

Commission on Disabilities (COD)

Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2020
10:00 am

Zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87160485050?pwd=QTdKVGNIU0xqaklsdmlkUXRKG42Zz09>

Present:

Full Members: Ann Corcoran (Chair), Lisa Franklin, Franny Osman, Joan Burrows.

Others: Director of Governmental Affairs Austin Cyganiewicz

Board of Selectman Liaison: Jim Snyder-Grant

1. Opening

Chair Corcoran opened the meeting at 10:10 am.

2. Regular Business

- A. Shared Concerns (timely issues not on the agenda, formerly “Citizens Concerns”) - A letter was sent to COD by a resident about an access concern with a first floor condo glass door replacement. Mr. Cyganiewicz had a conversation with the resident and will have ongoing follow up.
- A. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Ms. Franklin moved that the COD accept the minutes, as amended during the discussion, of February 18, 2020. Ms. Burrows seconded the motion. The COD voted 4-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed. Ms. Franklin moved that the COD accept the minutes, as amended during the discussion, of September 15, 2020. Ms. Burrows seconded the motion. The COD voted 4-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.
- B. Announcements – none
- C. Selectmen Liaison Report – none
- D. Report from Austin Cyganiewicz, Director of Governmental Affairs – These issues are included in the regular business below.
- E. Report from Commissions on Disabilities Alliance (CODA) by Ms. Franklin – One town had just started their first COD meeting. CODA had a discussion of Open Meeting Law recording requirements. Ms. Franklin referred them to Open Meeting Law training. Lowell’s COD has had some membership turbulence. City of Cambridge had been against allowing people working from home for an accommodation pre-COVID. CODA discussed whether the city would be more amenable post-COVID. Discussion of development and handicapped parking requirements in Arlington and Watertown.

3. New Business

- A. Ms. Johnson reported to Ms. Corcoran that Donelans only has high tables in their café eating area. Ms. Corcoran suggests we ask them to purchase a low table and low chairs for accessibility to the eating area by people who can’t achieve those heights. Ms. Franklin suggests starting by asking Frank Ramsbottom to reach out to the store. This is within his purview. Ms. Corcoran will contact Mr. Ramsbottom today and ask him to reach out.
- B. Massachusetts Office of Disability (MOD) Grant. At Town Manager John Mangiaratti’s suggestion, on Oct. 5 an application was submitted for purchase of two adaptive bicycles and training of NARA Park staff in renting them to people. There are bathroom facilities and other

amenities to make it a good place to rent them. Town would consider buying more if this works out. For now, people would sign up and use them for an hour. We expect a response within two months. Ms. Franklin suggests asking Ross Lilley of nonprofit AccessSports America about child size bikes. Ms. Osman suggests coordination amongst Mr. Cyganiewicz, Ms. Johnson (spearheader of the Accessible Bike Coalition), Town, Acton Recreation Dept., and AccessSports America.

- C. Early voting: Mr. Cyganiewicz reports 5500 mail-in ballots have been received so far of 10,000 applications; there have been 400 early voters so far at Town Hall. Ms. Corcoran reports that Mr. Cyganiewicz was given kudos by Select Board Member Ms. Gardner last night for his work on early voting. Ms. Franklin asks if the new ballot boxes are accessible. Mr. Cyganiewicz says they are ADA compliant, according to the vendor. He will check that they work for people in wheelchairs.
- D. Emergency Rental Assistance program continues: applications are still available online, in English, Spanish and Portuguese. The program is administered by the Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO). To apply, contact Social Services Coordinator L.ducharme@actonma.gov .
- E. Mr. Snyder-Grant said that at the last COD meeting Ms. Franklin reported having a good experience with captioning on Google Meet. Our COD's Zoom meetings have not had captioning available. Mr. Snyder-Grant and Mr. Cyganiewicz subsequently investigated the issue of the Computer Assisted Real-time Translation (CART) program and Google Meet. Mr. Snyder-Grant finds it simpler than Zoom. Tradeoff is that it has fewer features than Zoom, but we have rarely used the fancier features of Zoom. Mr. Snyder-Grant and Mr. Cyganiewicz agreed it would be a good platform for the COD to pilot. Mr. Cyganiewicz checked with the Information Technology dept. and they approved this pilot. The next step is to ask the COD if they are willing to test it out. There would be a Zoom link as a backup in case a quorum does not attend by Google Meet. Ms. Corcoran suggests having someone hearing impaired to participate and comment on the captioning. Ms. Osman will invite a friend who is hearing impaired. Ms. Franklin said the statewide COD recommended using Google Meet. Mr. Snyder-Grant suggests we try it for a couple of meetings.
- F. Jones Field Accessible Playground progress continues. A lot of families help spread out the rubberized mulch. Ms. Corcoran, who lives nearby, says the joy of the participants is heartwarming. Mr. Cyganiewicz showed photographs of the construction, with rubberized wood chips on parts they don't have funds yet for the harder surface. Ms. Osman made a motion that we give \$500 of our COD funds to the Recreation Department for Jones Field in memory of deceased COD Board Members Steve Baran, Cindy Patton, and Mady Harvey.
- G. Member Recruitment – One potential member expressed an interest in the Commission.
- H. Officers of COD - Ms. Corcoran suggests we make a slate of new officers for a November vote with a January turnover. Ms. Franklin moves that we have a vote for officers in November for assuming the position in January. The outgoing chair would write the Annual Report. Joan seconds. All in favor. The Motion passed. There was a suggestion that we make this change annual, to be discussed at a future meeting.

4. **Adjournment**

At approximately noon, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

