Westwood Disability Commission

February 23, 2021, 10:30 a.m.

Via Zoom

Draft

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Commission Members: Anne Berry Goodfellow, Jette Meglan, MaryAnne Carty, Marianne LeBlanc, Fran MacQueen, Connie Rizoli, Hilary Ryan

Guests:

Christopher Coleman, Westwood Town Manager

Lotte Diomede, Smile Mass.

**Agenda item:** Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 21, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.

**Agenda Item:** Hanlon School Building Project

Anne Berry Goodfellow forwarded to members this morning a draft letter which she proposes to send to School Committee Member Maya Plotkin relative to the project. Anne asked committee members to review and comment before she sends to Maya. Anne reported that Maya has asked for a volunteer from the Commission to work on resource group regarding the new school building .

MaryAnne Carty reported that Maya is very happy that the Commission is involved.

**Agenda Item:** Housing at 45 Clapboardtree Street

Connie reported that there will be hearing at the Planning Board on this tonight. The developers are requesting permission to build three more units. MaryAnne Carty reported that the Planning Board recently sent her materials on this which she will forward. The question is whether the units will be handicapped accessible. Questions need to be asked of building inspector regarding accessibility.

**Agenda Item:** Lotte Diomede, Smile Mass.

Lotte addressed the Commission. She is mother of a 20 year-old disabled child and the founder of Smile Mass. The company’s name is an acronym of "**S**mall **M**iracles **i**n **L**ife **E**xist” formed as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Its founding purpose is to help families of children or adults with disabilities enjoy happy, healthy vacations and recreation experiences. SMILE Mass strives to become the leading resource for handicap accessibility in vacation and recreation experiences. The organization has continued to envision inclusive recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It has purchased and made beach wheelchairs available for use at Cape Cod beaches. Smile Mass lends adapted equipment to families for a day, a week or longer. Inventory includes: floating beach wheelchairs, Rifton bath chair, white bath chair with back, high performance Hoyt running chair, blue Freedom running stroller, hoyer lift, and a portable ramp. Smile Mass purchased and outfitted a vacation home that families can rent: https://smilemass.org/initiative/beach-house/

Lotte explained that Smile Mass envisions the creation of other adaptive and inclusive recreation opportunities, including the building of a club house for disabled young adults, which would provide recreational facilities for families, and where disabled people can remain healthy and safe, mentally and physically. Lotte notes that the adaptive equipment necessary for a number of recreational activities are very expensive and difficult to transport. SMILE Mass is currently considering two potential locations in Stowe, MA.

Lotte offered to help our efforts in Westwood in whatever way she can. She noted that the Disability Commission in Sudbury, on which she has served, has had access to fines paid for illegal parking in handicapped spaces. Their Commission has used those funds to purchase Braille signs for a school and has also contributed $10,000 toward an adult exercise program for disabled individuals. Chris Coleman asked Lotte to provide information regarding this initiative (which she said she would do) and he promised to look into this for us.

**Agenda Item:** New Business

Anne announced that the Mass. Office on Disability will be hosting a webinar on April 14 at 11:30 to include MOD updates and initiatives, outdoor dining access responsibilities, and a question and answer session Anne will circulate the information.

MaryAnne Carty reported that Habitat for Humanity will be building in Westwood.

**Agenda item**: Adjournment and Next Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 12:12 p.m.

The next meeting will be on March 30, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.