

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 23, 2023 MEETING OF THE WESTPORT COMMISSION ON DISABILITY.

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Brian Gallagher, chairman, Anders Newcomer, vice chairman, Martin Costa, Kim Legendre, Rick Grundy,

OPEN MEETING

REMOTE PARTICIPATION: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS: The minutes of the prior meetings were approved.

BEACH STATUS: The Mobility Mats have been taken up at Beach Avenue and North Beach and put into storage for the winter. Parking at the beaches and looking at the water is an option for the fall and winter seasons. The mats will be put down in time for the 2024 season.

ADA TRANSITION TEAM: The representative of SPRED has been very helpful in putting together and submitting the necessary grant application for the money needed to hire a consultant to update the plan. The cost will be About \$15,000.00. There was also a discussion about the steps that are necessary to ensure access to the town website for individuals with disabilities. We need to find out who is in charge of the town website. We want to be sure that each department, board and commission is accessible. Jim Hartnett, the town administrator, will be contacted.

Perhaps the town website could list the beaches, playgrounds etc. that are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

BILL PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST DISABLED ADULTS IN JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT:

Letters in support of the bill were sent to Representative Paul Schmid and Senator Michael Rodrigues.

ABA-ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS ACT The Act provides that all federal buildings designed, built, or altered after 8/12,68 must be accessible to people with disabilities. People with complaints can file a complaint with the US Access Board which will investigate. The name of the complaining party will be kept anonymous.

NEW PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT CALLED WESTPORT LAKES. A comment was submitted to the Planning Board stating that our commission wants to be sure the development has a sidewalk as required by the Planning Board.

THOUGHTS/CONCERNS: Fire safety: The Fire Department does not have window stickers identifying the location of a disabled person inside the house. Our commission could buy stickers and make them available to town residents. We have to find a company that can design and make the stickers.

Lock boxes can be purchased from the Fire Department for \$75.00. The box holds your house key and can be accessed by the Fire Department in an emergency. The department has a key to open the lock box. The lock box screws onto your house near the door and has a reflector on it so department representatives can locate the box.

The police dispatcher has a disability form that disabled residents should complete and return to the dispatcher. The form will help the police and fire departments when responding to calls at the homes of disabled residents.

The wheelchair warranty bill is working its way through the state legislature.

The School Department in Westport is currently raising funds to put on a Special Olympics for disabled residents. In the past town residents who were interested in participating have had to join the Special Olympics games held in Dartmouth. Kim Legendre will ask members of the school department if there are ways our commission can help.

MEETINGS ON NOVEMBER 27 AND DECEMBER 12 ARE CANCELLED DUE TO THE HOLIDAYS. THE NEXT MEETING IS JANUARY 22, 2024.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.