



TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building
100 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545-5398

**Commission on Disabilities Meeting
Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 7:00pm**

MEETING MINUTES

Commission Members Present: Deborah DelDotto, Chair, Charbel Sakr (via phone), Vice-Chair, Diane Burns, Commissioner, Ashley Falandys, Commissioner, Leonora Ryan (arrived at 7:08pm), Commissioner, Justin Dobson, Guest, and Jeffrey Dougan, Guest.

Preliminary Matters:

1. **The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm**
2. **Approve meeting minutes of November 8th, 2022.** A motion to approve was made by Ashley Falandys, seconded by Diane Burns, and unanimously approved as written into the record. Due to the hybrid modality of the meeting, a roll call was taken as follows:
 - a. Ashley Falandys – aye
 - b. Diane Burns – aye
 - c. Deborah DelDotto – aye
 - d. Charbel Sakr – aye

Appointments/Meetings:

1. **Virtual meeting with Jeffrey Dougan, Assistant Director for Community Services at the Massachusetts Office on Disability (7:07pm).** Mr. Dougan gave a presentation on the services provided by the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD), including its Client Assistance Program (CAP), Disability Rights Unit, and Community Services Program. Mr. Dougan explained that architectural access is a primary focus for the community services program and involves reviewing building codes and civil rights laws. Mr. Dougan provided an overview of the Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Program which is administered by MOD. This program awards planning and capital improvement grants and that in FY2023, \$12million was requested by applicants with approximately \$3million awarded. Mr. Dougan explained that MOD offers technical advising services to Executive Office Agencies such as the Governor's Office, which is similar to the role of local Commissions on Disabilities who advise the Town Manager and the Selectboard on matters involving people with disabilities. Mr. Dougan shared that as local Commissions undertake initiatives, they should be in communication with the Town Manager and the Selectboard. Mr. Dougan also provided an overview of the trainings offered by MOD, such as Disability Emergency Preparedness Training, Community Access Monitor (CAM) Training, and ADA Coordinator Training.

Mr. Dougan then focused his presentation on the process of establishing and operating a local Commission on Disability. He reviewed the relevant pieces of legislation to establish a Commission and to establish a parking fund for handicapped parking fines. Mr. Dougan explained the importance of establishing goals as a Commission to focus its efforts. He also provided an overview of the different areas of advocacy for local Commissions, including working with Independent Living Centers, encouraging mobility for people with disabilities, increasing accessible affordable housing, education for people with disabilities, information referrals, advocacy to elected officials, educating members of the public, and other considerations such as collaboration with other Town departments.

Mr. Dougan reviewed a list of important webpages on the MOD website, ADA.gov, the New England ADA Center's website, the Center for Living and Working (CLW) website, etc. which can serve as resources for the Shrewsbury Commission on Disability. Mr. Dougan said that he would share this list of resources with the Commission tomorrow and that he'd be happy to return for a second presentation once the Commissioners have had time to review the resources and come up with potential questions to discuss with him.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Dougan for his time in presenting this helpful information and our appreciation for his offer to come for a follow-up discussion.

New Business:

- 1. Update from Diane Tonelli regarding meeting with Dawn Galli, Assistant Director of the Shrewsbury Council on Aging, about Dementia Friendly Shrewsbury.** This item was tabled until a future meeting due to Commissioner Tonelli's unexpected absence.

Old Business:

- 1. Library Event with a focus on disability.** Commissioner Falandys provided an update on this item. She reached out to a member of the Sudbury Commission on Disability who conducted a similar event. This member shared that their Commission planned a month-long event at the Library which involved having books related to disability on display in prominent areas, a display referred to as the "Museum of Adaptive Supplies" where various adaptive items used by people with disabilities were on display, a Zoom presentation by a speaker on language and ableism, and a final one-day event with vendors, local authors, tables focused on different disabilities, and a conference room that was turned into a sensory room. The event was aimed towards school-aged children and their parents. The total cost of Sudbury's event was approximately \$3,000.00 and Commissioner Falandys provided a breakdown of the costs. We discussed that the Commission's annual budget has historically been \$500.00 and that maybe the Commission could start with a smaller event which could be repeated and scaled up over time. The Commission requested that Commissioner Falandys provide a list of potential vendors, authors, presenters, etc. and the associated costs at a future meeting.
- 2. No Cost Trash Bags.** Commissioner Sakr reported that at a prior meeting there was discussion of trash bags being provided for free to people with disabilities. Commissioners were not sure if such a program existed, but shared that there is an annual free trash bag provided by the Town around the end of the calendar year.

Town Applications:

- 1. Market Basket Common Victualler License Request**
- 2. Audi of Shrewsbury and BMW of Shrewsbury License Extension Request.** Chair Deborah DeIDotto shared that she received no comments, so responded that the

Commission had no concerns. Commissioner Sakr shared a comment that the applications have not been accessible to screen readers. Guest Justin Dobson explained that there was no Optical Character Recognition (OCR) function applied to these documents and that he has reminded the appropriate Town staff of this need for applications sent to the Commission on Disabilities.

Other Business:

1. **March 14th, 2023 Presentation by the Council on Aging Director Hollie Lucht and staff in the Conference Room at the Senior Center.** Commissioners discussed that the next meeting of the Commission won't be in the usual space, Conference Room A, but at the Senior Center and that there will be a call-in option available as well.