

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 18th, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Kim Charlson, Chair.

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson, Chair; Lisa Feltner, Town Councilor; John Hawes; Fred Isaacs, Vice-Chair; Carol Menton; Jeanne O'Connell; Mohammad (Mo) Sayed; Gayle Shattuck, Town Personnel Director and ADA Coordinator; and Carol Wilson-Braun.

Absent- Megan O'Halloran.

Guests- Anne Marie Gagnon, Director of the Watertown Senior Center, and Elan Rohde, president of Watertown Autism Family Support Group and prospective commissioner.

GUEST SPEAKER- 1) Anne Marie Gagnon has been on staff since August and has worked in transportation, housing and general services for seniors, has worked with councils on aging, and is excited to be working with one town's senior center. She is working on how best to serve seniors, such as improving sound systems and getting a social services brochure printed in Braille. She wanted ideas from the Commission. Kim said that signage is important. Carol W. mentioned a potential equipment loan closet and the public school snow shoveling program.

2) Lisa spoke about public works projects that town council was addressing. For the Arsenal St. project, they were dealing with transportation, public works and public safety issues. An emphasis is increasing accessibility and safety for pedestrians. They are looking at small business accessibility, road width, parking, snow removal, trees and the problem of signage in the middle of sidewalks. Kim voiced a concern about the location of detectable warnings at intersections and the location of bike lanes related to sidewalks and roads. Lisa acknowledged they are dealing with the juggling of bike lanes, pedestrians and cars. The public safety committee will be discussing parking concerns, including the current winter parking ban, along with the public works committee.

CHAIR'S REPORT- Kim received a call from the Arlington COD about access to handicapped fine revenue. They should get approval from the town to make the change. Kim invited Elan to give an update of the Autism Family Support Group. She said that they had a first aid program for children with special needs (covering topics such as choking, splinting broken arms), had a drumming circle, and a holiday party at a bowling alley for the children, all of which were well received.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT- John asked if the income for parking fines was going down. Kim said we should find out about how vigorous the enforcement is, and whether appeals are being made. There is now a new parking enforcement person, and the prior vacancy may have caused revenues to decrease. It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to accept the Treasurer's Report for December. 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 spoke about 330 Pleasant St., which has 100 units and retail. He noted that 25 units have bedrooms without windows. He is making sure that there is enough handicapped parking, and that the spaces are in optimal locations. 101 Morse St has townhouses with 1-2 bedrooms. The courtyard has steps. There are also concerns about ramp issues (which cars and pedestrians apparently have to share) and accessibility of lockers in the basement. The Arsenal Yards project has been approved. A 6-screen cinema will be in the Old Navy building and the Marshalls building will be completely redone. There will be 500 units of housing, 15% affordable and 9% accessible.
- 2) Closed Captioning- Carol M. asked Anne Marie to remind her clients of the availability of closed captioning, and Anne Marie replied that the TV in the Center had it. Carol M. said that it is going well and we can now start thinking of community sponsorship. Megan should be able to give suggestions.
- 3) Special Ed- Kim said that the new special ed. director will be a speaker in March.
- 4) Safety and Access- no report.

NEW BUSINESS-

Carol M. recalled that we have sponsored cultural and arts events over the years, and spoke of an idea of hosting a 90 min. concert with 2 musicians- a professional violinist with hearing loss and a songwriter on guitar and keyboard, who developed hearing loss.

Mohammad announced that his first Wheelchair Man comic book is completed and will be launched on 1/26 in Boston at a law firm. He expressed a concern about no mailboxes on Pleasant St. Carol W-B noted that there are fewer and fewer mailboxes around. Kim will ask the post office.

John said he would try to get the new director of the Watertown Foundation to come in March or April.

The next meeting will take place on March 15th at 7 p.m. There will be no meeting in Feb.

It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

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