

Andover Commission on Disability

Virtual Meeting—Andover TV

March 23, 2022

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**Call to Order:** Co-Chair Justin Coppola called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Roll Call: Trish Leelman, Y; David Kahan, Y; Jemma Lambert Y; Eileen Reilly, Y; Katherine Ananis, Y; Kathleen Dolan, Y; Justin Coppola, Y. Also Present: Facilities Director and ADA Coordinator, Janet Nicosia.

Stephen Surette, Conservation Commission Member Ellen Townson, and Senior Center Liaison Molly Bicking arrived after the roll call.

**Liaison Reports and Announcements:**

**Plant and Facilities:** Janet said that the assistive listening devices have been ordered and will be tested when they come in.

**Approval of Minutes:**

*It was moved by Eileen seconded by David and voted 8-0 to approve the minutes of February 23, 2022.*

***Roll Call: Trish Leelman, Y; David Kahan, Y; Jemma Lambert, Y; Eileen Reilly, Y. Katherine Ananis, Y; Kathleen Dolan, Y; Stephen Surette, Y; and Justin Coppola, Y.***

**Liaison Reports and Announcements continued:**

**DPW:** Stephen reported that paving operations have begun and work on the water pipes both uptown and in other parts of town has begun.

Justin talked about a site visit to the “Sacred Heart Reservation” (Burnham Road/ York Street area) with Kathleen and Stephen recently did an on-site visit to review if this may be an acceptable place for an accessible recreation area. They determined that it was not accessible due to land contours and flooding and have a report to that effect. Justin asked Stephen whether the town engineer could be invited to upcoming ADA - CAM training and Stephen will reach out to him.

**Accessible Andover-- AndoverTV:**

Kathleen gave an overview of possible ACOD-sponsored topics to be shown on AndoverTV with its debut program starting on April 19. The first show will be presented either live or by video. Kathleen has been working with Fred Snell on the overall formatting of the shows. The way she envisions at least the first programs, is to have Fred host with one or two ACOD members who will discuss a pre-arranged topic with him. For example, Kathleen and Justin as topic facilitators will present an introduction/ overview of the Disability Commission’s history in town, its mission and its activities.

Other topics might include Project Lifesaver (Stephen offered to contact Sgt. Stephen Neal about this program); ADA accessibility through-out the town-- highlighting recent buildings and compliance modifications; outdoor recreation proposals—access along the Shawsheen river, land acquisition for trails and picnics as well as other opportunities currently being explored; and the role of caregivers for those living with or helping those with disabilities. Jemma added that she would be happy to assist with the caregiver piece as this would raise awareness in the community. Molly said there is a caregiver support group at the Robb Center and this program may be a resource. Kathleen asked for the name of the contact person so that she can talk to that person. The idea of aligning ACOD members with a particular topic to present on TV would give members visibility and further the role of the commission’s advocacy. Kathleen asked for volunteers and for other ideas to be presented.

## **State allowing in person meetings: Resume in person meetings discussion/no vote:**

Justin said that in person meetings will be allowed soon and asked how members felt about meetings being held in person going forward or whether to continue with video meetings. Katherine and Eileen preferred video as did Kathleen and she suggested waiting for further CDC guidance in mid- April, or to adopt hybrid meetings. Trish, Stephen, and David preferred in-person meetings but when the time is right, Jemma deferred to the will of the group. Eileen said closed captioning at the bottom of the video screen at these meetings has been helpful.

## **New Business**

**Conservation Commission:** Ellen reported that she asked for additional funding in the budget to increase the part-time land manager position to a full-time. Increased use of trails and upkeep of conservation land requires a fulltime position.

Article 20 which came up last year at town meeting is being submitted to purchase land at 138 Chandler Road, formerly a pig farm, which would add an abutting area to the land purchased to be used for recreational purposes. Ellen noted that this would in part redress some of the imbalance of recreation areas in that part of Andover unlike the downtown and other areas of town. She also clarified that Article 28 -- \$2.8M is for Shawsheen sewer lines, rather than recreational purposes or part of the Shawsheen River Master Plan. Trish said she would like to get involved with the Master Plan and Ellen will work with Trish to ensure she can be part of those meetings.

Kathleen asked about where funding would come from to make recreation areas along the Shawsheen and other areas ADA compliant. Ellen responded that the study phase was funded from State grants and going forward there may be more opportunities to apply for additional state grants. Ellen talked about a possible location she has studied—the Shawsheen Pines Reservation near Pfizer in Ballardvale. This flat area would need brush cleared and wider trails, but the slope is can be altered and the water flow is calmer than the one visited near Balmoral recently. Ellen will also be working with Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on proposed accessible recreation areas.

## **Town Meeting Warrant Review/Approval**

Justin said that each year ACOD reviews warrant articles submitted to the town pertaining to ACOD and makes recommendations where needed.

## **Town Meeting 2021**

Janet gave a brief update on a meeting she had with Justin and the Institute for Human Center Design (IHCD) regarding the architectural design of the West Elementary School. The IHCD review identified ADA issues not found by the architects and this group will be hired for projects going forward. Janet reported some additional HP spots to be in compliance as they need to be a certain distance from the doors.

Janet then presented slides for the following:

### **Article 5: \$125,000 ADA Related**

P5 -SCH-1 \$50,000 ADA compliance

P5 - FAC-1 \$75,000 ADA compliance

Justin noted the \$125K is level funded from last year. These are CIP (Capital Improvement Program) monies for ADA compliance issues that come up during the year for schools and facilities.

***It was moved by Stephen, seconded by Eileen and voted 8-0 to recommend approval of Article 5 for \$125K for town and school ADA compliance.***

***Roll call: Eileen, Y; Stephen, Y; Kathleen, Y; Katherine, Y; Jemma, Y; Trish, Y; Justin, Y; and David Y.***

## **Article 16: \$2,650,000 and Article 17 ADA Related**

Justin said that this CIP article is for ADA related design included in schools, facilities and the DPW. Justin proposed adding a line from Article 17 for \$250K called "minor sidewalk program" as it is ADA related, bringing the new total to \$2.9M

P16 - SCH-5 \$250,000 Doherty elevator full design

P16 - SCH-5 \$350,000 WHHP elementary playground renovation

P16 - FAC-5 \$550,000 lower Shawsheen track

P16 - FAC 6 \$500,000 Ballardvale parking lot

P16 - FAC-6 150,000 town offices stairwell railings

P16 - DPW-4 \$850,000 town sidewalk program

P17 - DPW-2 \$250,000 town minor sidewalk program

***It was moved by Kathleen, seconded by David and voted 8-0 to approve Articles 16 and 17 as described above in the amount of \$2.9 million.***

***Roll call: Kathleen, Y; Katherine, Y; David, Y; Jemma, Y; Trish, Y; Eileen, Y; Stephen, Y; and Justin, Y.***

## **Conservation Warrant Review/Approval**

Janet showed a slide of Article 20 which is a Land Acquisition warrant covering 40 acres which reads in part "to see if the town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$413,000 for the acquisition of land described as follows the land between 138 a Chandler Rd described in a deed registered in Essex N registry of deeds to authorize the select board to acquire such land..." This is an additional piece of abutting land not voted at last years' town meeting and mentioned above by Ellen.

***It was moved by Eileen seconded Katherine by and voted 8-0 to recommend approval of Article 20 for vote at Town Meeting.***

***Roll call: Kathleen, Y; Katherine, Y; David, Y; Jemma, Y; Trish, Y; Eileen, Y; Stephen, Y; Justin Y.***

Janet showed a slide of Article 7 Part B which is the Elderly/Disabled Transportation Program which reads in part "To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and raise by taxation a sum not to exceed \$12,000 for the purpose of continuing to provide for an elderly and disabled transportation subsidy program or take any other action related thereto." Justin noted that this article is filed annually by the Council on Aging.

***It was moved by Jemma, seconded by Stephen and voted 8-0 to recommend approval of Article 7 Part B for vote at Town Meeting.***

***Roll call: Kathleen, Y; Katherine, Y; David, Y; Jemma, Y; Trish, Y; Eileen, Y; Stephen, Y; Justin, Y.***

## **DEI 3/8/22 Meeting Overview (Kathleen liaison to DEI Commission)**

Justin noted that Katherine volunteered to be the liaison from ACOD to the DEI at the March ACOD meeting. Katherine reported that she recently attended her first meeting with DEI and will take part in a "Teams Software Training" session this Friday. Katherine gave a positive overview of her first meeting and shared her thoughts on how ACOD might fit within a broader interpretation of inclusion than DEI's primary focus of racial inequities in Andover.

Ultimately, Katherine reported she would like to see gender and disability issues be part of a larger and ongoing discussion. She mentioned the idea that programs or educational opportunities which address physical access barriers and other implicit biases might be able to expand the discussion. She mentioned for example, an ACOD-sponsored event in conjunction with World -Wide Disability Day in December. Trish agreed that people's

perceptions or personal views need to change so that people with disabilities are not seen as “other”. Katherine suggested that raising awareness about implicit bias is key and would like to explore whether this is something ACOD would like to address.

Discussion followed on how ACOD might be a part of this effort. Molly talked about how movies such as CODA (with hearing impaired actors) might be shown in the Library or Robb Center along with community discussion to help normalize disabilities. Ellen encouraged people to look into the Human Library-- a free international organization called Humanlibrary.org. a resource for people to borrow “people” with stories.

Jemma said DEI seeks to foster education for everyone and suggested possibly doing multicultural events in town. A variety of ideas and available resources could then be transitioned into services. David talked about his experiences and agreed that education and openness are key. He suggested contacting Dr. Larry Larsen as a resource. Eileen would like to work with education issues and said that it was important to be inclusive while maintaining focus, for example addiction and chronic illness are also disabilities, but education is key to maintaining focus. Jemma suggested the next ACOD meeting include a working group and Justin, noting Katherine is on next months’ agenda agreed. Katherine said she would like to start the discussion next month with members’ experiences with implicit bias-- either personally or in the community.

### **Announcements:**

Molly announced that on Tuesday April 19 at 2:00 there will be a presentation at the Robb Center by Ron Eskin (a retired disability attorney) on a landmark case that reversed New Hampshire putting an annual cap on coverage for Medicaid patients. The suit documented how much more expensive it would be to deprive people of preventive and needed care in the long run.

Justin noted MOD is planning 3 sessions of Cam ADA Basic Training with tuition paid for ACOD attendees. He also asked for a volunteer from ACOD to attend the kickoff meeting on the Chandler Road Recreation Area previously discussed. Deputy Town Manager Michael Lindstrom and the Planning Department are heading up this meeting on April 5 at 6:30 PM and virtually on April 6 at 6:30 PM. Details will be on the web site or contact Justin for information.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 27, at 6:30 PM Virtual

### **Adjournment:**

It was moved by David, seconded by Trish and voted 8-0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 PM.

Roll Call: Kathleen, Y; Katherine, Y; David, Y; Jemma, Y; Trish, Y; Eileen, Y; Stephen, Y; Justin, Y.