

Watertown Commission on Disability

149 Main St. Watertown, MA. 02472

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 17th, 2023

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

ROLL CALL- Kim Charlson, Chair; Lisa Feltner, Town Councilor; Patrick George, ADA Coordinator; John Hawes; Rachel Kay; Carol Menton; Megan O'Halloran; Naomi Ridge; and Carol Wilson-Braun. Guest- Tammy McKenna, Faire on the Square.

CHAIR'S REPORT-

- 1) Kim said that Watertown Cable would be moving to a new location between late June and late July. It was agreed by the Commissioners to meet in August instead of July.
- 2) It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously to give \$1200 to Faire on the Square for ASL interpreters and Braille materials. Tammy said they will also have 6 sighted guide volunteers. Carol M asked what role can we have at our table? Tammy said that we will be next to the Welcome Tent, and the guides will be there. Kim said that we would take an inventory of our supplies next month. Patrick knows where they are kept. Tammy will connect with Kim.
- 3) DPW and Trash Toters- Kim has not heard back from Greg St. Louis yet.
- 4) City Ordinance about Public Captioning- Kim dropped in on a meeting of the Committee on Rules and Ordinances. Changes were made in the language. Lisa said that the committee approved the ordinance, and it will be voted on by the Council in June. Patrick is the liaison. Businesses will receive instruction.
- 5) WCOD \$500 donation to Community Fridge- Patrick said we need to clarify which parent organization oversees it, Watertown Community Foundation or Wayside, to receive the donation. He said that the City Manager OK'd the donation. We voted last month.
- 6) Kim said there was an inquiry from a Watertown resident about problems with a screen reader for the Senior Center newsletter. Some elements didn't come through. Kim, Patrick, Chris McLure (Chief Information Officer) and Lydia McCoy (Director of Senior Center) will meet with the resident on 6/5.
- 7) Kim brought up the vacancy on the Commission. Apparently, there is a Residents' Advisory Committee that helps identify and vet people who wish to serve on commissions and boards, but they have a year-long backlog. Kim said we used to have a screening sub-committee that would make recommendations to the Manager, who would appoint them, and wondered if we could still do that. Lisa said that the Charter has changed and that a sub-committee would qualify as a meeting, but one Commissioner and Patrick would be OK. If the names were public, we could endorse. Rachel wondered if we could bypass the Advisory Committee if everything was in the open. Naomi emphasized that the COD should be picking our members, because we have the expertise, but Lisa said the Charter prevents that. Patrick wondered if the COD would be willing to send the Advisory Committee what we are looking for in members? Kim said that we are governed by the state statute for CODs, and that the Committee should be aware of that. Lisa said that the Manager might be able to expedite the appointment, and will bring it up in Council.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- It was moved, seconded and VOTED unanimously by roll call to accept the minutes from the April 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 April. 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 nothing new.
- 2) Special Ed- Rachel said that the Hosmer playground changes were still planned, but that costs were high. SEPAC is concerned about Special Ed staffing at the Cunniff Elementary School.
- 3) Safety and Access- a) Kim met last Friday with Liz Peltner about the Braille labels on the 4 statues on the walking path behind city hall. The machine labels were unreadable. New labels will be made at Perkins for a minimal charge.
b) Cracks in pavement along pathway behind city hall. Naomi noted that there was orange paint sprayed there and wondered when the work would be done. Kim asked Patrick to reach out to DPW. Patrick asked about SeeClickFix, whether Commissioners felt it was successful. Naomi and Rachel said yes but only for smaller issues. Lisa said it was hit or miss. Naomi said that the detectable warnings had been replaced with metal. Lisa said 311 was starting this summer to report issues. Kim said it was used by Boston and that it should be checked for accessibility.
c) Curbing Issue- next steps? Lisa said that granite curbing is being installed, but not unless significant construction is being done, otherwise they are using cement. The City Engineer just gave his notice, so that will slow things down. Kim asked if cement was OK. Naomi commented that cars park up on the grass and sidewalk, and create a divot.
d) Lexington Intersection- Kim said there is nothing new. Naomi said there was no detectable warning. Kim said she would work on the request to the Highway Dept.

NEW BUSINESS-

- 1) Lisa said she never heard back about the open space resource plan. Kim asked Patrick to get an update from Gideon. Kim will share a link to the meeting she attended.
- 2) Naomi said she sent the DPW an email about the condition of the sidewalks near the Village Condominiums at Lexington and Belmont Sts. Their response was that it was difficult, so they will just patch. John guessed it wasn't a high priority, that the streets were more important. Lisa said that the priorities would be updated in September, and that she would talk to the district councilor. Kim suggested trying to get others in the neighborhood to speak up and add their voices.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

The next meeting of WCOD will take place via Zoom at 7 p.m. on Wed, June 21st, 2023.

