

Commission on Disability Meeting Minutes
February 21, 2023



Present: Chair Mike McCue, Rose Bissonnette, Daryl Blaney, Lesley Allison. Absent: Eugene Brazeau

Volunteers present: Pat Maguire, Jim Peters, Kathy Suits

Lancaster citizens present: Jay Moody, Jean Syria, Lisa Engel

Meeting called to order: 6:00pm

1. January 2023 minutes were approved.
2. Citizens concerns:
 - Jay Moody spoke to the group regarding his concerns about the discontinuation of a program of daily calls to check on seniors called "are you ok". This program was run by the Nashoba Valley Regional Dispatch but was discontinued due to a low number of participants and staffing problems. He is working with Kelly Dolan to attempt to re-establish the program in Lancaster. Jay also spoke about communication concerns for this program and other social service programs such as Meals on Wheels. He recommended the formation of a group involving the Council on Aging, COD, and emergency services personnel to assist with these types of programming decisions.
 - Jean Syria spoke about the use of the two accessible town hall handicap parking spots. She expressed frustration that one of the spots is used daily by a town hall employee and the second is regularly taken by another frequent visitor who is a member of a town commission to the Prescott building. When Jean attempted to visit the town hall there were no accessible spots available. She also expressed concerns about the ramp access being blocked by an emergency vehicle.
 - Lisa Engle spoke about her request for closed captioning in town meetings. Mike confirmed that Sterling -Lancaster TV had addressed this issue for Select Board meetings and closed captioning was present. Lisa requested closed captioning for planning board meetings. The COD explained that accessibility of town meetings was an action item for the commission for the coming year and would be examined.
3. 2023 COD Planning / Activities:
 - Town survey results
 - Mike will follow up with Select Board and town administration.
 - Accessibility for town meetings
 - Lesley will spearhead this initiative.
 - Town website accessibility
 - Jim will take on the continuation of this project.
 - Town businesses / establishments accessibility
 - Daryl and Kathy will continue with this on-going activity.

4. ACTION ITEMS for 2023 initiatives:

- Mike
 - Follow up with Select Board and town administration regarding town survey results.
 - Introduce Jim to Christine Dynan for transmission of website accessibility information gathered in the past.
 - Send out a calendar of COD initiatives to the group.
- Lesley
 - Initiate investigation regarding town meeting accessibility. Engage COD members for ideas and coordinate results.
 - Find the list of businesses created in years past and communicate with Daryl and Kathy.
 - Find the accessibility checklist for businesses used in the past and coordinate with Daryl and Kathy.
- Jim
 - Look into town website accessibility. Coordinate with Christine Dynan.
- Daryl / Kathy
 - Coordinate the town businesses / establishments accessibility effort.
- Pat
 - Continue to update COD initiative tracking tool.

5. Annual report:

- Mike wrote the annual report of COD initiatives for 2022 with feedback from COD members and will submit it to the town to be published. Of note, Jim noticed that some previous annual reports are missing from the COD website. Mike will discuss this concern with the town clerk.

6. Affordable housing:

- Mike wrote an email letter to the Select Board highlighting the COD's observation of a dearth of affordable and accessible housing in Lancaster.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:00pm

Respectfully submitted,
Lesley Allison