

Disability Commission
Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2022
Hybrid Meeting

Meeting convened and called to order at 6:04 PM.

Members Present

Marcia Cairns, Ronald Menard, Kim Hopewell, and Lisa Thompson

Members Absent

Patrick Crowley and Michael McConville

Invited Guests

Jennifer Warren-Dyment (West Boylston Town Administrator)

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Minutes of September 20th, 2022, meeting approved by unanimous vote.

Business:

Discussion about article in *The Item* about October's Town Meeting violating Open Meeting Law due to accessibility issues at the West Boylston Middle/High School.

- The complaints were addressed by town Counsel stating the following:
Two complaints alleging violations of the state's Open Meeting law were referred to lawyers for formal response. Both committees receiving the complaints noted the town's ongoing work on issues raised in the complaint.
- School committee: Doing study for possibility of new or renovated school and upgrades that would include accessibility compliance and improvements.
- Town recently completed ADA self-evaluation and transition plan with assistance from Collins Center for Public Management and is engaged in working towards addressing to achieve compliance with state and federal requirements for persons with disabilities.
- The town is aware of its responsibility under OML and accessibility laws. They need to consider how to make Town Meeting more accessible. Possibly hybrid or different location?

Transition Plan:

- We need to be able to track changes as they are made. We need to be able to regularly monitor and update the status of the transition plan.
- Kim created and Access Database to monitor our progress. This will observe and report on all town owned facilities.

1. It will track by facility
2. The property
3. What the problem is
4. What the solution is
5. Target dates
6. Who is the responsible party?
7. ADA reference comments
8. The cost and source of funding
9. Whether it's programmatic
10. Contact information
11. Curb ramps...

- There are many actions that need to be taken that don't include structural changes to buildings.
- The Transition Plan is in its infancy, and this will all take time.
- The Disability Commission will work under the direction of the ADA Coordinator
- The ADA Coordinator will need to:
 - develop prioritized programmatic modifications including identifying and completing training for staff.
 - Develop prioritized plan for readily achievable physical barrier removals that can be completed in house or at minimal cost.
 - Develop prioritized capital investment strategy for major projects as part of overall capital planning process and incorporate into the Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
- Jennifer Warren-Dymont : Until now the ADA coordinator has been George Tignor who is the Building Inspector. Since the ADA coordinator is responsible for more than just buildings and structures, it makes more sense to have someone who can address all the areas needing to be addressed under ADA. Jennifer would be willing to take on this role when George's contract ends. Selectboard must appoint her.
- Marcia moved that the Disability Commission sends a letter to the Selectboard recommending Jennifer to take on the role of ADA Coordinator.
Ron seconds the motion. The motion is carried by unanimous vote.
- Jennifer has met with Michael Edwards from The Collins Center to make a timeline for projects and will work with Capital Investment Board on how these will fit into plans
- Once there is a draft document with a timeline, the Disability Commission will look it over and approve before it goes to the Selectboard. Then public comment, back to the Selectboard before being finalized.
- Once change is all documents on website need to be in PDF form for visually impaired folks to use assistive technology that read the screen.
- We need a Transition Plan in place we are more able to get grant funding.
- The town and Disability Commission cannot do all this alone, we will need to work with other committees in town (i.e., Parks Commission, Cemetery Trustees, etc).

- Part of the job of the Disability Commission is to educate people, businesses, and agencies in the town about the regulations and responsibilities they have under ADA.

Discussion about the By-Laws:

- Jennifer can help bring the Disability Commission together with the By-Laws Committee, we can meet to discuss any issues so we can sort it all out and resubmit our By-Laws for the May Semi-Annual Town Meeting for inclusion in the General By-Laws.
- Ron brings up a change in By-Laws of membership from 7 member to 5. This was we only need 3 to have a quorum.
- Jennifer suggests we can have Associate members who can help, lend, and ear, but do not vote. We don't need a limit on Associate Members.
- Ron motions to amend the By-laws to reduce membership from seven to five members, and we only need 3 for a quorum. Also, that we can have associate members. Marcia seconds the motion, The motion passes with unanimous vote.

Discussion about Trainings and Education the town about Disability rights/ laws

- Look into getting some grants to help pay for some trainings to educate ourselves and town businesses
- Massachusetts Office of Disability offers trainings, Department of Justice website, and ADA.gov have trainings.
- United States Access Board has trainings and quarterly meetings.
- Kim encourages us to be an active board, to read materials distributed, attend trainings, and pay attention to the laws. We want to make an impact.

Set next meeting for January 10, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Motion to adjourn, all approve

Meeting ends at 7:24 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Thompson, Scribe

