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Merrimac Commission on Disability Meeting Minutes

TOWN OF MERRIMAC

Meeting Date: November 6, 2019

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Meeting Location: Merrimac Public Library, 86 West Main Street, Merrimac, MA 01860

Members Present:

Christopher Gaudet, Chairman
Robert Hart, Vice Chairman
John Joseph Murphy, Treasurer
Kathleen Sullivan, Secretary
Ann Marie Murphy, Member
Charlotte Eileen Stepanian, Member
Anne Brown, Member
Margaret Sullivan, Member

Members not Present:

Bob Sinibaldi, Member/ADA Compliance Officer

Agenda Item No: 1

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Margaret Sullivan made a motion to accept the agenda for the November 6, 2019 meeting. Anne Brown seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion. The agenda was accepted.

Agenda Item No: 2

Approve Minutes October 2, 2019 Meeting

Approve minutes from COD meeting on October 2, 2019: Commission on Disabilities members considered the minutes. Anne Brown made a motion to accept the minutes.



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Time: 6:30 p.m.

Meeting Location: Merrimac Public Library, 86 West Main Street, Merrimac, MA 01860

Members Present:

Christopher Gaudet, Chairman
Robert Hart, Vice Chairman
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Ann Marie Murphy, Member
Charlotte Eileen Stepanian, Member
Anne Brown, Member
Margaret Sullivan, Member

Members not Present:

Bob Sinibaldi, Member/ADA Compliance Officer

Agenda Item No: 1

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Margaret Sullivan made a motion to accept the agenda for the November 6, 2019 meeting. Anne Brown seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion. The agenda was accepted.

Agenda Item No: 2

Approve Minutes October 2, 2019 Meeting

Approve minutes from COD meeting on October 2, 2019: Commission on Disabilities members considered the minutes. Anne Brown made a motion to accept the minutes.

Robert Hart seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion. The minutes from the October 2, 2019 meeting are accepted.

Agenda Item No: 3

CODA Conference Call Update- Anne Brown

Discussion (see attached notes). No action needed.

Agenda Item No: 4

COD Mission Statement

The following mission statements were considered:

1. Guiding Principles: Disability is a natural part of the human experience. The Commission on Disabilities operates on the premise that all people with disabilities are entitled to the opportunity to participate fully in society. We strive to ensure that all people live with justice, equity, freedom, dignity, privacy, economic self-sufficiency, and mental and physical health and well-being. We will listen respectfully and advocate when appropriate. (Revere)
2. Mission Statement: The mission statement for the Commission on Disability Issues is to serve the town in an advisory capacity, to identify the needs of the community under the ADA Civil Rights Law, and to monitor initiatives generated by this committee to see that results are achieved. We continue to work to bring accessibility to both town-owned and private facilities in our community. (North Andover)
3. Mission Statement:
We are a commission, all appointed by the mayor, who volunteer our time and skills to represent and ensure equal treatment for the disabled citizens of our community. We educate people on the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as well as state regulations related to persons with disabilities. We advocate in critical areas such as: Housing, Employment, Education, Transportation, Voting, Communication, Health services, Public accommodations, and Access to programs, services, and facilities that are available. (Haverhill)

COD members discussed the following Mission Statement:

The Merrimac Commission on Disabilities (MCOD) mission is to represent the interests of persons with disabilities and promote equal access to community life and activities. The MCOD works to increase awareness, provide education and advocates for the needs of all disabled residents of Merrimac.

Charlotte Eileen Stepanian made a motion to accept the Mission Statement. Ann Marie Murphy seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the Mission Statement. The mission statement will be added to the MCOD website.

Agenda Item No: 5

COD Webpage

Christopher Gaudet set up the web site. Margaret Sullivan suggested that Christopher Gaudet add his name and possibly procure a separate e-mail for MCOB. E-mails are public information. Margaret wonders if MCOB should have an e-mail not connected to the finance department. Christopher Gaudet will go to Town Hall and ask about the feasibility of a separate e-mail. Margaret Sullivan thinks this would avoid confusion. The website can be changed if the e-mail changes. Ann Murphy made a motion to accept the MCOB website as developed. Robert Hart seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the MCOB web site.

Agenda Item No: 6

Grant Update-Ramp-Robert Sinibaldi

John Joseph Murphy made a motion to table the Ramp Update discussion. Anne Brown seconded the motion. Members unanimously agreed to table the discussion.

Agenda Item No: 7

Power Doors Update-Christopher Gaudet

Christopher Gaudet shared updated information and correspondence regarding the installation of power door openers at the Merrimac Post Office. The post office landlord has no budget for the power door openers. Christopher Gaudet will continue to explore options. Other power door openers are being explored for other buildings in Merrimac. No action needed.

Agenda Item No: 8

Budget

The MCOB needs between \$200.00 ad \$300.00 for a budget to pay for courses people need to attend for education regarding disabilities. In the future, the MCOB will explore asking for donations in order to supply goods and/or services for people with disabilities who are in need. Budget will be discussed at the next meeting.

Old Business:

The Commission members discussed parking fines for people who park in Handicap Parking spaces without proper documentation. The town could raise the fine from \$10.00 to \$250.00. Chief Eric Shears communicated with Christopher Gaudet regarding this issue. More signs would need to be made to make the spaces more clearly labeled. No action needed.

New Business:

A letter was shared by Christopher Gaudet from a resident who wants to be able to access Town Meeting from her home. After researching the issue, it was determined that residents must attend Town Meeting to vote. The MCOD can help residents with disabilities access Town Meeting with parking, seating, or other modifications.

Open Discussion

Commission members discussed developing a flyer that could be included with the Light Department bills to let residents know about the MCOD. Additionally, the Senior Center newsletter could include information about the MCOD.

Agenda Item No: 9

Adjourn

Next Meeting: December 4, 2019 at 6:30 at the Meeting Room at the Merrimac Public Library, 86 West Main Street, Merrimac, MA 01860.

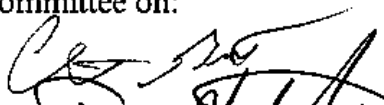
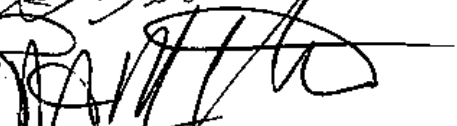
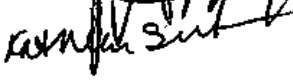
Anne Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Margaret Sullivan seconded the motion. Members unanimously accepted the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

List of Documents and Other Exhibits Used at Meeting:
Notes from Anne Brown from CODA Conference Call

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathleen Sullivan, Secretary

Minutes Approved by Committee on:

Chairman Signature: 
Vice Chairman Signature: 
Secretary Signature: 

Commission on Disabilities Alliance Conference call 11/26/2019. Reported by Anne Brown

Call began at 1:00pm Revere announcement. Town of Revere is attempting an ordinance on banning plastic straws as part of their ban on single use plastics. Revere COD is working to ensure the ordinance does not negatively impact persons with disabilities access. Revere requesting assistance or guidance on working to prevent the ban from affecting persons living with disabilities. Architectural Access Board executive director vacancy was the primary topic of discussion. The Department of Public Licensure and Architectural Access Board conflict on who has jurisdiction on who hires the replacement. Department of Public Licensure states that they will choose the next executive director and that the position will report to them. AAB cites that state law advises otherwise. DPL is attempting to instate an individual that the AAB does not want. The governor has been petitioned by the AAB to affirm the AAB jurisdiction over this role. A protest was staged last week and demands were made by the AAB to freeze the hiring process for this. William Joyce is the preferred candidate by the AAB for the position, the governor's secretary has indicated a willingness by the governor's office to appoint W. Joyce, but balked at affirming AAB authority. The governor did not come out to speak with the protestors. DPL states that it doesn't fit into their procedures to give up control over this position. The board feels that the DPL is doing a power grab and believes that the governor's office is supporting this move and is obstructing the process. CODA is calling for volunteers to protest again at the state house if it becomes necessary. CODA members are reporting that communication even with the AAB has become difficult recently and have been referred to various attorneys with questions and are having sporadic or non-existent responses from certain board members or attorneys. Collin is requesting individual stories of experience with the AAB be sent to him so that the selection of the candidate for executive director can be framed as the appropriate civil rights issue. CODA will continue to send out information as it comes up on dates of protests for anyone who would like to participate. He shared a story of an individual who was a Viet Nam veteran and he discussed how the AAB has had a positive impact on his ability to access public spaces. These are the types of stories he is requesting. ADA coordinator certification process, one of the CODA members contacted Connecticut regarding this. They do 3 to 4 sessions for 3 to 4 hour each. The course discusses responsibilities, communication, and the law. Each session cost is \$50. It is \$25 a session for ADA commission members. They do a state conference each year for 1 day as well where certification can be obtained. Collin will discuss with the new MOD director on getting her on board with implementing a certification process for Massachusetts ADA coordinators. The next CODA conference call will be December 4th. The focus for that call will be for setting goals for 2020 and to explore a plan to get the MOD on board with an ADA coordinator certification.

Call ended at 12:32 p.m.