

COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY

Minutes for 4/28/2016

Present: Jean Goldsberry, David Holdorf, Jennifer Brooke, Marybeth Barker, Meryl Schwartz, Lloyd Price, Alice Van Deusen, Concord Police Chief Joseph O'Connor (guest)

Meeting called to order at 5:10 PM. Minutes of 3/10/2016 approved.

Discussion with Police Chief: Chief O'Connor was invited to attend this meeting in order to establish a connection between the goals of this Committee and the goals of the Police Department. The conclusion of the discussion was indeed that the goals are the same---to advocate for and protect the needs of the disabled in our community, to include the particular issues of seniors as well as the physical and mental issues of the disabled. Chief O'Connor outlined his work experience before coming to Concord in 2014. Notably, he spent 24 years with the MBTA Police, ending as Chief Supervisor, and in that capacity became acutely aware of disability and access to services. The various points discussed:

Parking in lots both public and private vis a vis enforcement of use of handicapped spaces.

The possibilities for providing on-street handicapped parking with curbing.

The possible use of parking fines issued for misuse of handicapped spaces.

Awareness and education of both the police and the public in disability issues.

Police officers have been trained in the issues of dementia and autism.

Town Social Worker visits the Police Department regularly.

Police Department ran training program on the issues of PTSD.

Police officers have been spending time observing at Minuteman ARC.

Police and Fire Department share dispatching, so all public safety personnel are regularly informed of particular and individual issues.

Beede Center: The pool lift issue is on-going. Jennifer will follow with Jon Sturgis.

Town Meeting: There was positive feedback on parking, accessibility issues, and the hearing impaired sound system. Jennifer noted, however, that wayfinding both inside and outside the building is difficult.

Committee Membership: With the end of Alice's term, a new member must be found. Members knowing potential new members should encourage them to submit a green card. The issue of the involvement of a Selectman to replace the invaluable counsel of Carmin Reiss as well as the limited involvement of Assistant Town Manager Kate Hodges was discussed. It is felt by all members that someone from the Town should attend regularly.

New business:

The gym entrance barrier at Ripley should be addressed before the next election.

Selectman Chair Mike Lawson has requested that all Committee websites be updated.

Jennifer and David visited the Alcott House to review their preliminary plans for reopening the School of Philosophy building, which has been closed to the public for years because of the lack of handicapped access.

Jennifer and David visited 51 Walden to review their problem with access to the stage, as noted by the ABB, who have given them til July to present a plan for solving this problem.

Outstanding issues on the agenda, deferred: FY2016 goals, and review of Committee charge.

Next meeting to be June 9 (May 12 meeting cancelled because of late April meeting).

Meeting adjourned at 7:00.

Recorded by David Holdorf, Clerk