



**CHELMSFORD COMMISSION
ON
DISABILITIES**



RECEIVED

2020-11-10

8:32 AM

TOWN OF CHELMSFORD

PATRICIA E. DZURIS

TOWN CLERK

**CHELMSFORD COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
C.C.O.D.**

**OCTOBER 13, 2020 FINAL MEETING MINUTES
DATE ISSUED: NOVEMBER 9, 2020**

**The Commission held its October, 2020 meeting on
Tuesday October 13, 2020, at 7 PM
In the Town Hall Gymnasium.**

**The Gymnasium was set up to allow for a meeting observing proper
COVID – 19 social distancing protocols.**

**The meeting was held one week early on the 2nd Tuesday of the
month since the Gymnasium will be in use for elections on the
regularly scheduled meeting date of October 20.**

Members Present: Anne Smith, Paul Smith, Joanne Stanway and
Katrina Schmidt.

Members Absent: Len Olenchak, Jad Duggan, Terry Doherty.

The Meeting was presided by Anne Smith, Chairperson.

**Due to the absence of several members and the presence of two new
members the meeting was held as an informal discussion session
rather than as a formal meeting.**

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

CCOD welcomes new members Joanne Stanway and Katrina Schmidt.

Katrina has spent most of her life working with people with disabilities, including being a guardian, a strong advocate to help people who cannot speak for themselves to get the services that they deserve and that are their rights, and making sure that no one takes advantage of them. Her focus of concern includes handicapped access to public facilities, wheelchair ramps, entranceways, handicapped accessible restrooms, handicapped parking and related issues. Just because you have a disability does not mean you cannot reach for your dreams.

Joanne Stanway serves on several Town committees and organizations involved in open space stewardship and conservation, and has been a life long advocate for persons with disabilities. Her concerns include access to public areas for persons with disabilities, handicapped parking and related issues. She brought photos of several areas of concern in Chelmsford where access for persons with disabilities needs to be improved.

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT/ Paul Smith

The last meeting of the CCOD was held on February 18, 2020, nearly eight months ago. Paul Smith presented the February 18, 2020 meeting minutes to the CCOD members on February 29, and the minutes were approved by the members via email at that time.

TREASURER'S REPORT

CCOD Treasurer Len Olenchak was absent due to medical issues and was not able to prepare and present a Treasurer's report. Information will be provided to the members via email as soon as it becomes available.

ANSWERING MACHINE/ Anne Smith

Anne Smith stated that there have been no new messages received on the CCOD Hotline. The CCOD Hotline number is 978-250-9810 and is checked at least on a weekly basis.

SOCIAL MEDIA/ Paul Smith

One of our main goals for 2020 is to look for new content for the Facebook Page, ways to reengage Town residents who were following it in the past, and to generate more interest in CCOD and advocacy for the disabled from Town residents.

Joanne Stanway agreed to become a new CCOD Facebook Page administrator.

ACCESS ISSUES/ Len Olenchak

Anne Smith spoke with Len Olenchak via telephone regarding access issues in the Town. Len stated that he has been notified of several minor access issues since the last meeting and that he is actively involved with finding solutions. He is also continuing to work with the Building Inspector and the owners at several locations that have been discussed at previous meetings.

OLD BUSINESS

Large Print Menus/ All

The Large Print Menus initiative has been on hold during the pandemic since most restaurants have been closed or have been operating under

COVID – 19 restrictions. We will restart the initiative once things get back to normal.

All CCOD members will continue to do their best to promote the Large Print Menus Initiative with the owners/ managers of local restaurants, and to get as many local residents interested as possible. This may include sending out follow up letters to the restaurants who were contacted previously, revisiting them, etc. We will also continue to post information about the Large Print Menus Initiative on our Facebook page.

Scholarships for 2020

The CCOD awarded two scholarships of \$500 each to students with disabilities who graduated from Nashoba Tech in June, 2020. The students were Abigail Poor and Kaleigh Walsh, both of Chelmsford. Funds for the scholarships were taken from the CCOD Treasury, obtained from handicapped parking violations, collected by the Police Department. The scholarships were given to the Nashoba Tech guidance counselor and were announced at the virtual graduation ceremony on June 3, 2020.

Volunteer Fair – March 7th

The 2020 Chelmsford Volunteer Fair was held on Saturday, March 7, from 1:30 to 4 PM, at the Senior Center, located at 75 Groton Road. CCOD was represented by Jad Duggan, Joe O’Neill, Anne Smith and Paul Smith.

Conflict of Interest Law Education

All members are required to review the information sent out by the Town Clerk’s Office regarding Conflict of Interest Law Education to determine if they are currently in compliance, or to complete any steps needed to bring themselves into compliance.

CCOD Mission Statement

The members voted at the February 13, 2020 meeting to approve the CCOD Mission Statement, which was sent to the Town Clerk's Office and posted on the CCOD Facebook Page.

NEW BUSINESS

Statistics on Disabled Residents of Chelmsford

Katrina Schmidt raised the question of how the CCOD defines a person with a disability. According to the CCOD's By – Laws, “a person with a disability is defined as any person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment which limits one or more major life activities.
- Has a record of such impairment or is regarded as having such impairments as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act of 2008”.

Disabilities may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Blind/ visually impaired.
- Mobility impaired.
- Deaf/ hearing impaired.
- Cognitive defects.
- Physical impairments.
- PTSD.
- Autism.
- Recovering addicts.

Katrina also asked if there any available statistics on the numbers of persons with disabilities in Chelmsford. The Council on Aging and the Age Friendly Chelmsford Project have been working on similar initiatives so we might be able to get some information from them.

As of about one year ago, we had the following information:

- The number of persons aged 60 and over in Chelmsford (as of March, 2019) was around 9100.
- Blind/ visually impaired – According to the Assessor’s Office, a total of 25 residents applied for the blindness property tax exemption. According to the Perkins School for the Blind there are 76 legally blind and visually impaired persons in Chelmsford (those registered with Perkins).

Compiling a set of up to date, reliable statistics would be a good focus project for the CCOD to work on during this coming year. Potential sources of information could include the following:

- The Council on Aging and the Age Friendly Chelmsford Project.
- The Tax Assessor’s Office.
- The Police and Fire Departments.
- The Veterans’ Services Office.
- Social Media.
- State Organizations such as the Massachusetts Office on Disabilities and other State Organizations serving the disabled.

Handicapped Parking

Katrina Schmidt mentioned several locations in Chelmsford where she has seen the Police issuing tickets for illegal parking in handicapped spaces, including the parking lot at Kohls/ Staples. The income from these fines should be coming to the CCOD, and we will check on the current status with Len Olenchak.

LIAISON REPORT/ Jad Duggan

From: **John A Duggan** <jaduggan1015@gmail.com>
 Date: Sat, Nov 7, 2020 at 4:05 PM
 Subject: CCOD October 2020
 To: ken@cpfinancialadvisors.com <ken@cpfinancialadvisors.com>

Chelmsford Commission On Disabilities (CCOD), met at the Town Offices gymnasium on the 13th at 7:00 PM.

Welcome new members, Joanne Stanway and Katrina Schmidt.

Len Olenchak has been most active on access issues. He was not present but was able to speak with Chairwoman, Anne Smith about several of those issues.

Our large print menu initiative has generally been welcomed by area restaurants, however the pandemic has made this a moot point since so many are closed or open for take out only. We will get back on track hopefully if the virus gives us a new normal. Large print menu information will continue on our facebook page.

CCOD awarded 2 scholarships in March. Congratulations to Nashoba Tech students Abigail Poor and Kaleigh Walsh, both of Chelmsford. Funds came from CCOD treasury, sourced from violations in handicapped parking spaces.

The annual Volunteer Fair was held in March at the Senior Center. CCOD was represented by Anne Smith, Paul Smith, Joe O'Neill, and Jad Duggan. Always a humbling experience.

Katrina Schmidt asked if CCOD had a definition of disability. Our bylaws include people with a record of physical or mental impairment as defined in sec. 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Amendment Act of 2008.

Also: Blind, Visually impaired, Mobility Impaired, Deaf / Hearing impaired, Cognitive defects, Physical Impairments, PTSD, Autism, Recovering addicts.

Katrina also asked about available statistics of disabled residents in the town. More to come.

Next CCOD meeting: Tuesday, November 17th, 7:00 PM

Respectfully submitted
John A. Duggan, Liaison

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the CCOD is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul V. Smith, Secretary