

Meeting Minutes
Andover Commission on Disability
November 30, 2011

Present: Maddy St.Amand, Ruth Rosensweig, Stephen Surette, Bernadette Lionetta, Julie Pike, Pat Commene, and Susan McKelliget.

Minutes: Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. Stephen made a motion to accept the October 26, 2011 minutes. Seconded by Julie.and unanimously approved.

Old Business (Commentary on October Minutes)

Kids on the Block--Bernadette responded to inquiries brought up at the last meeting about the current status of this ACOD-sponsored puppet program by informing the commission that the teacher who had been overseeing the program was recently laid off necessitating a change in oversight. The program will be up and running this year under the supervision of Barbara Murray (a teacher from Doherty who will work with the Best Buddies program), an un-named High School senior, and High School sophomore Angelina Lionetta . A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow.

Sovereign Bank—As previously reported in the minutes, Mike Haggerty (from the Boston Architectural Firm Ginsler Corporation) indicated to Maddy that access modification work at the bank would be finished prior to the new year. However, Maddy noted that she has not seen any recent activity. **Action Item:** Maddy will inquire further into the matter.

Railroad Crossing—**Action Item:** Julie will contact Jamie in an attempt to ascertain what, if any, outstanding issue exists with regard to the recently paved railroad crossing intersection at Essex street. Stephen will be informed and consult with Chris Cronin as to what can be done. Julie and Stephen will then report back to the commission.

Curb Cut Sub-Committee—Julie and Stephen noted that there are no known outstanding curb cut problems so there is no formal report to give Chris Cronin on this matter. Pat asked about whether other heavily travelled areas apart from Main street, such as Ballardvale warrant consideration. Discussion was postponed to New Business.

New Business (Continued discussion)

Proposed Projects

Maddy handed out a “Proposed Project Worksheet for 2011/2012” which indicated the status (e.g. “completed,” “ongoing,” “sponsored and transferred” and “proposals”) for ACOD’s projects.

Projects:

Maddy began with a brief discussion of whether or not ACOD should fund “**Home Alert**” **decals** and the commission ultimately decided against funding.

With respect to the ongoing “**Study of Senior Residents’ Needs with the Council on Aging.**” which is being compiled by the Council on Aging, Maddy proposed, and the commission accepted, a collaborative role whereby ACOD would participate in information sharing where relevant. **Action Item:** ACOD will collaborate where needed with COA Board taking the lead on the study. Maddy will contact Ed Medeiros of the Council on Aging.

Maddy opened up a discussion about the need for formalizing a “**Spot Check**” program for curbs and sidewalk repairs which means commission members would contact Stephen if there are curbs or sidewalks that need to be re-paved for safe access. Steve asked for suggestions about how to prioritize requests and the commission agreed that the initial focus for leveling sidewalks and increasing the number of curb cuts, should involve problem areas within a mile of schools-- particularly the Doherty school since there are numerous uneven sidewalks in the streets contiguous to it. **Action Item:** Julie will ask Jamie if she would like to be part of the sidewalk spotting effort and commission members will actively engage in spotting problem areas to be brought to Stephen’s attention. Spot checks would extend to Ballardvale as well.

Funded Programs:

The commission agreed to remove funding **Sound blocking headphones for SPED** from further consideration.

Maddy opened the remainder of the meeting to commission ideas for proposed ACOD funding or support. *Bernadette proposed funding an ipad which includes “autism apps” as a pilot program for a team of teachers at the Doherty school.* Her son has this ipad currently and the idea is to enhance this experience by providing his teachers a similar ipad. Maddy noted the inherent problem of tracking a piece of technology such as an ipad, but Bernadette responded that the ipad would follow her son’s various teaching teams through out his school years. If the **Pilot ipad Program** proves a useful tool for students with autism, ACOD may consider funding ipads for other students at other schools particularly the High School. **Action Item:** Bernadette will contact Joyce Laundre, Director of Student Services for the town about this proposed pilot project, its cost and management, and report back to the commission.

Bernadette also proposed for consideration the concept ACOD funding expenses for a new **Peer Mentoring Program.** The way this would work is that ACOD would collaborate with Andover Youth Services which would identify children in need of social peer mentoring. For example, a high school student doing community service could accompany a student identified by AYS as needing social contacts-- such as going uptown for an ice cream after school. ACOD would fund the expenses associated with the activity. The commission generally agreed that this was an interesting program to consider funding. No final funding decision. Discussion should ensue with AYS staff.

Maddy asked Ruth if she knew of any needs raised by the public involving library accessibility. Ruth mentioned that there is currently an issue of cars parking right at the end

of the handicap accessible ramp and there was discussion about whether or not a sign above the area would solve this problem. Ruth noted that library director Beth Mazin has been in contact with Ed Ataide on some access issues.

Action Item: Maddy will follow up with Ed Ataide to see if ACOD could be of assistance as they address access issues at the library, especially the door to the parking lot. There seems to be a need to review the reconfiguration of the automatic openers at the rear library door which pose difficulties in opening with a backward reach. This is not possible for some chair users.

Action Item: Maddy will talk with Justin Sr. about the history of the parking lot door decision which presented problems in the past.

Next meeting will be **Wednesday, January 25th, 2012 @ 7 PM** in the Activity Room of the Memorial Hall Library.

Adjournment Julie made a motion to adjourn, Bernadette seconded and so moved.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McKelliget