2017

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

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson, Chair; John Hawes, Vice-Chair; Carol Menton, Jeanne O'Connell; Megan O'Halloran; Elan Rohde; Mohammad (Moh) Sayed; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator; and Carol Wilson-Braun. Absent- Lisa Feltner, Town Councilor. Audience- Ken Woodland from Watertown Prosperity, Marsha Lenhoff from Watertown for All Ages, and Lissa Gifford, Watertown resident.

GUEST SPEAKERS-

- 1) Ken Woodland from Watertown Prosperity spoke about their major program for snow removal. Students from the middle school and high school volunteer for community service hours and are paired with nearby Watertown residents who need help with snow shoveling during the winter. A challenge is pairing kids to all the houses that need their help. This year, 60 residents have applied so far to have their walks, driveways and cars shoveled. Referrals come from the Senior Center, Police and Fire Depts. Last year 75 students volunteered. Watertown Prosperity will start coordinating with the Watertown Rec Dept. A small stipend and a pizza party are provided.
- 2) Marsha Lenhoff from Watertown for All Ages came to find out about CART service. They are going to have a forum in the library on Nov 30th, but the library has the Loop service and pocket talkers so they won't need CART. She was educated on how to sign up for CART, and what it involves. She then spoke about the organization and said they are scheduling listening sessions to help Watertown become more age-friendly. They work with town departments, such as Department of Health and Dept of Community Planning, to identify needs. She invited participation from WCOD for their board. Their meetings are publicized.

CHAIR'S REPORT- 1) John reported on the Howard St dog park accessibility issue. It is grassy with a significant slope and access is a problem for a resident using a power wheelchair and a service dog. It is not certain what oversight a park has. A DPW issue? John will write a letter to Gerry Mee and Steve Magoon, and cc it to Ray Forte, and Kim will send it. John, Moh and Carol W will do a site visit to the park on Sat at 2 p.m. Mr. Forte will be invited.

2) Carol M. reported on the Faire on the Square. Carol M, Moh and Elan staffed the table. The fair was not well coordinated, no maps or information volunteers. There was no banner for the Commission. Moh recommended a better location for the table.

3) Moh brought up the need for marketing for the Commission, such as a logo and facebook page. Our mission is promoting education on the concept of accessibility. Moh, Carol M and Megan will look at marketing.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT- A part-time parking enforcement officer started today, but the town is still looking for a full time person. This is why our revenue is down. Kim wants to invite parking enforcement officers to come to the December meeting. Carol M. reiterated that Capital First costs should be shared between us, the Council and Cable. It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to accept the Treasurer's Report for July through Sept. 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 mentioned 33 Mt. Auburn St, which is still a vacant lot, but is planned to be a small housing project of 33 units and retail. A 2nd project is the Building F at Arsenal Yards, which has an underground garage, retail parking and 3 floors of apartments. There is an issue of where accessible parking spaces should be located, and whether there should there be an easy way to find them. Should the accessible apartments be near the elevators or spread around? Moh said they don't necessarily need to be by elevators.
- 2) Closed Captioning- Lisa sent an email about feedback of the closed captioning from the last council meeting. The captioning overlaid the budget display on the screen. Carol M. felt that the town council wasn't invested in the captioning effort, and we need to keep track.
- 3) No reports for Special Ed or Safety and Access.

NEW BUSINESS-

Moh brought samples of logos that he had designed for feedback from the Commission. Kim suggested adding a portrayal of Braille to the logo. There followed a discussion of terminology: disability vs different ability. Some do not like the term "disabled". People would rather label themselves rather than be labeled. Examples: No- hearing impaired or deaf mute, but Yes- Deaf and Hard of Hearing. No- Special Needs and Disability. Yes to Blind and Visually Impaired.

John said he liked and missed the projected transcript on a screen. Carol M said they'd try to make sure it gets set up.

Carol W brought up the Watertown Square project and its probable impact on Perkins people. There is a Public Works committee meeting about it on 10/30. Kim and Carol W will report back.

The next meeting will take place on November 15th at 7 p.m.

It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

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