

**Harvard Commission on Disabilities
Meeting Minutes 2/21/23**

Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: Meeting ID: 854 2525 6926

Passcode: 856387

Called to Order at 5:00pm by Davida Bagatelle

Present: Davida Bagatelle, Toni Spacciapoli

Approval of December 21, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Old Business

- **Report results of town-wide survey and incorporation into the ADA Transition and Self-evaluation Plan**
 - Shared summary with Center for Living and Working
 - 45 respondents; the majority of respondents identified as having no identified handicap
 - The results found:
 - Majority found town facilities accessible (73%), but the perception regarding the level of inclusivity was mixed. Areas and events that were identified as inaccessible included: town playgrounds, Bare Hill Pond beach, town hall and meetings, Harvard Park, schools, Fire Station. Comments made related to the manner in which people are greeted, use of automatic doors, limited transportation for individuals, and how our spaces are used and consideration as to the level of inclusivity for events in town.
 - Areas for improvement mentioned included the playgrounds, parks and trails, town meeting, wheelchair accessibility, parking, sidewalks, and town hall.
 - Accommodations that were perceived as lacking included: requirement of masks for indoor events, accessibility to augmented hearing devices, wheelchair accessibility throughout town, sign language interpreters, and braille signage.
 - Majority of respondents are not aware of who is the Town's ADA Coordinator, but they are aware of the role of ADA Coordinator.
 - A narrative summarizing the survey will be submitted as an addendum to the Town's ADA Transition and Self-evaluation Plan report.
 - Commission members are concerned that residents are not familiar with the process for requesting accommodations to meet their needs. The survey highlighted the need for the Commission on Disabilities to increase its exposure and mission.
- **Discussion regarding recently updated ADA Transition and Self-evaluation Plan**
 - Center for Living and Working briefed the Select Board on the report and self-evaluation plan. Corrective action items varied in cost and significance.
 - Discussed Commission on Disabilities role as an advisory board in supporting the departments and liaisons to boards and committees in Town. Members are concerned if the compliance problems to be rectified will be considered as part of the budget planning being conducted by various town departments.

- Will meet with the Select Board on March 7 to discuss survey results and ADA report.
- **CODA monthly meeting update**
 - Accessibility regarding new vocational-technical high school in Wakefield
 - Local CoD has authority to request increase handicap parking fees
 - Towns are developing an accessibility guide for residents. Toni Spacciapoli will research the link used by the town of Acton for this support.

New Business

- **Next steps in advising Town Administration and Select Board in relation to the ADA Transition and Self-evaluation Plan**
 - Write and submit a summary of survey results before the March 7 meeting.
 - Request a meeting with Tim Bragan, Marie Sobalvarro and Rich Maiore to brainstorm a strategy for disseminating the ADA Transition and Self-evaluation Plan and next steps associated with the report once the bound copy is received by Town Hall.
- **Inquiries to the Commission on Disabilities**
 - Davida Bagatelle received a phone call from a resident seeking in-home help with cleaning/organizing. Discussion as to the manner in which the Commission on Disabilities should be managing and allocating these types of requests. The Commission on Disabilities is not a service provider like other departments in town, such as Council on Aging, Board of Health and the School Department; however, we can assist in referring to the correct department.

Next Meeting Date: To Be Determined

ADJOURNMENT- Motion to adjourn at 5:51 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Toni Spacciapoli, Commission Secretary