

MINUTES OF MARCH 22, 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, SUE SHERMAN, KIM LEGENDRE

THE MINUTES OF THE 1/24/22 WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

WATER ACCESS:

North Beach: The road department will do some work filling in the gully that has formed and grading the area. The department will also put down the mobility mats we purchased. The beach committee will place a wheelchair accessible table at the beach.

Beach Avenue: We have purchased Geogrids to be placed in the two handicapped parking spots. There is a meeting of the conservation commission to discuss our proposal. We seek the approval of that commission. All our members are urged to attend that meeting.

Hixbridge road landing: The current cost of the project is much higher than the original cost so funding might be an issue.

CURRENT PROJECTS:

Lees Market has a program where it donates 1% of the receipts turned in to them to our commission. Receipts are collected by Country Woolens who will give them to Lees market.

Sign Language Interpreters: After publication of an article in the Standard Times about the ADA requirement that all towns provide sign language interpreters, upon reasonable notice, for Town Meetings Professor Dana Schlang of BCC was contacted to see if she is aware of any sign language interpreters in Bristol County. Professor Schlang heads the deaf studies program at BCC and she was prominently mentioned in the article. That article mentioned that the state has sign language interpreters that the towns can use but they are not always available. Professor Schlang provided contact information for Deaf Services Unlimited, an organization that provides sign language interpreters when asked to do so. All the information was provided to James Hartnett, our town administrator.

Entry to the lower level of the Annex: Dana t, the town recreation director advises that the recreation committee will use surplus funds to improve the walkway leading to the door. She also wants to have an automatic door installed at that location. The inside railing on the ramp leading to the floor also needs repairs.

Personal Care Attendants (PCA): An article in an online article published by the Disability Policy Consortium dpcma.org mentioned that Medicaid does not pay for PCA assistance. The site was brought to our attention by Denise Bouchard of the office of the Select Board. In Massachusetts MASSHealth has repeatedly applied for Medicaid waivers so that the cost of PCA care will be covered. Other resources include mass.gov/pca and southcoast.findhelp.com.

ADA TRANSITION TEAM

Information has been provided to Jim Hartnett, the ADA Transition team leader about the ADA requirements and a brief seminar for team leaders. We will follow up with Mr. Hartnett about scheduling a meeting to discuss what, if any, changes need to be made to the existing plan.

Swings in the two town playgrounds: We agreed to pay for two new disabled child swings and the Select Board approved the expenditure. Martin will follow up with Dana Stewart, the recreation director, to determine the status of the purchase.

There was a discussion about identifying projects in the north end of Westport including a walking path along the part of Watuppa Pond in Westport. Fall River has a very nice, paved path which ends at the Westport town line. Finding funding for such a project will be a challenge.

WEBSITE UPDATES: Rick Grundy has been making improvements to the WCOD website. We discussed things to place on the site and how to ensure that users will be able to easily access and navigate through the site.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS/CONCERNS: Having covered a wide range of topics there was nothing more to add.

NEXT MEETING: 4/25/22 at The Annex

MEETING ADJOURNED