

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 26, 2023 MEETING OF THE WESTPORT COMMISSION  
ON DISABILITY

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING; Brian Gallagher, chairman, Martin Costa, Rick Grundy.

THE MEETING OPENED AT 3:50 p.m.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION: No one participated remotely.

THE MINUTES OF OUR LAST MEETING: A vote was not held due to a lack of a quorum.

UPDATE ON TOWN BEACHES:

Beach Avenue—The GeoGrids were installed and are working well to stabilize the handicapped parking spaces. The mobility mats have been put down but due to storm erosion the mat configuration is different than last year. It is still difficult to get a wheelchair from the road to the mats due to the elevation difference. The guardrail in that area has been damaged which might create an opportunity to move the location of the mats in the future. There was also a discussion about purchasing more GeoGrids to stabilize the area from the handicapped parking spots to the entrance where the mobility mats are located.

North Beach: Martin Costa of our commission worked with Chris Gonsalves of the Highway Department and Sean Leach of the Beach Committee relative to the mobility mats and a wheelchair accessible picnic at the beach area. The picnic table is not there yet but its purchase has been promised by the Beach Committee. Martin Costa will follow up with Sean Leach of the Beach Committee. The mobility mats were put down by the Highway Department but recent storms caused runoff which carried away some of the material under the mats. A small trench was created. The Highway Department will address the matter.

East Beach: It is not easy for a disabled person to get to the water but anyone with a beach pass can park at the beach and enjoy the view.

Cherry and Webb Beach: It is not accessible to disabled residents for a number of reasons.

Gooseberry Island: The causeway has been reopened and there are two handicapped parking spaces. There is a walkway near the boat ramp that with a little work might become handicapped accessible. According to the State

representative responsible for the area, there are no plans to improve that walkway.

Horseneck Beach: Access is free for those with handicapped plates or placard. There is a long, paved walkway which is quite nice and upgraded, accessible facilities.

AFFORDABLE/ACCESSIBLE HOUSING IN MA: There will be a lot of money available in the state for new housing. There is a need for affordable, accessible housing that is ADA compliant. The website ADAchecklist.org has a list of areas where such ADA compliance is required.

THOUGHTS/CONCERNS: Westport Woods on Adamsville Road is a nice place to visit. There is a place with interactive displays for children. The trail is wheelchair accessible. There are plans being worked on to make the walkway accessible to visually impaired individuals. The property has been acquired to double the size of the walkway.

The adaptive equipment for the Middle School that we funded has been purchased and is being used by the disabled students.

Buckley Estates is a new development going in near Highland Avenue. We have not yet seen the plan for the development.

Gooseberry Island: As indicated above, there are no plans to improve the walkway that is there.

ADA TRANSITION TEAM: Jim Hartnett, the Town Administrator and ADA Transition Team leader attended our meeting. He confirmed that much will depend on what Westport residents decide to do with the old high school. He has experience with ADA plans from years ago but no recent experience. We agreed that the three members of our commission who are on the Transition Team should meet to discuss updates to the plan and then meet with Jim at some future date.

NEXT MEETING; 7/24/23 AT 3:45 IN THE SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.

