

Chelmsford Commission on Disabilities
Tuesday, January 17, 2023
Meeting Minutes

Attending:

Joanne Stanway, Katrina Schmidt, Jose Negron

The meeting started at 7:01 p.m.

Building Commissioner Report & General Discussion

255 North Road – Dartmouth Group sent two emails in response to Jose’s query. Rose Garden One to begin elevator renovation in February. Joanne asked about an improvement in open communication between residents and Dartmouth Group and ensuring safety of resident in case of emergency. Jose reported no update – the Board did not schedule a site visit as discussed. Also no update from Fire or Police who were to have visited 255 North Road together. Katrina asked if CCOD dropped the ball; Jose responded that we are doing what we can considering they are not required to comply because it is a condo association. Our hope was they would do more than what was required by law. Joanne acknowledged we have no real authority – our role is to listen to concerns of the community and to try to act which we did. She suggested that where we can be more helpful is to have a resource directory for when there is another complex renovation or other need for residents with disabilities. She also suggested coordinating better with public safety – coordinating with CCOD – and doing a better job of liaising with town departments better.

Katrina suggested that Commission members have some kind of identification we can present when representing CCOD. She said she felt uncomfortable talking with people about the 255 North Road situation.

Jose said Dartmouth Group proceeded the way they did under legal counsel. He did not feel as though they were at fault because they had legal counsel. He said the best way to mitigate is through communication and respect and suggested we use 255 North Road as a case study to avoid future issues – including through social media. Joanne added that CCOD needs to be more proactive. She added her frustration with pushback to going above and beyond what is legally required. Katrina suggested collaborating with other organizations that touch the disability community. Jose suggested hosting public forums on different topics. Joanne agreed, and said we need to increase our visibility, recruit members, and do that level set we’ve been discussing for months.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Joanne Stanway
Chair