

Andover Commission on Disability

Meeting Minutes February 25, 2015

After the agenda was duly posted and distributed, the meeting was convened on Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at 6:40 p.m. in the Memorial Hall Library, Activity Room, Lower Level.

Present: Co-Chairs Sarah Paterson and Jennifer Samaras, Maddy St. Amand, Julie Pike, Bernadette Lionetta, Justin Coppola Jr., Ruth Rosensweig, and Donna Gorzela. **Also Present:** Former Chair Justin Coppola Sr.

Minutes: Ruth made a motion to accept the December 16, 2014 minutes and Julie seconded, unanimously approved. (January meeting was canceled)

Old Business – Updates

Spot Checks: roads, sidewalks, signage--Stephen was not present and Julie had no new reports.

MOD Report: Maddy reported on a letter she received from from the Director of the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) Myra Berloff. The letter noted an upcoming AG opinion and or regulations on a possible to change to the Open Meeting Law. Specifically, the letter mentioned the possibility of a change allowing local disability commissions to use remote voting to meet quorums for a vote, ***Action Item: Maddy will continue to provide updates as they become available on this issue.***

New Business

Maddy announced the transfer of her acting chair position to the new co-chairs-- Sarah Paterson and Jennifer Samaras. The commission thanked Maddy for her dedication in that position and welcomed the new co-chairs.

Upcoming survey/inspection projects:

Youth Center--Justin Sr. reported that the original blue-prints have been reviewed and no access issues have been raised to date but there will be a walk-through in the Spring.

Ballardvale Playground Update--Sarah, Jennifer, and Maddy recently visited the Ballardvale playground which recently received final approval of the Historic District Commission. Discussion followed regarding upgrades and a few remaining access issues. The three reported favorably on the ADA -compliant swing-sets and other playground equipment and walkways/pathways. Full ADA compliance and playground opening are anticipated for this Spring.

ACOD Website – Jennifer set up a monitor so that the commission could review the “look and feel” of other town organization’s websites, and also other town disability commission websites in order to consider best features for possible consideration in a future ACOD update. Discussion followed regarding whether to put meeting information such as meeting times and minutes on line, and there was a consensus to use commission member names but not their emails on any new proposed site. There was general agreement that photos of ACOD events such as Andover Days and logos which are useful to the public would be included. It was agreed that a new ACOD website is desirable especially now, that the town web site is undergoing design changes. *Action Item: ACOD will track town website changes and continue to consider appropriate content and design which best fits its need within the parameters of the new town site.*

Discussion--General discussion about possible collaboration with other Andover organizations that have missions regarding people with disabilities followed. Discussion included:

Andover Community Trust-Ruth reported on the continued need to build new homes with “no-step entries” and wasn’t sure if there were any building plans making this basic access available in town. *Action Item: Ruth will contact Susan Stott of the ACT (who presented at ACOD a while back) about updates concerning any proposed building of homes with “no-step entries.” On a separate matter,*

Ruth mentioned that she will work on updating the MHL website with regard to the the ACOD link.

Challenge Unlimited-- This organization was discussed as an example of a possible local organization serving residents with disabilities --and potential collaboration/connection with ACOD. Also, there may be development of reciprocal links on both websites if there is pertinent information to serve the local community as ACOD's web site is updated.*Action Item: Bernadette offered to contact the executive director to find out whether having a liaison to Ironstone from ACOD makes sense.*

School associations and other ideas--Julie reported she attends various town meetings and has noted that accommodations (such as microphones for the hearing impaired) are not always and uniformly provided. General discussion followed, that as part of ACOD's education/advisory role, it would be a good idea for all board members attending public meetings to be be aware of access issues --wheel chair access through narrow aisles at meetings was brought up-- to ensure accommodations are made where appropriate. Julie also brought up some news items; one involved an ongoing sidewalk and facilities access issue in Methuen that involves a 10 year old lawsuit/court agreement with no resolution to date; and the other announcing the previously noted Ballardvale playground Historic Building Commission approval.

Announcements

Maddy reported that the next available CAM training won't be until the fall of 2015 and mentioned the dates and locations for ACOD consideration. *Action Item: Members will decide on whether they will attend upcoming training in the Fall, and Maddy will keep ACOD apprised of a "201" CAM course that Jeff Dougan of MOD may be offering--exact date unknown at this time.*

Adjournment

Bernadette made a motion to adjourn at 8:10 p.m. and Justin Jr. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Next meeting: March 25th 6:30 pm

Memorial Hall Library, Activity Room, Lower Level

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McKelliget