

MINUTES OF THE 9/27/2021 MEETING OF THE WESTPORT COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

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

THE MEETING WAS OPENED.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION. Ray Phoenix participated remotely.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES; The minutes of the August 23, 2021 meeting were approved.

WATER ACCESS: The mobility mats for Beach Avenue and North Beach have been placed in storage by the Highway Department until next season. Next season we hope to see improvements to North Beach including the grading of the beach area, the placement of the mobility mats and the installation of a wheelchair accessible picnic table by the Beach Committee. We also hope to obtain approval by the state for the installation of geogrids at the handicapped parking area at Beach Avenue. We have obtained approval of the Select Board for the usage of our funds to purchase the geogrids. The Highway Department has agreed to install them. We have received positive feedback from the Conservation Commission and the Westport Land Conservation Trust. We have committed \$5,000.00 of our funds to the Hixbridge Landing improvement project and hope to see some positive movement on the project in the coming months. However, as Sue Sherman pointed out, there may be issues with respect to the source of the more than \$400,000.00 required to complete the project.

COVID-19 UPDATE: The public buildings in town are now all open to the public but the wearing of masks in the buildings is required. Booster shots are available for those who are 65 and over plus those with compromised medical conditions.

THOUGHTS/CONCERNS: Months ago we spoke about getting state funding to retrofit homes to make them more accessible. Changes might include adding grab bars and ramps, widening doorways etc. A state representative sent us brochures prepared by the state concerning the process related to applying for funds. Now with the availability of American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds in the state and towns it might be easier to obtain the funds needed to retrofit a home.

Further discussion included such topics as finding ways to get a short statement about the WCOD in the Shorelines paper to advertise who we are, what we have done and what we hope to do. Our commission is an advocate for disabled residents.

Discussions also included grant writing, advocacy for improving the sidewalks in town, improvements to our website, the ADA Transition Plan, the bike path committee and a possible follow up article about the WCOD>

OUR NEXT MEETING: October 25, 2021 at the Town Hall Annex.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.