

Westwood Disability Commission
September 13, 2019 9:15 A.M.
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Hall

Minutes

Attendees:

Commission Members: Anne Berry-Goodfellow, MaryAnne Carty, Marianne LeBlanc, Fran MacQueen, Jette Meglan, Mary Sethna, Charles Taylor, Rania Kelly, Melissa Levin, Hilary Ryan

Guest: Megan Kobold Brenk

Agenda item: Approval of Minutes

May 10, 2019 Minutes Approved.

Agenda item: New Business – Introduction of new members

Welcomed 3 new members to the Commission

Agenda item: New Business - Presentation by MeganKobold Brenk, Co-chair SEPAC

Megan is actively working on succession planning within the SEPAC leadership team to keep things fresh. SEPAC's goal is to grow the organization and bring in more parents. SEPAC is working to have concrete liaisons at each school. Megan is still working to recruit parent liaisons at the middle school and high schools. Parents of the younger children are the future leaders of SEPAC. Liaisons are tasked with linking SEPAC to the PTOs. At Downey last year SEPAC rep, Liz Pollan, pushed for a seat on the PTO board. That liaison is working to make Downey School events more accessible to all. Downey is a good example of what SEPAC can do at the other schools.

Melissa explained the disability awareness program utilized in Newton Public Schools where students with disabilities put on programs for all students to explain their disabilities ("Same and Different Like Me"). Newton has curricula that explains various disabilities including autism, hear-impairment, etc. She will provide further information to the Commission. The Commission agreed that it is a great idea to have students talking to other students in schools about their disabilities, especially with older students teaching younger students.

This year another focus of SEPAC is connecting families. SEPAC held a family social at the end of the 2018-2019 school year and they have a start of school event coming up. SEPAC may focus this year on diagnosis-specific events addressing, for example, ADHD and autism.

Megan also notes that for students with disabilities, summer camp opportunities may be extremely expensive for parents. It was suggested that the Town Youth and Family Services consider providing aides at the summer recreation programs. MaryAnne Carty mentioned that the Community Chest may be able to provide scholarship funds for summer camp programs for students with disabilities. Megan suggests that if staff at the recreation programs were trained, they would be better able to engage participating individuals with disabilities.

Megan also informed the Commission that this year Westwood has a Special Olympic Developmental Sports program.

Agenda item: New Business – 2019-2020 Topics and Speakers for Regular Meetings

We hope to engage our new members for potential speakers.

We have also been talking about how most Town boards do not know that the COD exist. As part of an education process we will attend a FinCom meeting to inform them about the Commission and the need for Town Departments to be aware of residents with disabilities.

Marianne LeBlanc will contact FinCom to get on a Fall meeting agenda.

Goals for this year include: liaison with Conservation Commission, as well as the Pedestrian and Bike Safety Committee

Agenda item: Old Business – Comprehensive Plan Revision 2020

Abby McCabe has told MaryAnne that the Comprehensive Planning Committee’s goal is to have draft goals by Sept. 25.

http://www.townhall.westwood.ma.us/gov/boardcomm/active_boards_committees_n_commissions/comprehensive_plan_steering_committee/default.htm. Despite the deadline, MaryAnne invite Abby to come to our October meeting.

Anne reviewed the Commission’s revised facilities comments that still make clear that Town Hall is not accessible. Jette also mentioned that our observations need to include the issue access problems for early absentee voting that can only take place at Town Hall.

Jim McCarthy at DPW is going to be updating the ADA self evaluation and transition plan and to then possibly apply for a Municipal Americans with Disabilities Access Improvement grant

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-about-the-municipal-americans-with-disabilities-act-ada-improvement-grant>.

Agenda item: Old Business – Emergency Planning

Mass Emergency Management Hurricane preparedness

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/hurricane-safety-tips>

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/build-an-emergency-kit>

<http://cdd.unm.edu/dhpd/pdfs/FifthEditionTipsSheet.pdf>

Agenda item: Old Business - Housing

Jette spoke of transition challenges when students with disabilities finish their secondary education. These students grow up in town, participate in community events and even have jobs in the local community. As soon as they turn 22, however, and are looking to find independent or supportive

housing, it is most likely that there will not be appropriate housing here in their own community, thus losing the community support that was created during K-12 public education. Now with a couple of new group homes in the planning stage, it would be great if the town would require that Town residents get preference for occupancy in these homes.

Agenda item: For your information

1. Abilities Expo Boston Convention and Exhibition Center 9/13-15, 2019
<https://www.abilities.com/boston/>
2. Age Well With HESSCO Day- 15th annual conference held at Lake Pearl, Wrentham September 19, 2019, 9AM. \$10/pp includes breakfast and lunch.
<https://hessco.org/age-well-day-2019/>
3. Westwood Day - September 21, 2019
http://www.townhall.westwood.ma.us/gov/depts/human_services_/recreate/wday/default.htm
4. Mass Office on Disability (MOD) Summit September 27, 2019, 8:30-12:30 at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. <https://www.mass.gov/event/2019-disability-summit-2019>
5. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council (MASILC) Independent Living Conference 2019 September 27, 2019, 8:30 - 4:00 at the Marlborough Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel
<https://www.masilc.org/ilconference/ilconference2019>
6. Autism Speaks Walk, Boston Common, October 6, 2019.
http://act.autismspeaks.org/site/TR/Walk/NewEngland?fr_id=4402&pg=entry.
7. Mass Office on Disability Community Access Monitor Training Sept. 11 in Lowell, and October 9 in Falmouth, MA. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/community-access-monitor-training>.
8. Transition Conference: Charting the Life Course during Transition Years - Nov. 16, 2019, at College of the Holy Cross. \$75/pp. <https://thearcofmass.org/conference/>

Agenda item: Adjournment and Next Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.

The next meeting will be on October 18, 2019 at 9:15 am

Meeting dates for year: 10/18, 11/15, 1/10, 2/14, 3/13, 5/8, 6/12