

Meeting Minutes
Andover Commission on Disability
March 28, 2012

Present: Maddy St.Amand, Bernadette Lionetta, Justin Coppola, Jr., Ruth Rosensweig, Julie Pike, Stephen Surrette, and Susan McKelliget. Guests: Jeff Dougan, Justin Coppola, Sr.

Minutes: The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. Julie made a motion to accept the March 22, 2012 minutes. Justin seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business—Program Updates:

- Jeff Dougan from the Massachusetts Office on Disability was present for the entire meeting. In order to reserve time for discussion, Old Business listed on the agenda was tabled to the next meeting. Stephen reported that work was in progress on all the identified areas recommended for improvement.
- Maddy distributed newly printed colored pamphlets showcasing the concept of building new houses with no-step access into and within the homes. Ruth brought this concept to the attention of the commission about a year ago, and continues to fine tune the message i.e. (re-naming the term “visitability” to “basic access”) as part of the overall attempt to introduce this house building concept into the community. The pamphlets will be distributed to the information stations at the library, Old Town Hall, Town Offices and the Planning and Development department.
Action Item: Julie and Stephen will contact Ruth about picking up the pamphlets for distribution.
- Maddy handed out copies of the ACOD 2011 Annual Report submitted to the Town, which summarized ongoing commission activities as well as emphasized that ACOD’s modest budget is directed to one-time only proposals or new program initiatives for special needs individuals. She also distributed copies of the recently completed Access Issues Report of the School Department, conducted by Kessler McGuinness & Associates. The commission’s parking lot study of last summer was submitted as part of the Plant and Facilities coordination of this study. Superintendent Ed Ataide’s thorough comprehension of these matters and pursuit of renovation was commended.

New Business—Program Proposals

At the February meeting, the commission approved a motion to give \$1,000 to NEADS (National Education for Assistance Dogs Service) to help purchase a trained service dog for Jami Cope of Andover. This was not subsequently approved by the accounting department and Maddy will seek other sources of possible funding, such as the Towle Fund.

Bernadette put forward **three** proposals for the commissions’ consideration of funding. The specifics of the proposals are attached to these minutes with costs and number of people to be served outlined for each.

The **first** proposal is a “**Peer Mentoring Program**” for middle school students who are not able to participate in typical after school activities. The idea would be to recruit High School students to accompany students from the three middle schools to go downtown and participate in “structured” activities such as purchasing greeting cards for upcoming events, or getting an ice-cream. Andover Youth Services would administer the program. It was proposed that ACOD would provide initial funding of \$600 to allow 6 outings with 10 kids and 10 helpers. ***Bernadette made a motion for ACOD to provide the sum of \$600 to help fund a “Middle School Peer Mentoring Program. Julie seconded and unanimously passed.***

The **second** proposal is called “**My Own Voice—Treble Chorus**”. The Treble Chorus of New England is starting a new choral program for children and young adults with special needs to be called “My Own Voice”. It was proposed that ACOD would help fund the start-up costs of this program. The costs involve musical supplies such as rhythm sticks, a drum, and sheet music.

Bernadette made a motion to provide \$550 to help fund My Own Voice, a special needs program of the Treble Chorus of New England. Stephen seconded and unanimously passed.

The **third** proposal was for **IPOD Printers** which would allow 15 to 20 students with special needs at Doherty Middle School who currently have IPAD and IPOD Touch devices (but no printers). It was proposed that ACOD provide funds for one printer for each grade and one for the teachers.

Bernadette made a motion that ACOD provides the sum of \$593.85 to help fund IPOD printers for special needs students at Doherty Middle School. Stephen seconded and unanimously passed.

Ruth made a further motion for ACOD to approve additional funding if needed to cover additional shipping or taxes on the purchases for the above proposals. Julie seconded the motion which passed.

Guest Speaker: Jeff Dougan

Maddy introduced Jeff Dougan, Director of Community Services from the Massachusetts Office on Disability. Jeff visited ACOD about a year ago to encourage dialogue with the commission and provide updated information from the state and federal levels on disability issues. He distributed several packets of information including fact sheets for the revised regulations implementing Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which apply to public/state and local government entities and private businesses and places of accommodation. Jeff also discussed in general, employer tax credits for ADA-related eligible access expenditures, service animals, correctional facilities, and requirements for new construction and alterations. He noted that compliance with the revised 2010 regulations for new construction and alterations became effective March 15, 2012.

There was a question and answer period including upcoming training, the regrouping and activities of other town commissions, and improving accessibility at voting stations.

Adjournment

Julie made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Bernadette. The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

*Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 25, 2012, 7 p.m.
Activity Room, Memorial Hall Library*

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McKelliget