

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 25, 2021 MEETING OF THE WESTPORT COMMISSION ON DISABILITY.

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS; Brian Gallagher, chairman, Anders Newcomer, vice chairman, Martin Costa, Rick Grundy, Ray Phoenix, Sue Sherman.

THE MEETING WAS OPENED AT APPROXIMATELY 3:50.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION: Ray Phoenix and Sue Sherman participated via telephone.

THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2021 MEETING WERE APPROVED.

WATER ACCESS: With respect to the Beach Avenue geogrid placement the commission is still waiting to hear from Sean Leach who submitted the application to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Once we get approval from the state, we take the necessary steps to complete the project.

COVID 19 UPDATE; The town buildings are open to the public, but masks are required when entering the buildings. Booster shots are now available to everyone who is eligible.

THOUGHTS/CONCERNS; Some of our members recently saw articles concerning handicapped drivers in other areas of the country who were stopped by the police for traffic related offenses. When the disabled driver was ordered out of the car and the driver explained that due to his disability, he could not get out of the car without assistance the situation escalated. We will invite a representative of the Westport police department to attend one of our meetings to discuss what training the police officers are given when encountering someone with a disability. There is also a form that can be submitted to the local fire department to alert them to the fact that residents of certain homes are disabled. Once our website is improved, we will place a notification there to inform disabled residents of the availability of this form.

Playground swings: Dana, the town recreation director, has been contacted by Martin Costa about the swings. She advised that she has received another quote and will go with the cheaper of the two quotes. Dana is familiar with the requirements of the town accountant who requires vendor forms when requesting payment. We hope to have the new swings installed prior to the next season.

Our website: Rick Grundy is working on it. Through his work he has become familiar with the requirement for section 508 compliance for website access. Rick has been trying to find the correct person within the town government to deal with to gain to speak to about getting access to the site so changes can be made. During our meeting we learned that Nadine in the planning board office can give us an account which will facilitate the process of gaining the needed access. We discussed the necessity of making the website available to people with different types of disabilities.

ADA transition team: Three of our members, Brian Gallagher, Anders Newcomer and Martin Costa are on this team. Jim Hartnet, the new town administrator is also on the team. The team has not met in recent years and when it does, Jim Hartnet or some other member of the team will have to have received some ADA required training. Martin Costa will contact Jim Hartnet to discuss the issue.

Putting an article in The Shorelines newspaper about the WCOD; who we are, what we have accomplished, what we are currently working on and how we can be contacted. The person at the

paper to contact is Lynda Rego and she can be reached at [lrego2eastbaymediagroup.com](mailto:lrego2eastbaymediagroup.com). We will wait until our website has been improved and is up and running before contacting Ms. Rego.

The new accessible trail at The Westport Woods site: Martin Costa recently spoke to Ross Moran of the Westport Land Conservation Trust; the owner of the Westport Woods site and he was told that an article including this accessible trail may be premature. The Trust just received funding from BayCoast Bank to install the trail. Mr. Moran advised that he hopes the new trail will be completed in the coming spring and available for use late in the spring or early in the coming summer.

Martin Costa has also visited a handicapped accessible trail in Marshfield and will next go to Watertown to see a handicapped accessible trail for the blind. The Audubon Society also has various trails in Massachusetts including one in Dartmouth. Some of these locations have trails for the blind which include ropes, pedestals and benches. These visits will help get useful information for the construction of the trail at Westport Woods and useful information for our website.

There was a discussion about the sidewalks at Westport Point. The sidewalks are cracked and broken up in spots. Residents in the area are concerned that repairs to the sidewalks will create higher curbs making it less aesthetically attractive and more difficult to navigate.

NEXT MEETING; January 24, 2022 in the Town Hall Select Board meeting room.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.