

Meeting Minutes
Andover Commission on Disability
Memorial Hall Library Activity Room
June 26, 2013

After the agenda was duly posted and distributed, the meeting was convened on Wednesday, June 26, 2013 at 6:35 pm.

Present: Maddy St.Amand (Acting Chair), Julie Pike, Stephen Surette, Patricia Commane, Justin Coppola Jr., Ruth Rosensweig, Nancy Hogan, and Jade Perry.

Minutes: Julie made a motion to accept the May 22, 2013 minutes, Stephen seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business / Updates

- **Visitable Home Initiative**—Ruth reported that John Pearson from Andover Community Trust (ACT) who spoke at our April meeting, gave the Commission’s “handout” to the Boston Society of Architects Residential Design Committee for review/discussion at their recent board meeting. Susan Stott, also of ACT, shared the “handout” and information about accessible homes with a contact she has with Habitat for Humanity. There is question of Ruth and others presenting the concept at future meetings. **Action Item: Ruth will continue to coordinate outreach of this home building initiative to make homes more easily accessible.**
- **Online Resource Directory**— Pat reported that two Andover High School students have shown interest in the web development and research/content portion of the proposed updated resource directory for people with disabilities in the Merrimack Valley Area. They are Chris Primes and Emily Wilson. **Action Item: Justin will set up a preliminary meeting during the week of July 11th with Paul Puzanghera IT Director, Pat, Justin, and Bernadette to get this project started.**
- **Lock Box Program for Seniors and Disabled**—Maddy attended a meeting on June 13 with the board of directors of TRIAD to discuss ACOD’s potential sponsorship of a Lock Box Program

similar to one in Danvers, which has been discussed at previous meetings. Geared to the elderly and disabled, lockboxes manufactured by a company called “Kidde” sell for about \$67.00 each. Provision will be made for a subsidy for those unable to cover the cost and the program will be under the administration of the Fire (or Fire and Police) Department.

Pat made a motion that ACOD transfer \$5K from its 2013 budget to TRIAD for the initial equipment and installation of the Lock Box Program. Jade seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

New Business

- **Spot Checks** Elm Street –Julie and Ruth discussed access along one of the sidewalks on Elm street heading into town. Ruth “test-wheeled” the sidewalk and met with many obstructions, some requiring widening of the walk and removal of “sand areas” within the walk. Overgrown brush from neighboring properties was also a problem. **Action Item: Stephen is aware of this and it will be addressed by the Highway Department. Also discussed and brought to Julie and Stephen’s attention is the sidewalk damage at Wheeler and Bartlett Street noted by Bernadette at an earlier meeting.**
- **June 7 COD Conference in Marlborough**—Maddy reported this was a well attended group of disability commissions from towns and cities across the state. A brief discussion ensued among members who attended, about such ongoing problems as public transportation into and within the city of Boston with Justin Jr. explaining the obstacles this creates in seeking work. Another state-wide issue brought up was lack of sufficient public housing which involves long wait lists for people with disabilities.
- **Considerations for ACOD**--Maddy mentioned that disability commissions often have problems when Committee Chairs leave and there is no “grooming” of a replacement leading to a lack of effective continuity on the Board. Unfortunately, this has led to dissolution of some commissions. To prevent this happening with ACOD, Maddy would like to ensure that one or more of the ACOD

members are sufficiently trained in the many facets of the Chair position. Maddy also discussed the possibility of creating a Co-Chair position to better handle the Commission's workload. Maddy also noted she receives many building plans complete with blueprints from the Architectural Access Board for her review and comment which require a lot of time to process and evaluate.

Action Item: Maddy asked that Commission members be on the lookout for area architects who might be willing to volunteer time to review the blueprints and make recommendations to the ACOD.

- **Upcoming Board Meetings.** The Commission reviewed the 2013-14 meeting schedule and decided not to meet on November 26 as it is the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, just as the next planned meeting time is the Wednesday before Christmas. The Commission members agreed to meet December 3d. ACOD will meet as planned on July 24th 2013 and not have a formal meeting in August. Subcommittees will meet informally in August.

Announcements

News articles –Julie mentioned a recent Townsman article about AHS student cheerleaders mentoring students with disabilities.

Adjournment:

Julie made a motion to adjourn, Justin seconded and unanimously passed.

Next meeting: **Wednesday, July 24, 2013, 6:30 pm**
Activity Room, Lower Level, Memorial Hall Library

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McKelliget

Attachment: calendar of meeting dates