

Acton Commission on Disabilities (COD): Minutes for February18, 2025

Members present: Joan Burrows, Lisa Franklin, John Gianetto, Leslie Johnson, Pesha Kokis, and Melissa Wingfield. Also Jim Snyder Grant (select board liaison), Wanjiku Gachugi (town staff)

Members absent: None

Meeting was called to order at 10:11 am.

Announcements:

1. The Disability Policy Consortium has a grant to create a history of people with disabilities in Massachusetts. If you would like to add your story to the collective stories of others, contact Sandy Novack at 627-307-7775 or email at disabilityhistory@dpcma.org . It will be important for those in the future to know what life was like for people with disabilities from our era.
2. Lisa reached out to the CODs of Concord and Lincoln regarding the renewal of the bike share program on the rail trail. Acton wants to rejoin the towns of Concord, Maynard and Lincoln on the bike share program. Providing adaptable bikes will remain essential to the program.
3. Lisa and Pesha attended the Financial Committee's public meeting on January 28 concerning the upcoming budget. There were several people there who supported the necessity of the transportation program.
4. Regarding remote meetings, Gov. Healey signed a law on the supplemental budget bill that extends the municipalities right to hold public meetings remotely. There is ongoing advocacy to make this permanent.
5. The Select Board and Finance Committee are in the process of creating the town budget to submit at the annual town meeting in May. At this time, there are no proposed cuts to the transportation program.

There were no public concerns.

We unanimously approved the January 21st minutes.

We unanimously agreed to submit a copy of our previous transportation support letter to the finance committee to the Acton Exchange. The deadline is always the Tuesday at 5:00 pm of the week you want it to come out.

New business:

Looking over the proposed draft of projects submitted by the Sustainability Department regarding the Municipal Vulnerability Plan 2.0, we felt they should consider adding other projects specifically to assist people with disabilities who need help during severe weather events, such as ice and snow removal, or help doing errands during severe weather. We will submit our ideas to Sustainability Office.

We discussed the proposed policy covering service animals in town-owned buildings. We discussed concerns over the section on Emotional Support Animals. We voted 3 to 2 against the current policy, and suggested that the town more clearly define the terms "service animal" and "emotional support animal," then submit this again next month.

We had a discussion about attending the State House Education Day on April 2 to advocate for disability issues; there was only limited interest.

We adjourned at 11:54 am.

Documents used at meeting: animal policy draft, MVP2.0 project idea list, copy of letter sent to finance committee from cod