

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY'S RECORD

February 13, 2024

Approved June 11, 2024

ATTENDANCE AND CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rania Kelly at 7:40 p.m. via Zoom webinar. The following Commission members were present: Stephanie Finegold, Rania Kelly, Missy O'Regan, Elizabeth Polin, Connie Rizoli, Mary Sethna, and Marianne LeBlanc Cummings, Select Board Liaison. Absent: MaryAnne Carty, Michelle Fiola Reidy, Frances MacQueen, and Trish Tucke, COA Operations Manager. Staff Liaison Janice Donovan recorded the minutes.

Chair R. Kelly read the Commission on Disability's Mission Statement:

The mission of the Commission on Disability is to provide information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to residents and Town departments on matters of disability.

MEETING MINUTES

Accept Meeting Minutes of December 5, 2023

Upon a motion by C. Rizoli and seconded by M. Sethna, Commission members voted unanimously in favor to approve the minutes as written via a roll call vote: S. Finegold, (aye) M. O'Regan (aye), E. Polin (aye), M. Sethna (aye), R. Kelly (aye), C. Rizoli, (aye).

NEW BUSINESS

- **Transition Plan for Outgoing Commission Members - Nominate Chair & Vice Chair, Effective July 1, 2024**

Current Chair R. Kelly's term will expire on June 30, 2024. Commission members were asked to consider volunteering for the chair and vice chair positions. M. Sethna said she may consider taking one of the leadership roles but would not commit yet. No one else expressed interest in these roles.

- **Recruit New Commission Members for the 3-year term: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027**

Four Commission members' terms will expire on June 30, 2024 - M. Carty, M. Fiola Reidy, F. MacQueen, and C. Rizoli. At the Commission's last meeting, M. Carty requested reappointment for another 3-year term. Janice said her name would be submitted to the Select Board's office for consideration. The Select Board's office recommended staggered terms for 1, 2, and 3 years.

Whom do we need and how do we get the word out?

- *The Commission's bylaws state: "A majority of said commission members shall consist of people with disabilities. No less than one member shall be an immediate family member of a handicapped person."*
- *There was some discussion about the possibility of seeking young adult (18+ years old) residents from Westwood High School.*
- *M. Sethna mentioned that her son Reginald, a young adult is interested in being appointed.*
- *Janice said she would ask the Select Board's office to post our vacancies on the [board and committee openings](#) page. A resume and a [statement of interest](#) are required as part of the application process. R. Kelly offered an opinion that oftentimes requiring submission of this type of information could be prohibitive for some disabled people. She asked that a reasonable*

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accommodation be made with the application process. She said there should be an alternate way to complete the application process. Janice said she would share this information with the Select Board's office.

- *Board and Committee openings are posted every month in the Westwood WIRE. A request for a Facebook post, mention on Westwood News Now (Westwood Media Center), word of mouth, reach out to Council on Aging (ask to put something in the newsletter), Youth and Family Services, reach out to Danielle Sutton, Human Services Director for her input and to Tom Leydon (Westwood Living).*
- *A Commission member mentioned that she knew a resident currently on SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council), who had expressed interest in the past to be on the Commission. She said that she would contact the resident and get back with an update.*

OLD BUSINESS

- **Discussion about Social Media Presence for the Commission**

Appointed & and elected officials have very stringent rules when communicating outside a posted, open meeting. Social media exchanges among members could constitute a quorum. For this reason, the Town does not allow Boards and Committees to host their own Facebook pages. Town Department Facebook pages are administered by Town staff, who are not subject to the Open Meeting Law.

R. Kelly emailed Janice three upcoming events that she would like posted on Facebook. Janice will get these to Westwood Media Center for posting in the upcoming month.

Commission members who had asked previously about why the Commission cannot have its own Facebook page said that they are clear with the Town's policy and the Open Meeting Law.

REPORTS & FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- **SEPAC Update** – L. Polin said there are several SEPAC upcoming events: “Coffee Meet Up with Sue Maselli” at Muffin House Cafe on 3/5, “Parent’s Night Out” on 3/15, and the “SEPAC General Meeting” on 3/20. Please see [SEPAC website](#) for all the details.
- **Legislative Update** - S. Finegold reported that Director of Student Services, Sue Maselli, informed parents that the Department of Elementary School and Secondary Education (DESE) updated its Individualized Education Plan form for the first time in 20 years. Ms. Finegold said that the updates to the form include space for student input about their educational goals and plans. According to the DESE website, the new IEP form will lead to a more high-quality IEP and improve the overall educational experience for students with disabilities. Ms. Finegold shared a copy of the new IEP form with Janice. It will be available with these minutes.

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OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION, NOT PREVIOUSLY ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR

- C. Rizoli currently serves as a representative of the Commission on Disability on the Westwood Human Rights Task Force (HRFT). Ms. Rizoli said although she will no longer be able to formally represent the Commission when her term ends in June, she plans to continue to be on the Human Rights Task Force and be a voice on disability inclusion-related matters. Ms. Rizoli has offered to bring any matters of the Commission to the HRFT if needed. Janice will contact Ms. Rizoli if needed. In June, the next chair and co-chair should consider appointing a current Commission member as a representative to the HRFT. My intention in raising the issue was to have the Commission appoint a new member to the Task Force.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT

- The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 9th at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom webinar.
- Upon a motion by C. Rizoli and seconded by M. Sethna the Commission voted unanimously in favor to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m., via a roll call vote: S. Finegold, (aye) M. O'Regan (aye), E. Polin (aye), M. Sethna (aye), R. Kelly (aye), C. Rizoli, (aye).