



Town Clerk Date/Time Stamp

Merrimac Commission on Disability Meeting Minutes

TOWN OF MERRIMAC

Meeting Date: May 4, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Meeting Location: Merrimac Public Library, 86 West Main Street, Merrimac, MA

Members Present:

Christopher Gaudet, Chairman
Robert Hart, Vice Chairman
Kathleen Sullivan, Secretary
Charlotte Eileen Stepanian, Member
Margaret Sullivan, Member
Brienne Walsh, Member

Members not Present:

John Joseph Murphy, Treasurer
Ann Marie Murphy, Member
Bob Sinibaldi, Member/ADA Compliance Officer
Anne Brown, Alternate

Also Present:

Mary Usovicz, General Manager Merrimac Light Department
Larry Fisher, Merrimac Fire Chief and Light Commissioner

Agenda Item No: I

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Agenda Item No: II

Approve Agenda

Brienne Walsh made a motion to accept the agenda for the May 4, 2022 meeting. Eileen Stepanina seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion. The agenda was accepted.

Agenda Item No: III

Approve Minutes from March 2, 2022 Meeting

Commission on Disabilities members considered the minutes.

Brienne Walsh made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 2, 2022 meeting. Robert Hart seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion. The minutes from the March 2, 2022 meeting are accepted.

There are no minutes from the April 6, 2022 meeting because there was no meeting held due to lack of a quorum.

Agenda Item No: IV

Old Business

1. Shared Streets Grant for Church Street Improvements and
2. 45,000 Earmark for Church Street Sidewalk Improvements
Work is scheduled to start on new sidewalks on May 23 to utilize \$108,000.
3. \$45,000 Earmark Request for ADA Improvements at Sweetsir and Donaghue Schools sent to Representative Mirra and Senator Dizoglio
Christopher Gaudet had conversations with State Senator Barry Finegold. Christopher shared information about Merrimac's COD and the requests for funding. Information was forwarded to Senator Finegold's office.
4. \$45,000 FY23 Special Article Request for Sidewalk Improvements
The article passed and the Highway Department has the money to utilize for new sidewalks.
5. Approval from Sean Croninn to apply balance of ADA Transition Plan grant to website ADA compliant software if needed.
Approval is not needed because Cable Access paid for the upgrades to the website with AudioEye. The town website is now accessible to people with disabilities.

6. Draft Copy Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policies, Procedures, and Practices
COD members will review short and long forms for approval at the June meeting.

Agenda Items No: V

1. 6:30 p.m. appointment with Mary Usovicz Director of Light Department to discuss new drop box
Mary Usovicz is the new General Manager at the Light Department. She is working hard on ways to better serve customers. The drive up window and drop box on the building were limiting so the Light Department installed a new drive up drop box. The drop box is the right height but the handle is not ADA compliant. The Light Department will install a new handle. Other ADA compliance issues were discussed and Mary and Larry will work to explore ways to even out the front walkway and to make the drive up window tint less dark. Larry Fisher shared that the Light Department is working to make the building more accessible and ADA compliant. The building is old and solutions will take time. The Light Department is aware of compliance issues and will be making a plan to meet ADA standards. Right now they will address the handle on the new drop box, the uneven front sidewalk, and the tinted window.
2. COD Annual Report
The COD Annual Report was completed by Chris Gaudet and Brienne Walsh. It was submitted to the Board of Selectmen.
Robert Hart made a motion to accept the annual report. Eileen Stepanian seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion.
3. Northeast Independent Living Virtual Legislative Forum Meeting
Christopher Gaudet attended the March 29, 2022 meeting and engaged in conversation about ADA compliance and housing. HUD shared that their funding is 50% less than it was ten years ago. They will continue working with the state to get more housing assistance for people with disabilities in Massachusetts.
4. Alyssa Sexton from Inspectional Services request for past history COD Shared Street grant application
Robert Sinibald and Alyssa Sexton requested information from the COD regarding the Shared Streets Grant. Christopher Gaudet shared pertinent information.

5. Open Space Committee request to attend next meeting to discuss ADA compliant trails in town.
Robert Hart made a motion to add the Open Space Committee to the next COD meeting agenda. Brienne Walsh seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion.
6. \$87.40 for COD email renewal.
Brienne Walsh made a motion to appropriate \$87.40 from the COD budget to pay for the COD email renewal. Margaret Sullivan seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion.
7. Number of COD members for FY2023
There are currently nine members on the COD with one alternate. Robert Hart made a motion to have the COD continue to have nine members and one alternate. Margaret Sullivan seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion.
8. Handicap Parking for Old Home Days
Christopher Gaudet reached out to the Old Home Days Committee to schedule a meeting to discuss handicap parking issues at Old Home Days. Currently there are only two spots near the playground and this is not enough. Spaces in front of the Donaghue School are not able to be utilized because the Touch A Truck station is set up there. COD members discussed the possibility of using some of the spaces in the parking lot to the right of the Donaghue near the cafeteria door as temporary handicapped parking during the Old Home Days celebration.
Margaret Sullivan made a motion to ask the Old Home Days Committee to allot temporary parking spaces to the right of the Doanghue and place these spaces on the Old Home Days map. Robert Hart seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion.

Agenda Item No: VI

Open Discussion

Christopher Gaudet will attend the Community Access Monitor meeting on June 8 and 15, 2022 from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. The meeting will focus on reviewing ADA regulations.

COD members reviewed the need to explore assistive listening devices for people to utilize at Town Meeting. Brienne Walsh will explore options that are hygienic.

Massachusetts COD Alliance meets once a month on a Wednesday from 12:00-1:00. It would be helpful for one of the Merrimac COD members to attend. Margaret Sullivan volunteered to attend and share information.

COD members discussed the location of COD meetings. Currently the Merrimac Library meeting room is not heated or air conditioned. Also, the room is not set up for meetings. Brienne Walsh offered the use of the first floor meeting space at the Merrimac Senior Center.

Margaret Sullivan made a motion to relocate COD meetings to the first floor space at the Merrimac Senior Center. Robert Hart seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion.

Agenda Item No: VII

Adjourn

Next Meeting: June 1, 2022 at Merrimac Senior Center, 100 East Main Street, Merrimac, MA at 6:30 p.m. Eileen Stepanian made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Margaret Sullivan seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

List of Documents and Other Exhibits Used at Meeting:

Pictures of Merrimac Water Department Drop Box

Draft Americans with Disabilities Act

Short Form ADA Policies

Merrimac Commission on Disabilities 2021 Annual Report

Invitation to Virtual Legislature Forum

Emails regarding Shared Streets Grant

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathleen Sullivan, Secretary

Minutes Approved by Committee on:

Chairman Signature:

Vice Chairman Signature:

Secretary Signature: