

**Town of Acton
COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES (COD)**

**MEETING MINUTES
January 16, 2018**

Members Present: Madeleine Harvey (Chair), Ann (Nancy) Corcoran, Danny Factor, Lisa Franklin, Leslie Johnson

Associate Members Present: Joan Burrows, Franny Osman

Others Present: Joan Gardner (Board of Selectmen Liaison), 3 members of the general public, and Sarah Bursky via remote access (phone)

Call to order: 9:35 am

Citizens' concerns: None

Announcements

Lisa noted that when we refer to closed captioning or speech to text issues with regard to Town Meeting, this should actually be called by its correct/official name, which is CART, standing for Communication Access Real Time Translation.

Board of Selectmen Update None

Minutes

Minutes of the November and December 2017 meetings were reviewed and approved with minor corrections.

Town Emergency Response(s) to Winter Weather

A meeting of Acton's Medical Reserve Corps is set with Sheryl Ball (Acton's Health Director) and Evan Carloni (Public Health Inspector) to train people to assist in a shelter at Audubon Drive in Acton (former site of the senior center). Lisa was planning to attend, and the COD unanimously voted that she should do so as an official delegate of the commission. There was discussion about obtaining a list of people in Acton with

disabilities, although this raises concerns about confidentiality and vulnerability. Danny suggested that a representative from the Police Department come to speak with us. It was noted that plans may already be in existence (or used to be) and we do not wish to duplicate those. Joan noted that there had been such a list in the past based on a survey that had been taken. Franny inquired about what other towns do in this regard. Joan Gardner mentioned that a survey of seniors had been done and it was found that in general, they do not live in clusters. Danny pointed out that the schools have a list of children involved in IEP (Individualized Education Programs). Leslie mentioned a neighbor who is legally blind whose pipes froze during the cold snap and required a place to stay: what options are available? Public relations are needed to list numbers to call and to offer advice about available help. COD intends to discuss this further at a later date.

Phone Introductions with Strategic Planner

The COD will likely invite Sarah Bursky, a strategic planner, to hold a session for the commission to discuss goals, objectives, group dynamics, and to develop a new strategic plan. In preparation for this event in spring, a conference call was held so that we could introduce each other and hear from Sarah about her background and the ways in which she feels she could assist us. Sara noted that she wanted to be clear about our specific questions and wished to receive our help in the planning process, and asked that we be honest about our needs. She would probably spend several hours with us – including pre-planning - at a cost of \$750 which was previously approved by the COD. Nancy suggested that we have a bit of further discussion ‘offline’ and get back to Sara with our thoughts. It was further agreed that we would send Sara a list of issues that have arisen and which have been noted in the past. A motion was made to hire Sara, and there was a unanimous vote to do so. Danny suggested that two commission members develop the agenda with Sara over the next few months, and the COD voted unanimously that those two people should be Nancy and Danny. (This event will serve as the COD’s annual retreat.)

Executive Session

A roll call vote was taken to hold an executive session following up on two earlier ones. Lisa noted that the School Committee was being sued because of “insufficient reason” for an executive session, although Danny noted that this was a different situation. A vote was taken 3-1: Danny, Mady and Leslie yes; Lisa no. (Nancy had left.) A follow-up executive session was held to review minutes from the previous two sessions, and to review a letter prepared in response to the issues raised by the individual about the establishment in question. Two sets of minutes were approved with 3 yes votes (Danny, Mady, Leslie) and one abstention (Lisa). A brief executive session will be held in February to approve the minutes from this executive session.

Tape Recorder

A short discussion was held (but not concluded) regarding the need for a tape recorder at COD meetings to record proceedings in order to check for accuracy and/or review issues where there may be confusion. Nancy has a small one which can be used for now and which converts speech into text, and someone from the Council on Aging can train us to use it. The COD approved up to \$100 for purchase of a new one, but may decide to use Nancy's. A final determination has yet to be made.

Cross Town Connect and Taxi Update

Franny explained that Cross Town Connect, led by Sudbury, is trying to work with taxi companies to increase taxi service, focused on accessible vehicles. Note that Carlisle has an accessible vehicle available. The service could be used by students and senior citizens, as well as those with disabilities. Mady pointed out that some people do not know how to contact Uber, and not everyone owns a smart phone allowing them to use that app. Regular taxi services are also expensive and not affordable by everyone. Lea (visitor) noted that "Rides by Joanne" has served her well. Lisa has had positive experience with ABC Taxi also in town. Taxi services require availability at all hours (examples were cited of persons needing a ride to or from the hospital at 1 am). Danny suggested that we continue to explore transportation options with The Neighbor Brigade.

COD Mail

Mady suggested that instead of the twice weekly mail pick-ups she has been doing for the past two years, mail be picked up only on Fridays (as was done in the past). In almost all cases, the COD box is empty, and trips to Town Hall for this purpose are a waste of time. It was suggested that Kim Bricker from the Building Department could check the COD mailbox when getting her department's mail, as this would not involve any additional work, and she could be in touch with Mady if there was material to be picked up. It was agreed to move to this system. The COD unanimously voted to move to this system, and Mady agreed to speak with Kim.

February Agenda

The tentative February agenda was set.

Updates/Access Issues

The only access issue raised at the meeting was that of bannisters at 205-209 Great Road (Pine Hill Condominiums). While a new one has been installed, it is not adequate for at least one resident. Danny and Joan Burrows will continue to pursue the matter.

Accessible/Zagster Bicycles

Tabled until next meeting owing to lack of time.

Handbook Updates

Tabled until next meeting owing to lack of time.

Adjournment

12:35

Docushare Items

None

Respectfully submitted by
Joan Burrows and Madeleine Harvey