

Minutes
COD Meeting of July 16, 2013
Town Hall Room 126

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ACTON

(Recorded jointly by Cindy Patton and Madeleine Harvey)

Present: Members: Deanne Bonnar Chair, Danny Factor, Cindy Patton,
Madeleine Harvey
Associate Member: Wen Li,
Liaisons: Katie Green, Steve Baran

10:30 Meeting called to order

Citizen Concerns. Danny spoke about Deanne O'Sullivan's issues concerning a local church that does not have vertical access to extra rooms. She has a personal concern because her husband has mobility problems. The church may have an exemption. She will come to us in September about the Douglas School which doesn't have inside disability access for some children to special rooms such as those for music, art, and the café. A student who had broken a leg was unable to gain access to these rooms without having to negotiate icy conditions outside. Church to call Tom Hopkins. Jim Snyder & his commission are coming out with new trail maps and would like to be able to identify more accessible trails. He may also want to join us at some point.

Minutes from June 14th Retreat. These were recorded by Lisa with help from Mady, who sent around her own notes. Committee members read through the minutes and identified necessary corrections, which Deanne offered to make. Minutes approved with Motion Mady, Second Danny.

Mark B. Scachem came by to talk about Exchange Hall. Lower parking spot is not accessible and must be resurfaced. HP space needs to have more CPC funds from grant in order to fix, according to Glen Burger. In order to be eligible for additional money, the hall must be used by the Town. Five minutes will be designated at next meeting to further discuss Exchange Hall.

Board of Selectmen Report. Katie said Janet is trying to set up a meeting with Don and Eva to discuss Town Meeting accessibility. The Board is trying to have

a phone conversation with Jeff Dugan regarding Panera Bread. Many changes/revisions are required before a Panera establishment can go forward.

Additional Announcements. Deanne raised two additional points that had not been brought up earlier: 1) the AAB and Women's Club are working on getting funds/grant money to make access changes; this is going well; 2) There is another applicant for the Commission. Steve Baran is also interested. One Associate member is not really participating. Perhaps it is time for a new person.

Retreat Evaluation/Review. Deanne was interested in how we felt the retreat went, and was curious as to how we arrived at the decision to make Independent Living our education topic. We had a brief discussion about how this came about. Cindy reminded us that we have agreed to designate half an hour of every future meeting to a discussion around this issue. Wen mentioned some updates relating to DocuShare and issues having to do with the emails necessary to generate these documents. This will be discussed in further depth at a subsequent meeting. We agreed that we had not had sufficient time for group/team building, but that there were no agenda items we felt we could cut in order to make time for this. Steve suggested that too much time had been wasted with logistics of getting into the building (various doors were locked, the handicapped elevator was not immediately accessible, there were issues with a key upon our departure, etc.). In general, however, we all agreed that the meeting was useful and positive. We all went away feeling good about it. There was further conversation initiated by Deanne about how to do everything we set out to, given our limited capacity and time constraints. We need to develop a timetable for what will happen when (we already do have a 3-year plan in place) and also figure out how to deal with what we cannot do (bigger vs. smaller agendas). Do we revise the 3-year plan or come up with sub-topics? Katie discussed goal-setting, as they do at BOS (short-term versus long-term), and that this helps the Board keep on track. We need to set dates by which certain tasks will be accomplished. Danny suggested a poster of the master calendar at all meetings that we have up at every meeting so we can remind ourselves and keep moving things along. Deanne offered to make the poster with Lisa. Mady observed that as a newcomer to COD, her impression is that a disproportionate amount of time has been taken up with variances

issues while very important are often, at the expense of more substantive matters. Deanne said when she was involved with the MBTA RIDE, there were similar problems. One thing they did was to have gatherings that were not work related. We agreed that we should have such get-togethers, taking care not to broach COD related subjects per the open meeting laws. Deanne is going to work on setting up such a gathering for this fall. We also talked about the importance of recognizing what we have accomplished, rather than focusing on what we aren't able to get to. For example, we planned a retreat, and we made it happen.

Oktoberfest. We agreed to once again host a booth at this year's Acton Oktoberbest, which will be held on Saturday, October 12th. Deanne and Steve have agreed to be at the table from 10-12. Mady and Deanne have agreed to be there from 12-2. We need people for the 2-4 slot. Danny and Cindy are willing provided they don't have other obligations, but that remains to be seen. We have to arrange the physical set-up of our table and canopy.

Olmstead Act. Danny provided brief overview of this Act, passed by The Supreme Court in 1999. With Olmstead, first time ADA included mental illness. and other mentally disabled individuals have the right to live in less restrictive community settings rather than being institutionalized. Every state must make a plan to transition to less restrictive conditions. Massachusetts is doing well and using the right language (Georgia, by comparison, has done nothing at all, and even the offices intended to deal with this issue are vacant). In order for the plan to work, several things have to happen: 1) funds are needed for an expanded personal care system; 2) individuals must be able to obtain jobs and hold onto them (enforcement needed; nuts and bolts); 3) affordable housing is necessary. Steve suggested that there are many similarities between all of this and the issues being dealt with by the Committee on Aging. We discussed how all of this relates to the Commission: 1) Personal stories; 2) how is Acton doing strengths and failings? 3) Do we have independent living opportunities in this town? Danny would like to hear from the DLC. There were many lawsuits. Deanne talked about the State needing to do things, and what does COD need to do? What is achievable? Katie and Mady suggested finding out what other communities do. Katie recommended putting these items on a large calendar/visual display that we had talked about earlier, and Steve agreed that this would provide a "framework" for our discussions. There was further

discussion about what the Town/COD needs to do. Acton does have people in apartments with assistance. What about transport to medical care? The issue of isolation? What can we do to help families? Can we focus on transportation for people with disabilities, those with Alheimers, etc. There is a need for volunteers in individuals' homes, but this involves legal issues. At next month's meeting we can discuss the volunteer issue further, as we will be joined by Laura Decharme (Social Services Coordinator), Sharon Mercurio (COA Director), and possibly also Beverly Hutchins (Volunteer Coordinator).

Agenda for Next Meeting:

- *Exchange Hall (5 minutes)*
- *Fall social gathering*
- *Docushare issues*
- *Board composition*
- *Volunteer discussion (including our visitors)*
- *Independent living (half an hour)*

!2:30 Meeting Adjourned.