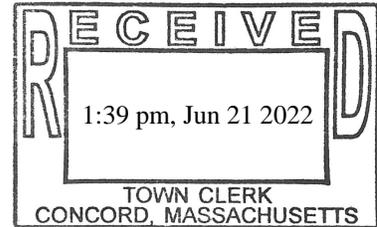


Concord Commission on Disability Meeting

Minutes

May 12, 2022



Present: Jean Goldsberry, Chair, Marybeth Barker, Jennifer Brooke, Linda Escobedo, Meryl Schwartz, and Karen Young (via Zoom)

Absent: Bonnie Albright, Janet Beyer, Lloyd Price

Guests: Sarah Nechamen (Disabled Persons Protection Commission) Mark Gailus

Linda Escobedo is the new member to the Commission from the Select Board.

Minutes from the April 21 meeting were not approved, pending Commission members' request to have additional time to review. Minutes will be presented at our next meeting for approval.

Note: Order of the agenda was adjusted to accommodate guests' schedules.

New Business

Sarah Nechamen/Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC): Jean introduced Sarah, the Outreach and Training Specialist for the DPPC. The DPPC is an independent state agency that addresses abuse reporting by caregivers against adults with disabilities and neglect of persons with disabilities between the ages of 18-59. The Department of Children and Family handles ages 0-17 and persons aged 60 and older are under the auspices of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Sarah's presentation was an overview of the DPPC's responsibilities, including how to file an abuse report and the steps taken once the report is filed. An investigator is assigned to the case and steps are taken to support the victim and to prevent future abuse. Once a report is filed, the agency then must decide whether or not to keep the employee. Reports are sent to other agencies, and to the State Police. Sarah explained the role of mandated reporters, designated as such because of their professional roles as they are more aware of abuse and neglect and are legally required to report. Proof of abuse is not necessary in order to file a report, only a suspicion that something is happening. To not report is a criminal offense.

Sarah asked for questions and there was considerable discussion among the members. DPPC receives many reports of neglect because it is a gray area.

Personal safety is priority and often the DPPC doesn't know who is "at fault. Marybeth addressed the issue of dignity of risk. People have the right to make poor decisions. Do they have the capacity to understand is the crucial question in these situations. Other comments focused on abuse related to emotional ties, as well as to financial abuse, which is not under the purview of the DPPC.

Carmen Reiss /Town Meeting Update: Carmen outlined the accommodations provided at Town Meeting. Hearing assisted devices were available, mask-only seating was located in the auditorium and between 2/3 to 3/4 of attendees in the gym were also masked. Adjustable microphones were provided. Closed captioning was only available on Sunday due to equipment issues and prohibitive cost. Carmen announced that Minuteman Media is purchasing new equipment and that in the future, CC will be available.

There was discussion among members about voting and why it is not feasible to allow voting privileges for remote attendees, primarily because of state requirements. How can there be meaningful deliberation with 12,000 remote viewers, and how is it possible to verify their voting status. Jennifer expressed frustration with the process as it exists and questioned how to make this work. There are many citizens who, for one reason or another, legitimately cannot attend and therefore cannot vote. Carmen noted that Wayland is experimenting with a remote open Town Meeting which would require a change to state law. Jean suggested reaching out to the appropriate persons in Wayland to learn more about this effort.

Old Business

Transportation Advisory Committee: Meryl has not been attending the TAC meetings recently. She will contact Nick Pappas, Chair, and follow up before our next meeting.

Junction Village Traffic: Marybeth updated the Commission on both the short and long term solutions to date. Junction Park is a multi-use space that must be accessible and able to accommodate all users, including both pedestrians and bikers of all abilities. It is expected that with the opening of the Route 2 bridge there will be a significant increase in bike traffic coming through the park. For the short term, none of the many proposed plans seemed viable and survey responses indicated opposition to dismounting and walking bikes through the park. The agreed upon solution is to install archways at both ends of the park, clearly indicating the space is a park, and signage will be

added to indicate it is a shared space. The emphasis will be on creating visual awareness that the park is a different space from the rail trail.

For the long term, the plans are far more costly and implementation is yet to be addressed. Ideally there will be a separate bike lane which will require shifting the bio-retention area. In the broad conceptual plans there will be a separation between cyclists and pedestrians including visuals showing cyclists and pedestrians where to go. The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee is not tasked with budget, costs, nor the timeline for signage, etc. The Committee has provided the survey, collated responses, and come up with the various plans but they are not the decision makers. Commission members expressed thanks to Marybeth for her participation on the Advisory Committee and for representing the Commission in this endeavor.

New Business

Picnic in the Park: Jean was asked if the COD would like to have a table set up at Picnic in the Park on July 4. This would be an opportunity to distribute information about our Commission and what we do. Meryl agreed to volunteer. Jean has a draft of a brochure that she will update. We also have the windshield cards (reminders to not park in handicap parking) and Autism Awareness patches, along with possible other related items.

Public Comment

Mark Gailus commented on Articles 46 and 47 that were presented at Town Meeting related to improvements to the Reformatory Branch Trail. Article 46 asked for a study of the RBT, and did not pass, but Article 47 asked to keep the trail as is and passed by an overwhelming majority. However, Mark acknowledged and agreed that the trail should be fully accessible. He added that he will include accessibility issues when working with the DPW and Director of Natural Resources on the RBT. Mark expressed an interest in better understanding the role of the Commission.

Correspondence and Miscellaneous

Jean noted that Kate Hodges was the ADA Coordinator for the Town. Now that she has resigned, the Commission would like input into who is appointed to this position. Linda responded that there is ongoing transition with the town administration and the Select Board has a lot on their plate. This transitioned into a discussion around the necessary collaboration or association between the Building Inspector and the Commission because the

BI is the last stop before buildings are approved. It was suggested that there be a more structured relationship between the BI and the COD.

Meryl asked about the status of Gerow Park and would it be possible to request a tour or at least ask to see the plans at some point before the project is completed.

Jean asked about the status of White Pond. Linda replied that it is scheduled to open in June.

Next meeting: June 9, 2022 at 5:00 p.m., via Zoom.

A move to adjourn was made and seconded at 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Young