

Meeting Minutes
Andover Commission on Disability
May 28, 2014

After the agenda was duly posted and distributed, the meeting was convened on Wednesday, May 28, 2014 at 6:38 p.m. in the Memorial Hall Library, Activity room, Lower Level.

Present: Maddy St.Amand (Acting Chair), Julie Pike, Jennifer Samaras, Donna Gorzela, Bernadette Lionetta, Sarah Paterson, Ruth Rosensweig, Justin Coppola Jr., Stephen Surette.

Also Present: Justin Coppola Sr. (former ACOD Chair)

Minutes: Stephen made a motion to accept the April 30, 2014 minutes and Justin Jr. seconded; unanimously approved.

Old Business / Updates

Placard Abuse: Maddy clarified that placard abuse occurs when people other than those for whom the placard is intended, use the placard for handicap parking. She has discussed this issue with Police Chief Keefe and police are authorized to issue fines (\$500) to enforce appropriate use. ACOD's assistance in identifying problem areas—places where abuse is occurring more often than other areas would be useful. Justin Sr. clarified that although handicap spaces are for use by plate/placard holders, drivers of people with disabilities may also use such spaces if a disabled person is present in the car.

Spot Checks: Stephen reported that he is tracking a request for a cross walk to be paved/painted at the Free Christian Church. He noted that the crossing problem at the Essex street railroad crossing -- owned by (B&M) tracks has been successfully resolved. This issue was raised by ACOD over six years ago.

Action Item: *Justin Sr. will provide Stephen with information on missing/inadequate signage through-out the town.*

Bancroft School Site Visit—On May 16, 2014, Maddy, Justin Sr., Justin Jr., Julie, and Sarah visited the “new” Bancroft School currently under construction along with Ed Ataide and others. Justin Sr. passed around copies of his Bancroft School ADA Review-- #1 an “interim report” -- as the site was not ready for a final (for accessibility) design review. Justin submitted this report to the town which included the following:

The need to address access issue regarding an **audio/visual cabinet** protruding into the handicap entrance which in turn leads into the ramp up to the platform/stage entrance in the cafeteria. (This particular handicap entrance has been discussed in previous minutes) and the A/V cabinet is the latest issue which still needs to be addressed. Justin Sr. also asked for clarification on whether there should be two (rather than just the existing one) set of **handrails** for the cafeteria steps leading to the platform.

Although **access to the lobby via the front door** of the school was not completed—not paved yet—Justin Sr. noted that it appeared that the lobby floor was smooth and did not pose a tripping hazard. The **lobby entrance counters** seem to be an acceptable height for wheel chair users. The Bancroft site seems to be on track for a September opening, with paved side-walks and the demolition of the original school occurring prior to a final walk-through. Sarah mentioned that the **Braille signs** are at fixed at the highest level allowable--60” which would be difficult for the younger children to reach. **Action Item: Justin Sr. to touch base with Ed Ataide about whether the Braille signage could be re-positioned at this point to a lower and more accessible height for all children.**

Outdoor dining – As proposed in an earlier meeting, Maddy explained that when eating establishments seek building permit applications it would be helpful to have an enclosure outlining basic ADA specifications, especially regarding furniture. This would also fulfill an important ACOD educational/awareness goal. Maddy distributed a draft enclosure for committee review. There

was general agreement that this information would be useful and is to include the international accessibility logo. It was also agreed that our ACOD approval decal would be awarded to facilities that meet compliance. Currently, 12 restaurants in Andover have outdoor dining.

New Business

Melmark School Project Offer—The Melmark School on River Road is seeking to continue to develop the site as a residential facility for autistic children in the Andover area. Jennifer and Bernadette recently visited with Melmark administrators in a “meet and greet” session to share respective goals and activities. Two Programs described by Melmark appeared to be of interest for support from ACOD. The first, which involves Andover High School’s Community Service program— students act as peer mentors to Melmark New England (MNE) children in recreational and other events. The High School Students work with the children on a variety of arts and crafts projects and may accompany students and staff on visits to parks and other area attractions. A need for funding some of the arts and crafts supplies for these residential children the **amount of \$500** was submitted to the committee for its consideration.

A second possible ACOD FY2013 Program Sponsorship discussed involves support for a pilot program with MNE for a vocational horticultural program. This involves local partners such as Whole Foods Market and a Lowell non-profit that provides gardening training to help the students learn gardening skills. A proposal in the **amount of \$1,000** was discussed which includes a training program, supplies (soil, plants, tools). Jennifer made a motion to accept the Melmark Peer Mentors request for funding for \$500 and the Horticulture program request for \$1000. Bernadette seconded. Unanimously passed. These funding amounts need to be committed by July 1.

Maddy made a motion that the balance of ACOD annual funding— **approximately \$400**—be used to allow for an ACOD presence at

the September Andover Days event. The cost would be \$175 for table and space rental; \$175 for updated ACOD brochures and bookmarks which would be on display at the table and used for other events; \$50 for refreshments at the table. Sarah seconded and passed unanimously. Need to commit the \$400 for spending in September. **Action Item: Maddy will follow through on budget requests.**

Announcements: Committee members to consider which month, July or August to take a break from monthly meetings.

Adjournment: Julie made a motion to adjourn at 7:55 Bernadette seconded. Unanimously approved

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 25, 6:30 pm

Memorial Hall Library, Activity Room, Lower Level

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McKelliget