

Westport Commission on Disabilities  
Meeting of June 4, 2018

1. Call to Order: The meeting at the Town Hall Annex was called to order at 3:45 p.m. with the following members present: Chair Brian Gallagher, Stanley Cornwall, Anders Newcomer, Martin Costa, Raymond Phenix. Consultant Jeff Bull and guest Kim Legendre were also present.
2. Remote Participation: No remote participation was requested by absent members, so this item was passed over.
3. Minutes: The minutes of the April 30, 2018 meeting were reviewed, with a motion from Mr. Cornwall to approve them as submitted seconded by Mr. Costa. The vote was unanimous.
4. Bank Article: There was some discussion of the good publicity generated by the recent news article and photo on Santander Bank's automatic door openers distributed by the COD, and consideration of future news releases that could be generated to increase awareness of disability issues. The installation of an automatic door opener at Greenwood Terrace and the work of local resident Pam Clarkson were mentioned as potential topics for publicity efforts. Mr. Gallagher indicated he will inquire about Westport Federal Credit Union's willingness to install door openers; Mr. Costa volunteered to survey all the banks in town to see if they have any accommodations for customers with disabilities.
5. Post Office: Mr. Gallagher reported filing a Freedom of Information Act request seeking contact information on the facilities manager for the southeastern Mass. region, and receiving a letter from the Postal Service declining to give out that information. He has contacted Rep. Keating's office for assistance, and is awaiting a reply. Mr. Bull suggested a letter to the town Building Department and Planning Board seeking confirmation that automatic door openers are required for all new commercial buildings in Westport.
6. Boat Ramp Update: Mr. Gallagher suggested that a railing needs to be included in any plans for devices to assist people with disabilities entering or exiting boats or kayaks at town landings. Mr. Bull indicated that the owners of the kayak shop at the Head Landing will help develop a prototype for such a railing. Mr. Gallagher felt that the Hix Bridge Landing would be the best option for developing a facility for boaters with disabilities; Mr. Cornwall indicated he would seek a meeting with selectmen to see if they would support that initiative.
7. New Members: Kim Legendre was in attendance, and expressed an interest in joining the commission, so it was suggested that she file a letter with selectmen seeking an appointment. Mr. Cornwall indicated the commission help Ms. Legendre revive the dormant Westport special education advisory council and support its mission in the local school system.
8. New Business: Mr. Gallagher reported on Mr. Cornwall's conversations with Pam Clarkson, an artist offering classes for people with dementia and Alzheimer's Disease; she is seeking a site for group classes for people with those and other disabilities. Mr. Cornwall suggested a web site posting and media articles promoting her services; Ms. Legendre suggested she seek a Helen Ellis Grant from the Cultural Council to underwrite the classes.

9. Other Business: Mr. Cornwall cited the need to revive the COD brochure project. Mr. Cornwall reported that the Mobi-Mats at the Knubble were not yet installed, due to issues with the parking area at the site; Mr. Bull indicated that the environmental order issued by the state needs to be studied.

10. Next Meeting: The meeting scheduled was discussed, and meetings on June 25, July 23, and Aug. 27 were agreed upon.

11. Adjournment: At 4:45 p.m., Mr. Newcomer made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Costa. The vote was unanimous.