

## MINUTES OF April 25, 2022 MEETING OF THE WESTPORT COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

PRESENT: BRIAN GALLAGHER, RAY PHOENIX, MARTIN COSTA, RICK GRUNDY, KIM LEGENDRE AND SUE SHERMAN.

MEETING WAS OPENED

REMOTE PARTICIPATION: RAY PHOENIX, KIM LEGENDRE

THE MINUTES OF THE 3/28/22 WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

### WATER ACCESS:

North Beach: Chris Gonsalves advises that the Highway Department is ready to begin clearing and grading the area. Anders will follow up with Sean Leach of the Beach Committee relative to the placement of the wheelchair accessible picnic table at the beach. The mobility mats are being stored by the Highway Department and will be put in place once the grading is completed.

Beach Avenue: The GeoGrids have been received and are in possession of the Highway Department. Piping plover nesting season began April 1, 2022 but the placement of the grids can still be accomplished if the organization that oversees whether or not there are nesting plovers in the area confirms that there are no nesting plovers in the area. Such confirmation creates a window in which the work may be performed. Martin Costa will speak to Chris Gonsalves of the Highway Department about coordinating these activities.

Hixbridge landing: Although it may take time and further study before the Army Corps of Engineers gets started on its plan to clear the river under the bridge of debris the plan to improve the landing is proceeding. We have confirmed with Jeff Bull of the Landing Commission that our commission has committed to spend \$5,000.00 of our funds to the project. When the time comes to get the funds from the town accountant, we will need some sort of invoice to satisfy the requirements of the town.

LEES MARKET PROGRAM. The market has a program where the market will contribute 1% of any receipts that are returned to them to worthy causes and organizations like our commission. Drop off locations for the receipts are Country Woolens on Main Road in Westport and the Commission on Disability mailbox which is in Town Hall. Kim Legendre and Sue Sherman will pick up the receipts from those locations and turn them in to Lees Market.

### CURRENT PROJECTS:

Accessible/Affordable housing. The annual budget prepared by the Massachusetts House Ways and Means committee did not include grants for accessible/affordable housing. A state representative prepared an amendment to the budget which, if made part of the budget would include those grants. Our members were encouraged to call Representative Paul Schmid and ask that he support the proposed amendment. Our commission sent a letter to Representative requesting that he support the proposed amendment.

Martin Costa has a friend, Ed Walsh who is a quadriplegic who is very active in the area of accessible and affordable housing. Mr. Walsh has asked for the opportunity to address our commission through a zoom call. He will address our commission at the May 23, 2022, meeting.

Letter to the Shorelines newspaper. Now that Rick Grundy has updated our website, we will create a brief submission outlining what we do, what we have done, what we are currently working on and how to access our website. We will also prepare a brief statement for the Select Board addressing our goals and achievements.

There was a recent article in the Standard Times which highlighted the good works being performed by the EMTs in Fall River and Westport. In those two towns the EMTs will perform an in-home safety inspection. The EMTs will provide advice on things a resident can do to make their homes safer such as removing throw rugs. Installing grab bars and ramps etc. The service is free of charge to the resident. It was also mentioned by Sue Sherman that the Westport police used to perform wellness calls for elderly or disabled residents. She will find out if the police still make those calls.

Walkway leading to the lower level of the Town Hall Annex: Dana Stewart, the town recreation director has advised that the recreation department has plans to improve the walkway leading to the door and install an automatic door. The plans also included upgrades to the indoor ramp and railing. Brian Gallagher will follow up with Ms. Stewart regarding the status of those repairs and upgrades.

#### POSSIBLE UPDATES TO OUR WEBSITE:

The Massachusetts Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation has prepared A Massachusetts Guide to Home Improvement pamphlet which is very helpful. The pamphlet can be obtained by calling The Office of Consumer Affairs at (617) 973-8700

#### ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS/CONCERNS:

Martin Costa Mentioned that Mr. Joseph Inglesby, a former trustee of the library in town invited Martin to inspect the amphitheater at the library to make sure the amphitheater is handicapped accessible. When he looked at the amphitheater Martin suggested a flat area be included so that people in wheelchairs can watch what the performances. Martin shared the idea with Mr. Don Davidson, a current library trustee.

Martin has also agreed to attend a meeting of the Planning Board to provide input from the WCOD on a proposed housing development where the developer wishes to eliminate the sidewalks from the development. The WCOD sent a letter to the Planning Board in opposition to the developer's proposed change. The Planning Board meeting addressing the issue is now scheduled for June 21, 2022.

NEXT MEETING: 5/23/2022 in the Select Board meeting room

MEETING ADJOURNED