

Harvard Commission on Disabilities

Meeting Minutes

11/18/20

Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88605005322?pwd=S3ZoYjAxU29xODFCMThheTlxb2taZz09>

Meeting ID: 886 0500 5322

Passcode: 248072

Called to Order at 4:10 pm by Davida Bagatelle

Present: Davida Bagatelle, Carolyn Luescher, Toni Spacciapoli

Approval of October 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Motion to accept

Old Business:

- **Bylaws**

- Davida Bagatelle shared the amendments made to the Commission's bylaws with the Select Board. Suggestions were made by members of the Board and incorporated in the proposed document.
- The bylaws will now be referred to as the Commission on Disabilities Policies and Procedures.
- Carolyn Luescher asked how the changes proposed will impact the current length of appointment for members on the Commission. Current members will serve a 1-year term. Davida Bagatelle informed the members that Tim Bragan indicated that commitments are based on the same schedule for elected officials, thus the term for appointment will run from July 1 to June 30.
- A discussion occurred regarding the length of terms and it was proposed that the terms will be one-year appointments with the individual member's discretion to serve longer.
- A motion to accept the Policies and Procedures as written was made by Carolyn Luescher and second by Toni Spacciapoli. The Policies and Procedures were unanimously approved.

- **Update on SelectBoard: Ch40-Sec22g- Parking Fees Allocation**

- Davida Bagatelle discussed her presentation to the Select Board on behalf of the Commission.
- The Select Board agreed that it was important to accept Sec.22g. Tim Bragan will consult with the town attorney to determine how to proceed in including this section in the Town regulations and the establishment of a separate account.
- Commission members once again reiterated the importance of having a parking fee allocation for projects for disabled residents.

- **Update on filling vacant seats on CoD**

- The Harvard Press has been running a brief description about the Commission and the two vacancies on the Commission.
- Davida Bagatelle has reached out to her community contacts to let them know there are openings.
- Davida Bagatelle suggested that if there are no interested candidates, the Commission may wish to approach the Select Board and review the Commission

member requirements.

New Business:

- **Communicating the mission of the Commission to Town Boards and Committees**
 - Davida Bagatelle spoke to Tim Bragan regarding outreach to Town Boards and Committees on behalf of the Commission.
 - Ideas were discussed. Toni Spacciapoli suggested inviting committees to a Commission meeting. Carolyn suggested posting on the Town's website with a description of our mission and an update on the activities currently undertaken by the Commission. The members agreed that it is important to inform Town Boards and Committees regarding their obligation to ADA.
- **Stu Sklar, Select Board Liaison joined the meeting at 4:34**
 - There was a discussion regarding the lack of an ADA statement on the Town website landing page regarding accessibility. Davida Bagatelle explained that she had a discussion with Civics+, which manages town websites, around the MoD grant application. In the conversation they performed a cursory evaluation of the website and noticed that the statement was missing. Tim Bragan and the Select Board have been informed by Davida Bagatelle.
 - Accessibility to Town PDF documents was also discussed. The Committee stressed the need to evaluate if documents are accessible. Carolyn Luescher informed the members that she has tested some software used to convert PDF's, but noticed that parts of PDF documents are readable, but not the entire document. A "how to" training will need to occur so that Boards and Committees are formatting PDF's correctly so that they can be read. Davida Bagatelle noted that Civics+ is able to provide the "how to" trainings.
 - The Commission suggested to Stu Sklar that all Town Boards and Committees should be informed regarding their obligation to ensure compliance to ADA. Davida will send Stu Sklar a sample of the accessibility statement and suggest that the Town's Boards and Committees start formatting documents as Txt.
 - The members sought Stu Sklar's opinion regarding a method to inform Town Boards and Committees of the Commission's advisory role. It was suggested that a blast invitation be sent to all boards and their members through Julie Doucet. Carolyn Luescher suggested communicating who we are and why we are here in the invitation. Toni Spacciapoli offered to draft a brief description about the Committee and an invitation to Town Boards and Committees to attend a meeting. The other Commission members will forward ideas to Toni Spacciapoli over the next couple of weeks.
 - Davida Bagatelle informed the Commission of a discussion she had with Tim Bragan regarding a protocol to be used by a community member when requesting accessibility. Tim Bragan advised her that the individual should contact him directly. Davida Bagatelle indicated to Stu Sklar that this process should be communicated to the residents. Stu Sklar suggested that the Town should add this notification to the ADA accessibility statement on the website. Members discussed the importance of communicating to Town Boards and Committees that Tim Bragan is ADA coordinator for Town and the contact person for accommodation/accessibility requests made by residents.
 - A follow up to the Select Board meeting concerning Ch. 40, Sec 22g. Stu Sklar explained that Section 22g of Ch 40 needs to be adopted by the Town first. This may be addressed at the next Town Meeting in May. Stu Sklar indicated that he will contact the Police Chief to ensure enforcement of handicapped parking law.

- Further discussion about the broader topic of accessibility and tools for hearing and vision impaired.
- Stu Sklar left the meeting at 5:05pm.
- **Disability Summit**
 - This has been postponed and a new date has not been determined.
- **Website Accessibility Software**
 - Carolyn Luescher updated members regarding downloadable software for screen reading. She indicated that she will share a link to the site for members to review. She also indicated that Accessibe offers a free trial. She is willing to test how the software works. Davida suggested she should request access to the Town's website from Marie Sobalvarro or Julie Doucet. Carolyn will coordinate this with Town Hall.

Next Steps:

- Carolyn Luescher will contact Town Hall for access to the landing page for the Town's website to determine if the Accessibe software reader makes a difference.
- Toni Spacciapoli will compose a draft of a communique and an invitation to Town Boards and Committees. Carolyn Luescher and Davida Bagatelle will forward their ideas to her. A draft will be presented at the next meeting.

Next monthly meeting scheduled for December 16, 2020 at 4:00pm

ADJOURNMENT- Motion to adjourn at 5:27 pm; It was seconded. All members were in favor by roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni Spacciapoli, Commission Secretary