Westwood Disability Commission

January 12, 2018 9:15 A.M.

Selectmen's Meeting Room

Town Hall

**Minutes**

Attendees:

Commission Members: Tom Barner, Anne Berry-Goodfellow, MaryAnne Carty, Fran MacQueen, Jette Meglan, Jude O'Hara, Connie Rizoli, Mary Sethna, Charles Taylor

Guests: Polly Attridge, Rania Kelly, SEPAC; Jessica Pugliesi, WPS Transitional Specialist; Nicole Banks, Director Westwood Recreation Department, Sheila Moylan, June St. Playground volunteer coordinator, Nancy White, playground consultant.

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**Agenda item**: Approval of Minutes

November 17, 2017 Minutes Approved

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**Agenda item**: New Business - Women’s Recovery From Addiction Program (WRAP) Human Rights Committee (HRC)

Jude O’Hara is working with the WRAP HRC and is seeking volunteers for the HRC. The WRAP is located inTaunton. A minimal time commitment is involved as the HRC meets quarterly at the convenience of the members. Anyone interested in additional information should contact Jude. Anne suggested that Jude contact the Disability Law Center and the Mental Health Legal Advisors to solicit volunteers.

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**Agenda item**: June Street Playground

Nicole Banks, the Director of the Westwood Recreation Department attended the meeting to provide the Commission with an update on plans to build a new playground on Pheasant Hill at June Street. Nicole was accompanied by neighborhood volunteer coordinator Sheila Moylan and playground consultant Nancy White.

Neighborhood fundraising is near complete with contributions form community members and local businesses including Roche Brothers. In addition, the Recreation Department has arranged to repurpose equipment formerly used at Downey School. the Westwood Department of Public Works will maintain the equipment once the playground is installed.

Nancy White shared the current plans for the playground. Materials and equipment were selected for durability and suitability for use by children of different ages, stature and ability. The playground surface will be wood fiber augmented by replaceable landing pads at the end of the slides to minimize likelihood of injury during play. A perimeter is necessary to retain the playground wood fiber surface. Access to the playground site is still under review. It was noted that the June St. site is a “pocket park” without a parking lot resulting in less use than other playgrounds in town. The Commission wants to make sure that the playground is open to all users and recommended that the Recreation Department consider plans to provide access to all either by site improvements or loaner equipment.

Nicole mentioned that the main playground for children of all ages is the School Street playground which provides parking as well as wheeled access. She said that the Recreation Department is seeking a revenue source for playground maintenance and improvement. In the past, the Westwood Young Women’s Club provided some funds from their “Letters from Santa” program. Anne mentioned that the Town receives revenue from enforcing appropriate Handicapped Parking use, and will speak to Town officials to suggest that as a source for funding improvements for wheeled access.

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**Agenda item**: High School Transition Fair

Jessica Pugliese, Westwood High School Transition Specialist, provided an update on plans for the High School Transition Fair for Students aged 14-22. The Transition Fair will be held on February 7, 2018 in the HS Cafeteria. Jessica has confirmation from 11 attendees including Autism Housing Pathways, NE Autism Center, the local ARC, and local representatives of state agencies including DDS and MRC. She has also received donations from Wegmans and Roche Brothers.

She is awaiting a response from the Federation for Children with Special Needs and Higher Education. Connie Rizoli offered to contact Rich Robeson at the Federation to request participation. Anne offered to contact individuals involved in disability access in Higher Education.

Anne asked Commission members to attend the Transition Fair to be a resource to the parent and student attendees.

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**Agenda item**: Agenda for March 9 meeting

John Decker has recently been appointed as the Westwood Fire Chief. The Commission will invite Chief Decker to our March meeting to discuss the availability of information on disabled residents for Emergency Planning and to First Responders.