



**CHELMSFORD COMMISSION
ON
DISABILITIES**



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

**JANUARY 15, 2019 REVISED MEETING MINUTES
DATE ISSUED: JANUARY 24, 2019**

**The Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting on
Tuesday January 15, 2019, at 7 PM
At the Town Offices**

Members Present: Anne Smith, Jad Duggan, Francis Gilroy, Joe O'Neill, Terry Doherty, Paul Smith.

Members Absent: Len Olenchak.

The Meeting was presided by Anne Smith, Chairman.

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Audio – Described Content at the Merrimack Repertory Theatre

Chelmsford resident Cynthia (Cindy) McLain attended the meeting and discussed an initiative she is working on to promote the offering of audio – described content at performances of the Merrimack Repertory Theater (MRT) in Lowell. Currently she is trying to evaluate the potential demand for this service in Lowell and surrounding communities, including

Chelmsford. Ms. McLain previously met with CCOD members Anne Smith, Len Olenchak and Paul Smith to discuss this matter on December 20, 2018.

She provided data that she has compiled from the Perkins School for the Blind (Perkins) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) regarding the numbers of legally blind and visually impaired persons in Chelmsford, Lowell, Westford, Tyngsboro, Dracut, Tewkesbury, Andover, Billerica, Carlisle, Methuen and Bedford.

According to Perkins there are a total of 813 legally blind and visually impaired persons, (who are patrons of Perkins) in the eight communities she researched, including 76 in Chelmsford.

According to the MCB there are a total of 2890 legally blind persons in the eight communities she researched. For privacy reasons the MCB did not provide a separate total for Chelmsford. Also according to the MCB, the breakdown by age for legally blind persons in the eight communities she researched is as follows (approximately):

- Age 65+ - 60%.
- Age 14 and under – 5%.
- Age 14-65 – 35%.

Questions that would need to be answered include the following:

- Total cost for implementing audio described programming, including accommodations for the audio describer during the performance.
- Transportation to and from the performances, which is a major problem for many persons with disabilities.
- Finding ways to let people who might be interested in the programs know when they are being offered.

Selectman Ken Lefebvre also attended the meeting and offered to discuss the proposal with the Town Manager to see what information or other assistance the Town could provide.

Ms. McLain will provide a written summary for the CCOD to reference in exploring ways in which it could help in this initiative, which will also be passed on to the appropriate Town officials.

Lack of Handicapped Parking Spaces at Varney Park

Selectman Ken Lefebvre indicated that a complaint was raised at a recent meeting of the Vinyl Square Action Committee concerning the lack of handicapped parking spaces in the parking lot at Varney Park and the beach on Freeman Lake, located on Adams Street in North Chelmsford. CCOD/ ADA Coordinator will inspect the parking lot and report back to the Town.

SECRETARY'S REPORT/Paul Smith

Paul Smith presented the December 18, 2018 meeting minutes. Joe O'Neill made a motion to approve the December 18, 2018 meeting minutes. Jad Duggan seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT/ Francis Gilroy

Francis Gilroy presented the Treasurer's Report for December 31, 2018. Paul Smith made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for December 31, 2018. Terry Doherty seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Answering Machine/ Anne Smith

One call was received on the answering machine from Terry Doherty, on January 8, requesting help in preparing an accident report, since he was unable to write due to an injury he received. He resolved the issue on his own before the CCOD responded to the call.

Access Issues/ Len Olenchak

According to information received from Len Olenchak prior to the meeting, he received several calls regarding minor access issues from Town residents since the last meeting, and has been able to resolve them satisfactorily.

Large Print Menus/ All

Members looked at a draft information packet that was prepared by Anne Smith and Paul Smith for presentation to restaurants regarding the large print menus initiative, and also discussed it with Selectman Ken Lefebvre. Ken agrees with the CCOD members that this packet should be provided free of charge to restaurant owners in order to promote the initiative.

The draft packet includes the following:

- An introductory letter explaining the purpose of the program and requesting the participation of local restaurants.
- Suggested guidelines for font type and size, special effects, etc.
- A sample copy of a large print menu (also including a braille menu in case of interest).
- Stickers and/ or placards for placement in the entryway of the restaurant to inform patrons of the availability of large print menus on request.

Ken Lefebvre suggested the packet could also include a list of tips for restaurant staff to guide them in providing assistance to patrons with visual impairments.

Francis Gilroy suggested that the packet could include information on alternative formats in addition to large print menus, such as braille menus, audio information, visual aids and other forms of technological assistance.

The cost of printing the information packets could either be reimbursable by the Town or paid for out of the CCOD's budget.

Ken Lefebvre is planning to discuss the information packet with the Town Manager and receive his input, after which the CCOD will proceed with printing of an initial number of packets and begin to distribute them to local restaurants.

Meeting Protocol/ Anne Smith

Anne Smith requested that members be aware at all times of the proper protocol for meetings, such as limiting discussions to reasonable lengths, avoiding long tangential discussions, staying on topic, etc. This will contribute to keeping the duration of meetings within reasonable lengths, and ensuring that discussions are productive at all times.

Adaptive Bike Program – Anne Smith

On November 30, 2018 the CCOD received an email from a representative of the Acton Commission on Disabilities, who is working on an adaptive bike program to make adaptive biking more available to people with disabilities and senior citizens in the region. Adaptive bikes include recumbent three-wheeled trikes, hand cycles, and side-by-side bikes. The program would primarily be focused on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, and a bike shop in Acton has said it might be willing to offer and maintain adaptive bikes for rent on the rail trail.

They are gathering a list of potentially interested stakeholders including disability commissions, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail representatives, Council on Aging representatives and others.

A meeting to discuss the way forward on this measure has been scheduled for Thursday, January 31, from 7 – 8:30 PM, at the Acton Recreation Department, located at 50 Audubon Drive in Acton. All are invited and several CCOD members have indicated they plan to attend.

Ethics Training – Francis Gilroy

All CCOD members should have received an email from the Town Clerk on December 10, 2018 providing the mandatory annual notice to all

municipal employees concerning the conflict of interest law education requirements. Members should review the information attached to the email and confirm their receipt of the conflict of interest law summary by following the instructions in the email by April 5th.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought up at the meeting.

LIAISON REPORT/ Jad Duggan

From: **John A Duggan** <jaduggan1015@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Jan 23, 2019 at 11:02 PM

Subject: Chelmsford Commission on Disabilities meeting

To: George Dixon <gdixon10@hotmail.com>

The Chelmsford Commission on Disabilities held it's January meeting on Tuesday, the 15th at the Town Offices at 7:00 PM. Present: Chair, Anne Smith, Secretary, Paul Smith, Treasurer, Francis Gilroy, members: Terry Doherty, Joe O'Neill, and Jad Duggan.

Also Selectman, Ken Lefebvre and for public input local resident, Cindy McLain.

Ms McLain is advocating for the addition of Audio Described Content, (ADC), at performances of the Merrimack Repertory Theater in Lowell. How much interest will there be for this service? How will it be promoted? Would costs be supported by sponsors? This would benefit visually impaired theater patrons. There may be other questions.

Progress continues on our efforts to encourage large print menus in local restaurants. Selectman Ken Lefebvre will be discussing this large print effort (as well as ADC at MRT and questions of same). Thank you Selectman Lefebvre.

CCOD has been in communication with Acton Commission on Disabilities who want to make adaptive bikes safer and more available to local riders on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. A meeting about this effort will be held Thursday, January 31, 7:00 to 8:30 PM @ Acton Recreation Dept, 50 Audubon Dr Acton. Interested parties are invited.

The next CCOD meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 19, 2019, 7:00 PM at the Town Offices.

Respectfully Submitted

John A. Duggan, Liaison

ADJOURNMENT

Jad Duggan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Paul Smith seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the CCOD is scheduled for Tuesday, February 19, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul V. Smith, Secretary