

Andover Commission on Disability—October 26, 2016 Committee Meeting

After the agenda was duly posted and distributed, the meeting was convened on Wednesday, October 26, 2016, at 6:40 p.m. in the Memorial Hall Library, Activity Room, Lower Level.

Present Chair Julie Pike, Stephen Surette, Bernadette Lionetta, Justin Coppola Sr., Justin Coppola Jr., and guest Director of Community Services Joe Connolly

Minutes Stephen made a motion to accept the September 28, 2016 meeting minutes and Justin Jr. seconded. Unanimously approved.

Old Business – Updates

Member Discussion on ACOD business—In order to acquaint Director Connolly with ACOD activities, Julie opened the discussion with a series of photos showing access problems brought to the attention of ACOD which were subsequently fixed.

Photos included a light pole at Old Town Hall placed at the bottom of a handicap ramp; curbs blocking pedestrian crossings; hydrants and poles in the middle of sidewalks; and lack of curb cuts at town buildings.

A general discussion followed, about ACOD's role as an advisory commission, which also sponsors projects in their earliest stages in the hope that town funding will follow. In addition to ACOD's ongoing role in assisting with compliance of new and rehabbed construction and specifications of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), ACOD is or has been involved with the following:

- **My Own Voice** a choral group for children with disabilities which also sings with the New England Treble Chorus and attends concerts. Bernadette noted that it will be 5 years since this program started, beginning with 4 children and now including nearly 50 children with a broad range of disabilities.
- **Kids on the Block**, a puppet program for school age children, explains autism to them and also began as an ACOD sponsored program
- **Project Lifesaver**, sponsored initially by ACOD now under the purview of the Andover Police Department to assist in locating lost or wandering individuals
- **LockBox Program**—sponsored initially by ACOD now under the purview of Andover Fire Department uses boxes containing keys to a residence for use by the fire department in case of emergency.
- **Community Garden** at the Center at Punchard—ACOD funded for 2 years as a start up
- **Accessible projects**—ACOD is involved in reviewing architects' plans for school buildings, playgrounds, and the like for accessibility issues and is

involved in ongoing sidewalk studies, handicap parking, and basic access with most of its members trained in Community Access Monitoring Training.

General discussion among members and Director Connolly followed.

In particular, Director Connolly talked about his experience in Arlington as Recreation Director with respect to factoring in at the outset access issues so that appropriate design is built into the overall planning piece. In that community, a team was hired to look at the entire spectrum of disability issues. Joe mentioned the possibility of a study at the Poms' Pond and Recreation Park sites. Tennis courts and pickle ball are now inaccessible.

Studies on access are critical in communities to ensure best practices and to avoid costly re-dos when non-compliant or even dangerous conditions are not considered. (An example in Arlington of water drains which could have been a problem for someone using a cane was brought up by Director Connolly.)

Bernadette and Justin Sr. noted that it might be a good idea to put forth a warrant article for such a best practices plan for all town projects.

Julie noted that ACOD is involved with walk-throughs of buildings to ensure ADA compliance on things architects might miss. Signage, counter heights and access ramps are some of the areas typically targeted during these walk-throughs.

New Business: Action Item: Julie reported that a few emails have come in and she will respond to them.

Announcements: Action Item: Bernadette will send information to Susan McKelliget on wrist bracelets that have imbedded medical information pertaining to the wearer. She will check into the cost of these bracelets and Susan will email members with information.

Adjournment: At 8:18 p.m. Bernadette made a motion to adjourn and Justin Sr. seconded. Unanimously approved.

Next meeting:

November 30, at 6:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Susan McKelliget