



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF NEW MARLBOROUGH
807 Mill River Southfield Road, Mill River, MA 01244**

Minutes of the Commission on Disabilities
Town Hall, New Marlborough, MA
Wednesday, July 10, 2019

Members Present: Tom Stalker, Chair/Secretary
Marsha Pshenishny, Vice-Chair
John Hotaling
John Pshenishny
Tara White, Liaison

The meeting of the Commission on Disabilities (COD) was convened at 10:35am.

Elect commission officers

Chair: Tom Stalker; Tara 1st, Marsha 2nd, all agreed

Vice-Chair: Marsha Pshenishny; John H. 1st, John P. 2nd, all agreed

Secretary: Tom Stalker; Tara 1st, John H. 2nd, all agreed

Review and approve meeting minutes for March 28, 2019

Motion to approve: John P.

Second: John H.

All agree.

Update on submitted COD Bylaw

The COD had submitted bylaws to be voted on at Town Meeting and be included with the Town bylaws.

The reason these were not voted on was most of the language was already included in the Massachusetts General Law, which was voted on by Town Meeting the year prior. Also, the Massachusetts Office on Disabilities had indicated the COD could change the number of meetings, indicated in the MGL law, from 10 to 6. Town Attorney responded and said the Town could not change the number of meetings and 10 would have to take place every year. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) could, however, change the number of members. The BOS did change the members from 7 to 5 when they appointed the new members in a recent meeting.

Discuss update of Title II Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

ADA Consultant

Tom would like to submit a planning grant application to update the Town's Title II Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (Title II), which is due the beginning of October 2019.

Tom approached Jim Mazik, ADA Consultant, to provide a cost estimate and scope to update the Town's Title II report. Jim's response included a Scope of Services and Cost Estimate, sample of a Town hall Assessment for Petersham, and Table of Contents.

Tom also suggested we submit a project for the project grant, with the application deadline the same as the planning grant.

Tom did explain that currently we cannot submit for either grant as the Town does not have an ADA Coordinator.

Survey of Town employees, committees, boards, commissions, etc.

The survey is what the group has been referring to as the education part of ADA.

Tom asked the group to review documents provided so we may decide which version to use in surveying those involved in Town government.

One version is a free form Q&A (from Jim Mazik) and the other version is multiple documents with mostly check boxes for Yes and No.

Members should be prepared to give their opinion as to which version we might use at our next meeting. The results of the survey would then be included in our Title II report.

Additional documents were provided which an ADA Coordinator would fill out. The documents, along with the responses from members of the Town's government (department heads and chairpersons of committees-boards-etc.) would be the information needed to either produce a Title II report or update an existing report.

Evaluation of Town website per ADA standards

The website is considered a facility and needs to be evaluated and results included in our Title II report.

The Website Accessibility form would need to be filled out by someone involved with the Town's website (Sharon?). The results would then be included in our Title II report.

Discuss publishing and publicizing the ADA notice and grievance procedures

We need to press upon the Town that they do need to publicize and advertise the Grievance Procedure as well as the ADA Notice [of non-discrimination]. They need to put in a newspaper and other publications, wherever we know people are viewing our information. In addition to a newspaper, possibly the Five Village News could include the two notices in one of their publications. They should also be posted at the different Town facilities.

The group should bring suggestions and ideas for promoting these two documents to assist Town hall in getting the word out about ADA, to our next meeting.

One place we do want to consider is on all agendas. Many towns do put information pertaining to accessibility and how to request a special accommodation on their agendas, job postings, bid postings, etc..

The group was asked to check around other towns to see how they present ADA and special accommodations in their legal postings and agenda notices and brings suggestions and samples to the next meeting.

Discuss Massachusetts Office on Disability – Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvement Grant Program for 2019

In conversation with Jim Mazik, he indicated that accessibility issues and projects be prioritized as follows:

1. Parking/Sidewalks
2. Bathrooms
3. Services/Programs
4. All Other Issues, i.e., water fountains

The Town's Title II report, for the Town hall, does indicate: Action Item - accessible parking spaces and access aisles are not clearly identified; Solution - Resurface, pave & paint lines at accessible parking to delineate accessible parking spaces.

Planning Grant

Group spoke on this subject earlier in the meeting.

Project Grant

Tom has been asked to apply for an automatic door opener for Town hall, similar to the ones installed at the library. He indicated we should ask for more and possibilities would be to pave the parking lot, install railings along sidewalks [along with proper signage], install the automatic door opener and adjust the threshold to ADA guidelines.

A request can be made up to \$250K in projects. All projects must be completed by June 30th of the same fiscal year. The grant would not cover any necessary engineering costs.

The project would be managed by the ADA Coordinator with whomever is coordinating for the facility. Lacking an ADA Coordinator, Tom is not sure who would oversee the project.

Tara indicated she felt the Town should pay for the parking lot paving through Town Meeting appropriated free cash. She also questioned who would cover the engineering costs. Tom indicated, going by the previous two years of grant awards, they were generally done in-kind.

Further discussion can take place once the documentation has been received on the next round of grant applications.

Any new business for commission review (time permitting)

Tom indicated he had gone to a Commission on Disabilities meeting in Sheffield. Basically, what they do is survey the Town for issues [with barrier removal] and bring those issues to their ADA Coordinator. For instances, their covered bridge is in the process of being fixed/renovated. They have asked the ADA Coordinator to be sure the bridge is accessible under ADA guidelines, which currently it is not.

Their group also writes articles for inclusion in their Town publication as well as having a table at the Town's annual fair in August. Tom suggested we could do the same at Burritt day here in New Marlborough. Tom will draft an information brochure and send it around to all members prior to the next meeting.

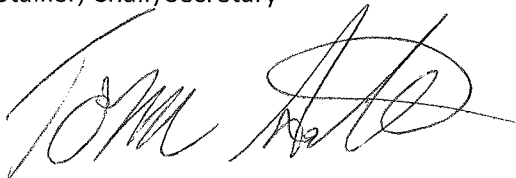
Our next meeting will be August 6, 2019 at 9:30am.

Adjourn

John P. made a motion to adjourn with John H. second. All agreed.

Prepared by:

Tom Stalker, Chair/Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Stalker', written in a cursive style.