

Meeting Minutes
Andover Commission on Disability
July 28, 2010

Present: Justin Coppolla Jr., Justin Coppola Sr., Gilbert DeMoor, Julie Pike, Maddy St. Amand, Ruth Rosensweig, Stephen Surette, Bernadette Lionetta, Jeff Dougan,(guest),and Susan McKelliget.

Minutes: The meeting began at 7:07 p.m. Stephen made a motion to accept the June 23, 2010 minutes, Justin Jr. seconded. Unanimously approved.

Old Business

Maddy introduced Jeff Dougan, Assistant Director of Community Services, from the Massachusetts Office on Disability. Jeff periodically attends commission meetings to better get to know commission members and to let members know that he is available as a resource for state and federal disability issues. The commission then updated Jeff on a number of issues of particular interest to the ACOD.

- **Handicap Parking Committee update--** Maddy noted that although the State does not mandate notices be posted informing the public of the new increased fines for handicap parking violations, (from 100 dollars to 200 dollars), the ACOD made a decision to pay for these fee increase notices which are then attached to poles. ACOD bought 10 signs at \$32.50 each as part of its educational outreach component. Also, parking “crosshatch” survey specs will need measurements. **Action Item:** Stephen volunteered to handle this to ensure compliance.
- **Foster’s Pond Project**—As noted in previous Minutes, the town approved the purchase of land at Foster’s Pond for public use at the April 2010 Town Meeting. A group of Foster’s Pond residents are in the process of applying for grant monies to reimburse the town. In the meantime, this group has recently submitted a plan to the town which would cost \$5,000 to address waterfront access plans for all townspeople. However, this project is “on hold” for now. **Action Item:** ACOD will work with the Foster’s Pond group on a consulting basis as plans develop.
- **Visitability concept**—Building new homes voluntarily to conform to basic access requirements has been discussed at length at previous meetings. **Action Item:** Ruth is going to write a concise letter to the Townsman outlining the benefits of this concept for homeowners with or without disabilities and the prospective re-sale advantages of these modest accommodations. Jeff noted that the towns of Natick and Eastham have adopted proposals (which would provide incentives/ or promote the concept) and will provide information to ACOD on their progress.
- **Project Lifesaver**—Bernadette recently spoke with Sgt .John Pathiakas who is the point person on this project from the Andover Police Department. Initially, ACOD sponsored this program which now increased to 13 individuals.

- **Kids on the Block**—Bernadette gave a brief overview of this partly ACOD funded project which in conjunction with designated school staff, students, and advice from Bernadette, produces puppet shows featuring children with various disabilities. The puppet shows are targeted for elementary and middle school age children.

New Business

Jeff reiterated that he tries to attend disability commission meetings to become re-acquainted with members, provide the latest information with respect to federal and state disability issues, and to assure commissions that he is available as a resource on the many issues affecting the disabled population.

Jeff distributed flyers with contact information explaining that within his agency there are basically three main units: Legislation, the Client Services Program, and the Community Services Unit—the unit Jeff works for-- which among other things, involve building codes and access issues. Jeff also distributed yellow “Warning” notices to the commission that can be used by citizens when a person is parked illegally. Published by the MOD, these notices are used by volunteers.

Noting the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Jeff also updated the commission with respect to federal building code regulation changes-- such as rules governing accessible design.

Jeff also distributed information on tax incentives for improving accessibility. There are two tax incentives to help cover the cost of making access improvements. Both tax credits and tax deductions are covered in the materials.

Finally, Jeff distributed information on pending state legislation-- currently in various committees.

Discussion ensued about the evolution of ACOD from its inception to now being on the “punch list” for town building projects, and as an up-front “educational” commission on ways to improve access and avoid potential liability issues. Jeff once again urged ACOD to be in touch if there are any questions on site access issues and the like. Ruth asked about the CAM (Community Access Monitoring) training program and Jeff explained that ADA and the variables of building codes regulations for access, are major components to the training. ACOD has required members to have this training so that when new building designs are proposed, members will know whether access issues are in compliance with the law.

Adjournment

Justin Jr. made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Bernadette.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McKelliget