

Committee on Disability

Minutes –1/14/2016

Present: Marybeth Barker, Jennifer Brooke, Jean Goldsberry (chair) Meryl Schwartz, Alice Van Deusen, Carmin Reiss (Select Board), Kate Hodges (assistant town manager, ADA coordinator), Peter Baty (West Concord Advisory Committee), Judy Keyes (guest), Jonathon Keyes (guest)

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 PM by Jean Goldsberry, chair.

On a duly made and seconded motion, minutes of the 11/17/2015 meeting were approved as written.

Parking at CCHS: Mr. Keyes expressed concerns regarding accessible parking and access at CCHS for Town Meeting (TM). Ms. Hodges reported that there have been multiple meetings with town staff, CCHS personnel and the town moderator regarding the upcoming town meetings and how to best utilize the new high school facility, making it as accessible and welcoming as possible. The decision has been made that the main meeting hall will be the auditorium, with additional seating in the cafeteria and, if needed, the gymnasium. Cars, vans and busses will be able to unload passengers at the “back” bus entrance, facing the Beede Center. This is where the town clerk will set up the registration area. From this area there is direct access with no stairs to auditorium seating. An area on this level with up to 43 seats will be earmarked for those with limited mobility. Additional temporary HP will parking will also be made available. Police, town officials and TM volunteers will be on hand to direct traffic flow and assist all attendees in understanding the new facility and how to access TM. Ms. Hodges also stated that assisted listening devices will be available and, if requested, closed captioning can be provided. The state has devices that, with advanced notice, the town can use. The Disability Committee requested that Ms. Hodges request such a device. Ms. Hodges admitted that, as this is the first time TM is in the new facility, there may be unanticipated issues. The special TM in February

will provide a “dry run” to test out some of the procedures. She had hoped to have the CC system for that meeting, but there are 16 towns in the Minuteman Regional District who are having February town meetings and only eight CC devices in the state and all have been reserved. Ms. Hodges will request the device for the annual TM and work with Mark Howell to see if it is compatible with the technology at CCHS and CCTV. Ms. Hodges also assured the committee that there will be a great deal of information provided to the public through all of the customary channels, including the warrant. The public will be invited to request any additional services and encouraged to submit these requests 30 days in advance of the meetings.

Ms. Hodges said she would attempt to attend as many Committee meetings as possible and requested that the committee appoint a liaison member with whom she could meet on a regular basis. She invited citizens to contact her with any concerns at khodges@concordma.gov and (978)381-3000.

West Concord Parking: Peter Baty, representing the West Concord Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the Planning Board, presented a list of sidewalk issues that the WCAC plans to submit to the DPW for repair and improvement. This list was generated by the WCAC in its efforts to improve connectivity and respond to citizen concerns. He presented the list to the Disability Committee as part of the vetting process prior to submission to the DPW. The committee agreed that all of the identified concerns were “egregious” and should be improved. Mr. Baty described the list as a living document and encouraged the committee or any citizen to submit additional concerns. Such requests may be sent to peterbaty@yahoo.com. Ms. Goldsberry said that the Committee will send a letter of support to Carleen Hempel, chair of the WCAC supporting the list and encouraging the DPW to make this a priority.

Committee or Commission?: The issue of becoming a commission was raised briefly. Ms. Reiss told the Committee that the Committee could submit such a request to the SB and it would be put forth at TM. She reminded the committee that the warrant for the 2017 TM will open in December. The Committee agreed

to study the issue this spring, seeking assistance from Kate Hodges and Jeff Dugan and decide whether or not this is something to pursue.

Miscellaneous: Ms. Goldsberry reported that a letter has been received confirming that the AAB has approved the Heywod Meadows plan.

Parking and accessibility issues remain at the CCHS field. Presumably the School Committee is continuing its efforts as promised. The Committee will look again at the issues when the fields are being prepared for spring use.

Ms. Goldsberry distributed the annual report written by Mr. Holdorf and the announcement of a forum (1/31 – 11:30 am) at First Parish by the National Alliance on Mental Illness. On Tuesday (1/26 – 10 am), the film Lives Worth Living will be shown by the COA.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Van Deusen

