

**SEPTEMBER MINUTES**  
**Town of Acton**  
**Commission on Disabilities (COD)**

**MINUTES**

**Tuesday, September 18, 2018**  
**9:30 am, Town Hall, Room 126**

**Present:**

Full Members: Mady Harvey (Chair), Facilitator, Chair, facilitating; Nancy Corcoran, Franny Osman, Danny Factor, Leslie Johnson, Lisa Franklin, Joan Burrows.

Associate Members: Joan Burrows, Franny Osman

Visitors: Town Manager John Mangiaratti, other residents.

**Announcements:**

-Discussed putting backlog of materials onto Docushare. Past decision to ask, getting Kim Brickner (Secretary in Planning Department who assists COD) to help was confirmed.

-Pedal Power has decided not to rent bikes.

-September 20 is Senior Center/Human Services Center Open House at 30 Sudbury Rd.

-Town Manager will attend the upcoming summit at Assembly Row.

-Town Manager describes the grant application to the Mass. Office of Disability that is due October 1. Money has to be spent by June 1, 2019. Danny moves that Franny represent COD in conversation with the Town Manager as he creates the application. Lisa seconds. Unanimous yes.

Some ideas collected later in the meeting from the committee for possible improvements to apply for funding for, to be shared with John:

Accessible rental bikes

Building modifications

Provide more services [?]

Information cards listing disability resources

Accessible bathrooms near rail trails

Accessible bathrooms at train station

Service related… [?]

Rides for dog walkers

Parking barriers

Barriers at NARA Park

Picnic tables throughout the community being more compliant  
More automatic door systems.

-Avalon in North Acton is planning to build an additional section which that will have 80+ units, including 20 adaptable and 6 already fully accessible units. Twenty-five percent of them will be affordable. There was a comment that the present Avalon does not have easy walking access to the bus stop.

### **Citizens' Concerns:**

1) Someone came to Danny Lisa with an issue about swimming pool lifts for people with disabilities in housing complexes; are there people who know how to operateuse them so when someone wants to use them to swim the operatory can teach and answer questions? Nancy thinks that as Access Coordinator, Danny can explore this question and would like us to find out how many such similar types of pool equipment exist pool things are in town and what hours the pools are staffed. There was a discussion of whether pools are covered by our mission or not if they are on private property. Danny says Mass Access Code regulates them.

**Danny movvoes** that the Access Coordinators do a fact-finding regarding pool access as to whether human resources exist to assist or instruct/work wheelchair lifts in pools. Mady seconds, **Motion passes**, Four yes, one abstention (Lisa?). four in favor.

- 2) Resident complained about a heavy door at the now-closed Paper Store at Roche Brothers Plaza, Mass. Ave. location. (thus a moot point unless a new business opens up at the same Mass. Ave. location with the same door).
- 3) Member of Commission complains about inadequate handicapped spot signage at Donelans.

### **Dog Park:**

Karen Martin from the Acton Dog Park Committee visits. Representatives of the Dog Park Committee have been meeting with many committees in Town and are now coming to the COD. Last fall the Dog Park Committee presented to the Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen first asked the Committee to find out if there is a need and desire to have a dog park in Town. The need was demonstrated by surveys and other means, and now the Selectmen have asked the Committee to search for a location. Karen went over the qualities studied in each site, such as flatness, ground cover, water for dogs, water for humans, trails, and impact on wildlife. The Committee narrowed their search to four sites .(Quarry Rd., Ice House Pond, Arlington St., and School St.). Karen reviewed the four sites and the pros and cons of each. She asked for COD input on what features are desireable from our point of view as COD, and what properties we like. The issue will likely go to spring Town Meeting. Quarry Rd., Ice House Pond, Arlington St., and School St.

The Committee is meeting with all other Town committees and soliciting public opinion at Oktoberfest and other public events. Stanton grant will pay for 90% of design as well as building.

Opinions: Handicapped access. Note that playground requirements are that every feature has access for all. If a person without a disability can use, those with disabilities can, as well. Lisa offers to ask Commission for the Blind; Nancy raises question of any special needs for other service dogs. Discussion of having both a big and a small dog area. How about an aggressive dog be-alone area? Communicate with CrossTown Connect about supporting people who need to use the van to bring their dog to dog park. Suggestion to do a survey on surveymonkey.

COD expresses thanks to Betsy Kristl for being spearheader, caring about fighting isolation for people with disabilities through a dog park, and getting this process going.

The Commission reviewed a letter drafted by (Leslie Johnson and) Terra Friedrichs that would be a standard form letter sent to people who seek assistance on a disability issue from the Commission on Disabilities, advising them of what the committee does and doesn't do and where to go for help.

**Nancy moves** that Danny and Franny soften the letter up and bring it to the next meeting.

**Franny seconds.**

Danny amends that the goal for Danny and Franny include writing the cover letter to John Mangiaratti, explaining this letter.

**All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.**

**Review of Minutes:**

Motion to accept minutes of August 21, 2018 meeting.  
All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

**Retreat Brunch Plan for Nov. 4 Sunday, 11 to 2, 25 Half Moon Hill.**

**Meeting Facilitation Schedule:**

Franny and Volunteer Pesha have made the next few months' facilitation schedule, just mailed to commission.

**Membership:**

The Commission discussed our numbers and the need for more members or help from volunteers. It was noted that the Volunteer Coordination Committee is having trouble finding volunteers. Acton TV will help advertise. There was a discussion about the best way to invite people to get involved and how long someone should be advised to attend meetings before they decide if they want to be on the Commission. It was suggested that it would help attracting and including new members if people are offered rides to the meetings. There was a brainstorm session to think of what to say on a TV spot about COD. List to be sent to whatever member is doing the spot.

**Motion that Joan goes ahead with making PSA at Acton TV  
All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.**

**Transition Plan:**

Members are impressed with Corey York's work on this. Lisa feels John Mangiarrati and Corey York are doing a great job working on the Transition Plan. Lisa says they will issue a final report that will identify priorities of different barriers, the solutions, and the cost. This work leads to a schedule for "transition". Called "Transition Plan" because it is a process.

Mady thanks Lisa for gently pushing the Town to do the Transition Plan.

Danny hopes most important communications are shared at COD meetings rather than just within the Transition Plan email shell.

Tangential discussion of front door of Town Hall (Main St. side) and signage that might explain that it is not accessible.

**Announcements and concerns:**

There is an Open Meeting Law training meeting coming up in Harvard, MA. Suggestion that all of us attend and carpool.

Suggestion we find out warrant items for the December Town Meeting and review them at the November meeting.

Announcement: Neighbor Brigade doesn't have human resources to drive people to appointments with Dep. Trans Assistance in Lowell for Food Stamps/Mass. Healthfood stamps or Dept. of Social Security Administration in Waltham for SSI (Supplemental Security Income)/SSDI (Social Security Disability)SSI.

**COD Handbook:**

Danny and Pesha are working on it. Call for updates to certain parts including bios (send 150 word bios to Danny and Pesha), description of positions (e.g. associate), history of COD, accomplishments, acronym list, list of Commissions on Disabilities. They may be coming to individual members and asking them to contribute updates to certain parts. They hope to be done by the end of March. Danny will also write an inventory list of what the Commission owns.

People should send 150 word versions of their bios to Danny and Pesha for Handbook. They will make changes on description of positions, eg full or associate. Want to add more on history of COD. Hope Joan Burrows can help with that. Suggested to update the committee's accomplishments. Suggested to check with Lisa about Independent Living materials. EMAIL anything missing to Danny and Pesha. Lisa suggests get rid of Citizens Concern page.

### **Access Updates:**

Danny spoke to Corey York about Route 2a between Great Rd. and Davis Rd. with people walking on street with no shouldersidewalk. As narrow as it is where it crosses Nashoba Brook, there isIn the section where Route 2A is narrow as it crosses Nashoba Brook, MassDOT requested a need for a shoulder between cars and sidewalk, with some greenery or space between. Corey has sent it back to engineers to put that separation in and thinks that is the last thing needing a review by the state. Projected gGroundbreaking before cold, hopefully in by spring.

Joan and Danny met with Frank Ramsbottom for two hours.

### **Evaluation of Meeting:**

Some comments:

It was a little more relaxed than some.

Turn off phones.

### **Documents shared at meeting that must be put into docushare with these minutes::**

-Draft letter written by Leslie and Terra

Respectfully submitted,

Franny Osman

Approved 11-20-18