

MINUTES OF THE MAY 23, 2023 MEETING OF THE WESTPORT COMMISSION  
ON DISABILITY

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

THE MEETING OPENED AT 3:50 p.m.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION: Sue Sherman participated via telephone.

THE MINUTES OF OUR LAST MEETING; They were approved without change.

NEW MA BILL TO EXTEND WARRANTY PROTECTION FOR POWER WHEELCHAIRS.

- Extend the period from 1-2 years.

- Reimburse out of pocket costs.

- Holding providers to reasonable timelines for evaluations in emergency situations.

- Providing loaner chairs while a chair is inoperable.

- Requiring providers to stockpile common parts.

- Authorizing the AG to intervene when necessary.

There was a public hearing last week at the legislature on Beacon Hill. Several people attended. For those of us who could not attend, the opportunity to provide written testimonies was offered. It is hoped that the Bill will soon be acted upon by the full Legislature.

TOWN BEACHES AND WHAT IS BEING DONE TO MAKE THEM READY FOR THE NEW SEASON:

Beach Avenue—The GeoGrids were installed and are working well to stabilize the handicapped parking spaces. The placement of the mobility mats has been affected by storm related erosion. Ross Moran of the Land Conservation Trust has advised that he will work with the Highway Department and our commission to determine the best place to put the mats.

North Beach: Martin Costa of our commission is working with Chris Gonsalves of the Highway Department and Sean Leach of the Beach Committee to be sure that the mobility mats are put down and a wheelchair accessible picnic table is placed at the beach area.

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.

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.

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.

Recreation Department: The department is in the process of upgrading the two playgrounds in town. Substantial donations have been received. Dana, the head of the department has requested input from our commission. It is summer camp season and the department has programs designed for disabled children. Our commission continues to be supportive of the department.

ADA Transition Team: Still no plan to meet. Apparently, when the bleachers at the new school were purchased and installed they did not include spaces for students in wheelchairs. This is an area that can be addressed by the transition team. There should be an accessibility plan for people in wheelchairs as well as an evacuation plan. The ADA Coordinator on the team must be involved in the schools, the playgrounds and other areas.

NEXT MEETING; 6/26/23 AT THE SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.