

**Disability Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 7, 2023**  
**In Person Meeting**

Meeting convened and called to order at 6:02 PM.

Roll Call:

**Members Present**

Kim Hopewell, Marcia Cairns, Ronald Menard, Lisa Thompson, Patrick Crowley

**Invited Guest**

Jennifer Warren-Dyment (West Boylston Town Administrator)

**Public Comment**

- Kim introduces this new addition to The Disability Commission meetings. This 10-minute notice period will be provided to allow public comment for questions from the public. Although we will not be able to take action on any items as they have not appeared on the agenda for this meeting, we can take the items under advisement for future meetings.
- Kim makes her comment that after meeting with the Town Administrator (Jennifer) she advises that we need to slow down with our approach. We cannot implement all the changes in the Transition Plan on our own. There are other Town Boards and Departments that will be responsible for the changes, and we can't even move forward with anything until the Transition Plan is adopted by the Town. The timeline for implementation can't begin until the Transition Plan is accepted.
- We need to think more about how we will approach the Transition Plan: What is the Process? Who is in charge of doing what? Who makes sure things get done? What is the role of the Disability Commission in this process? How do we approach it and how do we document the changes needing to be made and what changes have been made?
- One of our roles will be to educate and inform the town.
- Kim: We need to decide our approach, no actual changes until the adoption of the Transition Plan.
- Ron asks if the suggestion is to identify what needs to be done, let the various town boards and departments know what they need to do and then let them do the work?
- Jennifer says that the DC (Disability Commission) does not have jurisdiction over them. We need to think of what our role is, to me mindful of various groups and think of how we will steer and track the updates, policies, projects to help us meet the goals of the transition plan.
- Jennifer says she can ask Mike Edwards to come out and give us advice. He had stated at the September DC meeting that we need to be slow and deliberate and thoughtful if we want to make this work.

- Kim says maybe we should set up a meeting with another town. Maybe ask Mike Edwards to let us know some DCs that are doing it right. Kim says she has called but not heard back from various DCs.
- Jennifer suggests she can reach out to some other town administrators and see if they can connect us with their DCs.
- Marcia says it's a good idea, because why invent the wheel.
- Kim mentions Service Animals. Says there are inconsistencies with this, and we need a policy for the town. Jennifer says the questions Kim raises would need to go through Town Counsel. Ron starts looking up information on Service Animals in the Transition Plan. Pat says since the town has not yet adopted the transition plan, the things on tonight's agenda shouldn't really be discussed, since they are related to the transition plan.
- Jennifer says we need to have public comment into the transition plan. She says we will have plenty of work to do once it is adopted. Right now, we need to work with the Bylaws Committee. We also can use this time to work with other DCs so when the Transition Plan is finalized, we will know how we want to approach it.
- Ron says it will vary from item to item.
- Jennifer says that some groups will want our guidance and help, and others will want to do it themselves.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Minutes of January 10, 2023, Meeting approved by roll call vote. Patrick Crowley abstained since he was not present at the January meeting.

### **Old Business**

- **ADA Coordinator**  
Kim and Ron went to the Selectboard meeting. Jennifer was accepted as ADA Coordinator.
- **Discussion about the By-Laws**  
We have a meeting with the Bylaws Committee on Thursday 2/9. Ron asks why the Bylaws committee has issues with our Bylaws. Jennifer says there are 2 issues. First, they had a meeting to discuss our Bylaws and no one from the DC came. The second issue is that the Chairman of the Bylaws Committee has concerns about the amount of power the DC would receive based on the Bylaws we submitted. He is concerned about us becoming a lobbying entity based on #5 of Article II. Town meeting adopted MGL 8J, so this helps us.  
Jennifer says if we incorporate our Bylaws into the general town Bylaws and changes, we will want to make after that would need to be voted on at Town Meeting. Pat reiterates once they are incorporated into the town Bylaws, we cannot make a change to the Bylaws without a vote at Town Meeting. Ron asks why we should put our Bylaws into the General Bylaws. Jennifer says it locks the Bylaws in place. Kim says if we don't, then we lose transparency. Jennifer says having them be part of the Town Bylaws makes them very visible and public and

makes us more transparent. Jennifer says we may want to see what the Bylaws committee says when we meet on Thursday. Pat says he likes the idea of them being in the General Bylaws but maybe they don't need to be as strict, maybe less restrictive than they currently are. Ron agrees. Jennifer states that any item in the Bylaws is enforced by the Selectboard. Kim says we should make changes to the Bylaws now. Pat says it's not on tonight's agenda, so we can't vote on it, and it would need to fall under discussion. Jennifer says we she thinks we can work through this with the Bylaws committee together, and if all goes well, we could walk away from the meeting with what we want to have approved and added to General Bylaws at Town Meeting. Pat asked about who holds the public comment on our Bylaws? Is it us or the Bylaws committee? Jennifer says since it is a warrant article it could be the Selectboard. Pat says he thinks it's the committee that holds the public hearing.

### **New Business**

The DC requests the scribe gets the Meeting Minutes out to the DC sooner so they can be reviewed prior to the meeting.

Question about having zoom meetings. It is determined that we can do our meetings over Zoom, or we can have them I person, but we cannot do hybrid. We do not have the staff to film and make hybrid work. When we do a zoom meeting though, important to remember that all voting members must be seen on the screen. You cannot have your camera off. Kim mentions the disability accessibility to attend in person DC meeting, and wonders if fully Zoom is more accessible. Jennifer says the Planning Board is still fully Zoom. Pat says it makes sense to have the DC meetings be on Zoom. Ron suggests we could meet downstairs or do Zoom.

Jennifer says she is going to ask to the Selectboard about the date for closing the warrant. Jennifer will suggest a date. Once the date for town meeting is set, then the warrant opens, and this is the period to get articles in.

**Next Meeting:** The Disability Commission is meeting with the Bylaws Committee on Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, and will set the date for our next DC meeting at that time.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:10PM

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lisa M. Thompson, Scribe

