

Andover Commission on Disability—April 26, 2017 Committee Meeting

After the agenda was duly posted and distributed, the meeting was convened on Wednesday, April 26, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. at the Memorial Hall Library, Activity Room

Present: Chair Julie Pike, Donna Gorzela, Justin Coppola Sr., Justin Coppola Jr., and Stephen Surette

Minutes: Justin Sr. made a motion to accept the March 22, 2017 meeting minutes and Steve seconded. Approved.

New Business

Julie introduced invited guest Frank O'Connor, Vice- Chair of the Andover Housing Authority. The Commission may be involved in some upcoming forums on the issue of housing for the disabled population in Andover and it wished to better understand the Authority's involvement—if any--with this type of housing. The Housing Authority is an independently elected Board with staff and receives state subsidies and no town funding.

Justin Sr. asked a number of questions regarding the purview of the Housing Authority and Mr. O'Connor responded to the following key points. There are currently 218 elderly one bedroom units; 56 family units (one of which is wheelchair accessible) and 127 private units in town which are subsidized under the Federal Section 8 program. If an individual or family is income eligible they may move among various section 8 housing units—so long as they remain eligible. Many are deemed eligible under federal SSI provisions.

- Tenants are charged 30% of income.
- There is no plan to increase housing stock due to anticipated federal budget cuts.
- Railroad street units are privately-owned section 8 housing.
- 10% of units are occupied by people with disabilities
- Wait-list for Elderly Housing is 2 years, families and people with disabilities, is 8 years.
- Julie asked if veterans get preference, and they do.

Julie handed out copies of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's "Home Modification Loan Program" She also suggested that ACOD attend the 2023 Regional Housing Plan on May 15, 2017 to learn more about the 5-Year Housing Plan Andover will be participating in as part of the requirements of the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Justin Sr. responded that he would like to see ACOD's plan have a requirement, incorporated into the town's by-laws that a percentage (12%) of all new residential multi- housing units in Andover be constructed according to "Easy Access" guidelines. *Action Item: Justin Sr. will get copies of the brochures on Easy Access printed up in addition to ensuring there is an ample supply available of ACOD's brochures.*

Old Business – Updates

- **Spot Checks:** Steve reported that he and Deputy Director/Highway Superintendent Andover Parks Superintendent Marc Fournier will be attending an upcoming ADA training session pertaining to design of curbs and ramps
- **Bylaws:** Justin Sr. completed amendments to the ACOD by-laws to accurately reflect current ACOD practices. They now comply with the town's Open Meeting Laws. *Justin Sr. made a motion to accept the amended bylaws and Steve seconded. Unanimously passed*
- **Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act Improvement Grant Program** Justin Sr. reported on the Town's Application for an ADA improvement grant offered by Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD). The application seeks funding for an audio enhancement system called "Top Cat" in the Andover schools. There are currently a few such audio enhancement systems in place which have been extremely successful. "Top cat" would ideally be available in every class in town.
- Julie wrote a letter of support to the Director of MOD on the grant
- **Vacancy:** Donna is now officially listed on the Town Web site as an ACOD member. There are still 3 openings remaining.

New Business

Julie reported that she and Justin Sr. and Justin Jr. attended the Regional Commission on Disability Meeting in Brookline yesterday. Justin Jr. reported that MOD's "Call for Art and Juried Art Exhibition" on the theme of "Breaking Barriers" will select and publicly exhibit some of the works in late 2017. MOD also discussed upcoming Municipal ADA Improvement Grants, Massachusetts regulation up- dates, CAM trainings and Handicap Parking violations reporting practices among some (mainly un-funded) CODs.

Announcement:

Julie announced that there will be a Triad-sponsored "Free Senior and non-Senior Disabled Photo IDs" event on Friday, May 26, 2017 at 9:30 AM. Proof of I.D. is required. Call for reservations at 978-623-8321

Adjournment: Justin Jr. made a motion to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. Donna seconded. Approved.

Next meeting: May 24, 2017 at 6:30PM Memorial Hall Library, Activity Room, Lower Level

Respectfully Submitted
Susan McKelliget