

Andover Commission on Disability

Virtual Meeting—Andover TV

April 27, 2022

Call to Order: Co-Chair Justin Coppola called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Roll Call: Eileen Reilly, Y; Jemma Lambert, Y; Kathleen Dolan Y; Trish Leelman, Y; Rebecca Schnopp, Y; Stephen Surette, Y; and Justin Coppola, Y.

Also Present: Janet Nicosia, Town ADA Coordinator and Facilities Director, Molly Bicking, Council on Aging Liaison, Ellen Townson, Conservation Commissioner and Liam Flanagan, Andover High School Student.

Guest Speakers: Detective Robin Cataldo, Bob Douglas, Director of Conservation, and Elizabeth Maldari, intern.

Conservation Director Robert Douglas

Justin introduced Bob Douglas, Director of Conservation for the Town, with whom Justin has worked on a number of projects, such as access to boat ramps and canoes, signage for kiosks and most recently, the Town's Shawsheen River Master Plan. Bob said they are in the process of putting together the Shawsheen River Master Plan including a section on people with disabilities. He then introduced Elizabeth Maldari, an intern who is also working on the Shawsheen River Master Plan and may be doing outreach with focus groups on the needs of people with disabilities. Elizabeth is working toward her Eco-Social Design master's degree with a focus on people with disabilities.

Approval of Minutes:

It was moved by Eileen, seconded by Trish, and voted 7-0 to approve the minutes of March 23, 2022.

Roll Call: Eileen, Y; Jemma, Y; Kathleen, Y; Trish Y; Rebecca, Y; Steve, Y; Justin Y.

Liaison Reports:

Ellen reported work on the Shawsheen River plans and signage for open spaces is ongoing.

Janet reported that Kathleen, Eileen, Wes Murphy, and others from Andover TV tested "Listen Everywhere" software at the Andover High School Field House and this assistive listening device will be ready for Town Meeting. People needing hearing assistance will be given cards with QR codes that can be downloaded to their phones. The QR code connects to a closed caption website. Two large screens in the Collins Center will be available with live streaming and closed captioning. Adaptors for phones will be available, and for those using hearing aids, Bluetooth will be available.

Eileen will provide assistance at an ACOD table on these assistive devices at Town Meeting. There is a banner available for the table.

Guest Speaker/Detective Robin Cataldo

Justin introduced Detective Robin Cataldo, who gave an update on **Project Lifesaver**. Det. Cataldo works with Sgt. Neal on this program. She described the radio frequency device worn by individuals who may wander. When someone is wearing this device and with a home monitor if they move out of range from where they are supposed to be, an alarm is sounded and the APD responds by tracing the whereabouts of that individual. There are 15 people with disabilities who have this device in Andover.

Kathleen asked how people in town can find out about this program and Det. Cataldo said there is information at the Senior Center and if there are calls to homes because of wandering this is may be the time when caretakers first become aware of the program. Justin suggested doing a PSA (Public Service Announcement) on resources like this available in town.

Old Business

Accessible Andover on AndoverTV

Kathleen reported that she and Justin had their first recording session with Andover TV and found the environment to be comfortable and they had responded to prepared questions. For this introductory session, she and Justin talked about ACOD, what it does and possible future topics. The hope is that various programs like Project Lifesaver, ADA efforts in town, and others will be presented, perhaps monthly.

New Business

Library Materials Proposal

Justin had an idea for funding materials for people with disabilities, at Memorial Hall Library. Kathleen followed up by communicating with Director Barbara McNamara and Dean Baumeister to see if this might be an unmet need that ACOD could provide. A list of materials was put together which included a large keyboard, a Dementia Friendly Book Collection, Autism materials, ZoomText software program to assist people with low vision, a wheelchair, and a walker with rollers for the lower floor. The cost for these resources is \$4200.

It was moved by Kathleen seconded by Eileen and voted 7-0 to fund \$4200 from this FY 2022 budget for the library materials request.

Roll Call: Trish, Y; Eileen, Y; Jemma, Y; Kathleen, Y; Rebecca, Y; Steve, Y; Justin, Y.

Jemma asked if the ACOD would consider using the balance of this years' budget (\$800) to fund an ADA compliant bench outside the Youth Center for parents and children with disabilities. Jemma also talked about a pilot program she is working on for students who lose their support system when the school year ends. She talked about collaboration with the social worker team tied to the Andover Public Schools and services for screening, mentoring, and other support including a stipend at the end of the program.

It was moved by Jemma, seconded by Trish, and voted 7-0 to fund a handicap bench in front of the Cormier Youth Center for \$800 to close out the FY2022 budget.

Roll Call: Trish, Y; Eileen, Y; Jemma, Y; Kathleen, Y; Rebecca, Y; Steve, Y; Justin, Y.

ADA Issues

Justin discussed why ACOD put the Shawsheen Pines Boat Launch Project on hold. At the April 5th Conservation Commission, it was issued a continuance. Justin said that one Shawsheen River Boat Launch must be ADA Compliant and that everyone tells him that Shawsheen Pines is the best site for the ADA Boat Launch. So, we should not build a non-compliant version there, until we know where the ADA site is going to be!

Janet brought up the need to clarify some on-going issues such as access to boat ramps, with the Architectural Access Board (AAB) and Justin, Bob Douglas, and herself will meet with William Joyce of the AAB in the next week or so. Janet explained that under ADA, if programs are made available for the general public, there are civil rights protections which mandate access to these programs for people with disabilities. AAB is the state's Regulatory Board. This means that if a program such as boating or kayaking is available on the Shawsheen River, access to the same is required for people with disabilities-- and there must be ADA compliant access.

Justin noted, for example, that playgrounds in town were designed to comply with AAB and ADA regulations. Janet, Justin and Bob will work with the architect to determine costs, as well as ways to meet the legal and holistic needs of these recreational programs.

Discussion about the Conservation and ADA regulations for kayaking and hiking trails were discussed. Ellen noted that the former railroad bed, now a "rail trail" might be a viable hiking site for ADA compliance as it is level. Additional access to Pomp's Pond was also discussed.

Ellen noted there are 7 Conservation Commissioners who are involved with these issues. Andover is a challenge for access due to its hills and rocky terrain, but if there is one site in the community for each feature such as a boat launch, then we meet the ADA access regulations.

Announcements

Justin announced there will be Virtual CAM2 ADA Advanced Training on May 6, 2022. Andover will host, and Janet and Steve plan to attend. On June 9, 2022, there will be a Virtual COD Regional Meeting in lieu of the ACOD June meeting. Andover will host, all local Commissions on Disability are invited.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 25, at 6:30 PM Virtual

Adjournment:

It was moved, by Jemma, seconded by Eileen and voted 7-0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 PM.

Roll Call: Trish, Y; Eileen, Y; Kathleen, Y; Rebecca, Y; Jemma, Y; Steve, Y; Justin, Y.