

Office of the
COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

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TOWN OF SHREWSBURY
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COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
Conference Room A
Tuesday, January 8, 2019 – 7:00pm

MINUTES

Present: Diane Burns, Mary Ellen Thompson, Beth Shea Bryant, Mary Ellen Costa

Excused: Margaret Mulcahy, Deborah delDotto, Anna Connors

Guests: Thomas Hopkins, Executive Director of the Architectural Access Board; Patricia Sheehan, Shrewsbury Building Inspector; Ms. Sheehan's daughter, law student at Boston College; Meg Coffin, Chief Executive Officer for the Center for Living & Working, Inc.; Mike Kennedy, ADA Access & Advocacy Coordinator for the Center for Living & Working, Inc,

Presiding: Diane Burns, Chairperson

The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm when Chairperson Diane Burns announced a quorum of COD members in attendance.

Presentation to the Board:

Mr. Hopkins presented a detailed description of the role of the nine-member Architectural Access Board which is under the Division of Professional Licensure in the Massachusetts Office of Public Safety and Inspection. The board's duty is to conduct hearings on complaints and variances with regard to ensuring access, in alignment with the Americans for Disabilities Act, for all residents of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Mr. Hopkins discussed the history of the board which dates back to 1968. He also verified the jurisdiction held by the board and when construction/renovations must follow "the formula" of the board and when work is

exempt from following guidelines set forth by the board. The process for handling complaints with regard to access issues was also reviewed and examples were mentioned. Mr. Hopkins also communicated the procedure for applying for a variance and the guidelines the board follows for granting or denying variances or for scheduling a hearing regarding a variance request. Several examples were exhibited. After the presentation, the guests vacated the conference room and the meeting continued with the Commission's members.

Approval of Commission Minutes:

Ms. Burns motioned to approve the minutes of the meeting held November 13, 2018. No second on the motion was available, as the members present were not in attendance at the last meeting.

Town Manager Report:

No Report Available

Appointments/Meetings:

Above meeting and presentation with Mr. Thomas Hopkins, Executive Director of the Architectural Access Board.

Commission Members' Announcements/Comments/Phone Log:

Mary Ellen Thompson announced that she would not like to be re-appointed when her position is due for renewal in June, 2019.

Conflict of Interest Law program certificates and signed receipts were collected by Mary Ellen Thompson who will issue them to Sandra Wright, Town Clerk.

Sign Bill Schedules:

There are no invoices to be paid.

New Business:

Discussed requesting that our commission offer to provide a brief (5-10 minute) presentation to the Board of Selectmen, a synopsis of the goals and objectives of our board and the process we go through for granting license requests. We also discussed explaining how we educate local businesses on accessibility issues and how we support new and existing businesses in order to assist them in complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We also discussed that this presentation should be performed by the entire board and whether we should review what we will present at our March meeting and subsequently present it to the Board of Selectmen in April or May, 2019. We agreed to add this topic to the next agenda (March, 2019) and then plan our presentation at that meeting.

The board discussed creating a policy for the Business Recognition Program. It was suggested that we draft a proposal for a procedure for receiving nominations and judging the nominations. A poster was hung in the Town Hall requesting nominations and several nominations, mostly recognizing Price Chopper, were received. We discussed including not only local businesses but also organizations such as the library. We also discussed vetting the nominations via telephone,

text, or email and the new forms will need to include this information. It was discussed to include signs for the program at Town Hall, the library, and the senior center, as well as the town's website. We then discussed broadcasting the recognition via the town website, the *Community Advocate*, via tweets and/or Facebook. An additional option discussed included the local cable channel. It was suggested that we present this recognition up to three times per year. Beth Shea Bryant offered to write a policy/procedure for recognizing businesses for this program, as she has experience writing procedures. The board would provide the judging for this program. The *Community Advocate* is expected to publish an article advertising that Papa's Hardware is the latest recipient of the recognition program and it was discussed that maybe we have them include the name of the previous recipient, Home Depot. Beth will email Anna to find out if she could use her connection and go to the *Community Advocate* to have the paper not only announce the latest recipient of the recognition but to also have the paper request future nominations.

Louise Russell from the Council on Aging was emailed by Beth regarding coming to one of our meetings to discuss making the senior center more dementia-friendly. One suggestion to make it more dementia-friendly was to widen the bathrooms so that a caretaker would be able to accompany someone with dementia into the bathroom for activities of daily living. Diane offered to provide her occupational therapy expertise to consult to Louise and the center for any necessary changes and Beth gave Diane the contact information. Our board will also be recognized in the newsletter for the senior center.

Old Business:

It was discussed that Margaret had contacted Ms. Valerie Fletcher regarding speaking to the commission as well as to the community regarding accessibility needs by businesses. A date needs to be finalized and it was discussed whether a program should be during the day (i.e. lunch time) or in the evening (after work hours). The list of potential invitees was discussed and included restaurants, medical facilities, grocery stores, and various places frequented by the public. The meeting is only to offer information on providing accessibility and the presenter, Valerie Fletcher, will speak for about one hour on the topic. A small honorarium would be paid to Ms. Fletcher on behalf of our board. It was discussed that the event could take place in the evening at the library so that parents as well as businesses and schools could attend. A "blast" could be sent to schools and the Council on Aging regarding the event which most likely would take place in the evening as opposed to during the day. The date and time of this event could also be added to the superintendent's newsletter.

Other Business:

The accessible fishing dock at Jordan Pond was approved by the Board of Selectmen and will be installed by the Massachusetts Fish & Game Commission. Mary Ellen Costa will follow-up with Ben Tartaglia regarding the number of docks that will be installed at Jordan Pond and when this will take place.

Correspondence:

A variance was granted to South Street Realty LLC and the CPA firm on the second floor of 385 South Street with regard to omitting the installation of an elevator at the CPA firm.

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Next Meeting:

Scheduled for Tuesday, March 12, 2019 at 7:00pm.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Ms. Burns motioned to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Ms. Shea Bryant and so voted all in favor, 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Costa