

Andover Commission on Disability—September 28, 2016 Committee Meeting

After the agenda was duly posted and distributed, the meeting was convened on Wednesday, September 28, 2016, at 6:35 p.m. in the Memorial Hall Library, Activity Room, Lower Level.

Present Chair Julie Pike, Stephen Surette, Justin Coppola Jr. Justin Coppola Sr. and guest Ellen Townson of the Conservation Commission. (*Note: Julie reported that Justin Sr. was approved by the Selectmen to be an ACOC commission member*)

Minutes Stephen made a motion to accept the August 24th meeting minutes and Justin Jr. seconded. Unanimously approved.

Update on Haggetts Pond Trail--Ellen Townson, Conservation Commissioner, Conservation Commission thanked ACOD members for the FY'16 ACOD donation. She reported that the donation was much appreciated and went toward funding an engineering study of the proposed accessible handicap parking lot at the entrance to the Haggetts Pond rail trail.

Ellen reiterated that the Conservation Commission's goal has been and continues to be making access to the "rail trail" along the pond accessible to as many people as possible, by addressing a broad range of ambulatory issues. For example the location of the parking lot was based on ADA compliance considerations and physical logistics of the area. Not only were entrance, grading and slopes of the land considered but also other access issues such as the need for compostable toilets, safety railings and benches along the trail. Access from the trail to the waters' edge was measured at .6 mile from parking lot.

The parking lot area was chosen based on its proximity to the water as noted above, among other access-related considerations. Two things were discussed related to the proposed ADA compliant parking lot:

- An information kiosk which will be ADA-accessible will be placed on site before the trail starts and will provide pertinent notices regarding the trail and pond.
- Tim Turbett, a rail trail conservation overseer (duties involve notifying animal control officer for off-leash dogs or other animal related issues and keeping the trails clean of refuse) owns a home 75 feet away from the proposed parking area/entrance on Haggetts Pond road. He has made his opposition known that locating the parking lot at the proposed site would not be acceptable due to the proximity to his house and he wishes to locate it at another entrance to the pond-- which is much further away from the water and is not ADA compliant.

Ellen also talked about her desire to fund other access related projects in conservation areas to allow all citizens regardless of their abilities to enjoy the natural spaces in Andover. She will be in touch as needed with ACOD.

Julie asked Ellen about the proposed plaque which would be attached to or placed near the information kiosk which would honor the memory of former ACOD member/President Maddy St. Amand. Maddy was involved in disability issues for several decades. Ellen noted that the plaque will be affixed to the kiosk later when it is actually installed.

Ellen also reported that due to the dog waste which is significant along the trail, there may be a proposal to ban dogs from the trail as owners don't seem to be cleaning up after them.

Since all members present participated in the September 22 "walk-through" of the Haggetts Pond trail—joining roughly 30 others-- including Joe Connolly, Director of Community Services, a brief discussion ensued about the many positive aspects of the soon- to-be accessible trail.

Old Business – Updates

- Spot Checks: Stephen reported that starting next Wednesday, ramp work and pot hole repairs will start and work on River Street in Ballardvale should be starting next week also.
- Julie reported that she is in the process of reaching out to a potential ACOD candidate.
- With respect to upcoming projects, Justin Sr. advocated for community/accessible trails being a good choice for ongoing support.

New Business

- **Abilities Expo**—Justin and Justin attended the September 17th "Abilities Expo" Annual Event at the Boston Convention Center and brought back to the commission a fact sheet on latest products and services for the disability community and their caregivers. *Action Item: Julie will encourage all commission members to attend the exhibition next year.*
- **Meeting with Town Manager**—Julie reported that she reviewed the highlights of ACOD's accomplishments over the last year and that Town Manager Andrew Flanagan and Director of Community Services Joe Connolly will be at next months' ACOD meeting. Julie also reported that Selectman Bob Landry is liaison to ACOD *Action Item: Stephen, Justin Sr. and Justin Jr. will send "best of" ACOD photos relative to issues that have cropped up, to Julie for her to select for" talking points" at the October meeting. Julie will contact Bernadette to see what she could have ready for the meeting.*

- **Access complaint:** Julie related a complaint regarding Karma restaurant—a woman and her son with a service dog were denied entry to the restaurant. The police were called and they suggested the woman contact ACOD. When she did, Julie got in touch with MOD (Massachusetts Office on Disability)
Action Item: Julie will follow up with MOD and also ask Jeff Dougan from that agency if guidelines are available for this type of situation.
- **Website:** Justin Sr. proposed that he and Justin Jr. will handle ACOD updates to the town web-site.

Adjournment: At 8:15 p.m. Justin Jr. made a motion to adjourn and Stephen seconded. Unanimously approved.

Next meeting:

October 26, 2016 at 6:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Susan McKelliget