

Meeting Minutes
Andover Commission on Disability
March 23, 2011

Present: Maddy St.Amand, Ruth Rosensweig, Pat Commene, Julie Pike, Justin Coppola Jr., and Susan McKelliget.

Minutes: The meeting began at 7:06 p.m. Julie made a motion to accept the February 23, 2011 minutes. Justin seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved. **Note: ACOD has been notified that meeting minutes cannot be posted online at this time.**

Old Business—Program Updates

Project Lifesaver—In abeyance at this time. *Action Item:* Pat will make a last attempt to reach Lieutenant Pathiakas to find out whether the idea of providing ramps for access to homes for the disabled on a temporary basis is a feasible idea. In addition, ACOD would perhaps provide a small grant for funding for Project Lifesaver if needed at this time.

Kids on the Block— In affiliation with Best Buddies Program and the Doherty Middle School, three puppets which are part of the Autism Awareness Program were purchased by ACOD and will be part of training in the 2011 school year. *Action Item:* Maddy will call Bernadette to find out the date for the upcoming puppet show.

Visitability Concept—ACOD continues to explore the feasibility of adopting a visitability or more aptly described “basic access” concept in Andover based on existing models. The concept would encourage development of homes with basic access for the disabled such as zero-step entrances and entrances that are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs. Ruth handed out a pamphlet produced by an organization in Georgia called “Concrete Change” which promotes basic access in new construction. The pamphlet provides brief narratives along with color photographs of how basic access works to the advantage of homeowners. *Action Item:* Ruth will forward copies of this pamphlet to her contact in Natick who is advancing this concept in that town. Ruth will offer a commission letter of support of this concept for future advocacy.

Annual Report—On behalf of ACOD, Maddy produced the Andover Commission on Disability’s 2010 Report outlining its mission, goals, and accomplishments of the past calendar year. The full Annual Report is available at the Town Clerk’s office.

New Business

Maddy distributed an updated ACOD membership list and asked members to make any needed corrections and be aware of term expirations as a few members’ appointments expire in June of 2011. She explained the letters expected from the Town Clerk and the need to formally acknowledge willingness to continue serving. This is followed by re-appointment by the Board of Selectmen.

Review of Town of Andover Master Plan—The Town’s goals and visions are included in the Town Master Plan which includes information about town services, open space, housing, economic development and the like for future planning. *Action Item:* Maddy, Pat and Jami will review the plan and attend upcoming meetings in April regarding the Town Plan.

Ongoing and Potential Commission Efforts

- ***Handicap parking survey***—Completion of this survey will be a top ACOD priority as will completion of handicap parking painting which was put on hold during the snow season. There may be some re-positioning and therefore re-painting of some spaces. *Action Item:* Julie, Stephen and Maddy are working together toward this end. Urgency due to spring weather – report is due to the Plan & Facilities Dept. and the Highway Dept. for lining corrections.
- ***Identification of Needed curb cuts***— Tabled for tonight—*Action Item:* Stephen will report back to ACOD next month on curb cuts.
- ***Restaurant guide to Andover***—Last year, Maddy did some preliminary work toward assessing some of the town’s restaurants for accessibility. *Action Item:* ACOD must decide whether to complete the survey format and site reviews in order to publish an Andover Restaurant Guide. It would include information on accessibility with respect to parking, elevators, entrances, and rest rooms to inform the public which restaurants are disability friendly.
- ***Transportation to medical appointments*** - After a brief discussion about local transportation to medical appointments for the disabled, Justin agreed to research the Merrimack Valley Transportation Authority (MVTA) EZ Trans program regarding current service for medical appointments, and report back to ACOD
- ***Shawsheen Plaza Handicap and Parking Access***—Maddy initiated contact with one of the company representatives of the holding company of the property, called “The Guys of Andover Incorporated.” Maddy intends to request time to review the plans and site with this group regarding potential access issues.
- ***Playground Issues:*** Discussions and activity regarding the South school playground are on hold until after Town Meeting when budgets are finalized. Maddy spoke with Ed Ataade about the consideration of a road and parking access behind the Sanborn school, lack of which prevents a disabled father from getting to see his son’s games. We are expecting an answer on this matter.

ACOD Grant Considerations

- ***Temporary ramps concept***—Pat noted that she had a conversation with a contact at the fire department, regarding the possibility of using ramps on a temporary basis to assist with home access for the disabled. ACOD is willing to expend a small grant award to further this endeavor if storage and liability matters do not become issues.

- **Noise-Cancelling Headphones**--Pat reported that there may be a need for noise cancelling headphones in certain school classrooms in case of a fire drill or emergency evacuation procedure at the schools. Pat learned from her contact at the fire department that there are a few children who, due to their disability, require such headphones for a safe exit with their classroom. ACOD will consider whether this is a need which could be funded.
- **Funding of Memorial Auditorium Signs**--Julie reported that the Memorial Auditorium (behind Town Offices) has been renovated but there are no signs at the main door indicating where the handicap entrance is located along with handicap parking. **Action Item:** Tomorrow, Maddy and Ed Ataade are scheduled to do a walk-through and price out the needed signage so that the auditorium is properly signed for walkway, entrance and parking areas. **ACOD Motion/Vote:** Ruth made a motion to allow the ACOD Chairperson to assess signage needs for the auditorium and appropriate needed commission funds (within a few hundred dollars range) to ensure that the newly renovated Memorial Auditorium is appropriately handicap signed. Justin seconded the motion, which passed.
- **Funding Additional Handicap Signs**—ACOD paid for 9 x 12” signs that post the new fine of \$250. for handicap parking violations which are posted on the same pole as the HP designation. There appears to be a need for more of these signs in town such as at the auditorium, gazebo area, town house, veterans’ affairs parking areas and the like. **Action Item:** ACOD will determine the need for additional signs and fund if budget allows.

Adjournment

Pat made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Julie. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Next meeting will be April 20, 2011 at 7 p.m. – a week earlier than usual.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McKelliget