



CITY OF ATTLEBORO, MASSACHUSETTS
COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES
GOVERNMENT CENTER
77 PARK STREET ATTLEBORO, MASSACHUSETTS 02703

MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 3, 2019

Present: Barbara Clark (guest, Attleboro Council for Human Rights/ACHR), Stanley Estime (guest, ACHR), Chairperson Angela Ferreira, Mary Flaherty (guest), Treasurer Susan Jenson, Vice Chairperson Kevin Lacoste, Chris Laureano, Secretary Cynthia Van Voris, Ty Waterman (guest, City Councilor)

Absent: Michael Andrade (ex officio), Jennifer Davies, Stephanie Forte (ex officio), Mary-Jane Jenson, William McDonough (ex officio)

--Meeting called to order by Ms. Ferreira at 7 pm

--Guests introduced: Ms. Clark and Mr. Estime from ACHR are attending to discuss how our two groups overlap.

--Mr. Waterman attended because he would like a general idea of what the COD does. Summary provided: Mission statement is to ensure that Attleboro is accessible to all, with any type of disabilities. All events occurring in Attleboro should be fully accessible. The COD has advocated to become a Commission instead of a Council, which has been approved and goes into effect on July 1, 2019. This will give COD access to handicap parking fines if that type of account is also approved. The COD wants to make sure parking regulations are followed, as well as all ADA guidelines. Building Inspector William McDonough is Attleboro's ADA coordinator. The COD sent a letter to Mass. Department of Transportation supporting the need for the South Attleboro train station, whether in its current location or a different one, to be fully accessible. We have had several informative speakers including the Mass. Office on Disabilities, Mass. Rehab Commission, Attleboro Enterprises, and Eastern Mass. Peer Network.

--Mr. Frank Balut has been a frequent participant in COD meetings, advocating for improvement of various sidewalk issues around the city, especially near the Senior Center. Mr. Waterman announced the sad news that Mr. Balut passed away yesterday. All members appreciated his dedication to citizen safety.



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--Mr. Estime asked how we address specific complaints regarding accessibility. ACHR has an incident report on its website. They did a presentation to an eighth grade civics class at Brennan Middle School, during which students asked how to respond to a hate crime. Ms. Ferreira noted that the Special Needs Parent Advisory Council does special needs awareness training in the schools. The ACHR does not report to the mayor, unlike all other councils and commissions. Suggestion made to ask Steve Withers, City Clerk, about grievance process.

--Ms. Van Voris mentioned the Mass. Commission Against Discrimination, which does free community trainings about responding to discrimination. Ms. Clark suggested COD and AHRC could co-sponsor the event; she volunteers for the library and could arrange a date for this training. Councils on Aging and Substance Abuse could also be involved. Ms. Van Voris will contact MCAD to discuss training options.

--Ms. Ferreira will set up a meeting with the ADA Coordinator to discuss the process of a grant application to assist with ADA compliance. Mr. Waterman and City Councilor Diana Holmes will also participate.

--Ms. Ferreira has heard back from the North Attleboro COD re: co-sponsorship of a screening of Intelligent Lives, a film about young adults with disabilities—a representative will attend our next meeting on May 1.

--Minutes from March 2019 meeting reviewed. The date of the meeting was inadvertently left off and will be added. Members decided that the names of any guests will be added to the list of those present. With these changes, motion to accept minutes made by Mr. Lacoste, seconded by Ms. Jenson and unanimously approved.

--Future guest speakers: May 1, North Attleboro COD; police chief/ parking enforcement officer will be invited to attend June 5. Ms. Jenson will pursue the latter.

--Councilor Holmes has mentioned a new position being established related to Community Development Block Grants. Dorothy Brissette is Community Development Director. There are numerous categories for the block grants,



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including removing architectural barriers. Ms. Ferreira will be meeting next week with Mr. Waterman, Ms. Holmes and Ms. Brissette to discuss this.

--Ms. Flaherty asked if closed captioning is available for City Council televised meetings—Ms. Ferreira said yes. Ms. Flaherty also mentioned the idea of an accessible splash pad at the site of the Liddell pool in South Attleboro, which is being closed.

--Ms. Mary-Jane Jenson had pursued the issue of the automatic door at Coelho Middle school not working at one point, when she was volunteering in the school library. The school business manager said he did not know it was not working and it has now been fixed.

--Ms. Van Voris mentioned two articles in the Sun Chronicle that mentioned the Foxboro COD making donations to the town, such as library books about disabilities. Foxboro COD receives large amounts from handicapped parking violations at Gillette Stadium.

--Mr. Lacoste mentioned the idea of space in the Bronson Building to be used for a business hiring disabled workers. He has asked the ARC if they could be involved (the North Shore ARC is involved in a similar business in Peabody)—no response yet.

--Kick-off for library summer reading program—can COD be involved? The disability awareness training that the SEPAC does would not be feasible as it is not portable.

--Farmer's Market does not take EBT as payment. Markets that do take EBT give bonuses to participants. Ms. Jenson will talk to Heather Porreca, who is on the board of the Farmer's Market. On May 4 there will be a pop-up market at Bristol Community College, as well as the next three Saturdays.

--Mr. Laureano stated the EMPN Trauma Training on 3/11 went well—5-6 attendees including two from the school department. EMPN is discussing a similar presentation in September. They need more time for promotion—maybe third week of September? Mr. Laureano did discuss the COD at the event. Suggestion



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made that perhaps trauma could be the “theme” of the new Saturday/Sunday edition of the Sun Chronicle.

--Ms. Flaherty showed pictures of downtown sidewalks that were not cleared after the last snowstorm—huge impediment to travel. She mentioned the “Snow Angels” program where volunteers sign up to shovel snow as needed.

--Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Van Voris, COD Secretary