



Marblehead Disabilities Commission

Meeting Minutes – October 17th, 2023

Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell, Dee Cuffe, Brigitte Duffy, Ed Lang, Samantha Marino (*remote*), Andrea Mountain (*remote*)

Members Absent: Amy Hirschron, Cheryl LaLonde

Guests Present: Nancy Powell, Kyle Wylie, Thatcher Kiezer

Ms. Blaisdell called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m.

1. Upon motion by Brigitte, seconded by Dee, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 10th, 2023 meeting.

2. Review of ADA Report. Mr. Thatcher Kiezer was present to summarize the Collin's Center ADA report on Marblehead's transition plan. Michael Andrews, lead on this project, assessed all facilities, websites, and town resources and their ADA compliance. The report includes a summary as well as a table of action items and recommended timelines that the town may follow to work towards compliance for the transition plan. Mr. Keizer noted that there are numerous administrative, website, facility, and infrastructure requirements the report had recommended as well as general process changes. The expectation is that the municipality makes "good faith" progress, and will not adhere to a specific timeline, especially keeping in mind financial limitations with funding limitations. Mr. Keizer explained that he and the department heads, along with input from the Disabilities Commission, will be prioritizing projects, with special regard to public safety first and foremost.

Mr. Keizer purported that the municipality applied for community impact grants, from which the town hired the Collin's Center to complete this transition plan; as the prior ADA plan had not been updated in a significant amount of time. Much of the financial coverage to make these improvements will be garnered through taxes and grants.

Discussion ensued about the issue of not assessing for ADA compliance in a building plan prior to the start of a new project, with Mr. Keizer referencing an example of when a new community access path was built, however, it was not ADA compliant, requiring a structural update following the initial completion of the project. It was recommended by the Commission that the application process for building permits should include a list of criteria indicating ADA compliance at the start of the project planning, so it is not an afterthought.

Ms. Blaisdell expressed concern that some of the newer projects in the town were deemed not compliant despite best efforts. Mr. Keizer stressed the importance of coordinating all entities within the town to become more knowledgeable and educated in this area. A question pertaining to the contracts that the town enters into with companies to complete such projects, arose with regard to



Marblehead Disabilities Commission

identifying any stipulations that the hired company must guarantee that the project and its outcome will be compliant with ADA regulations. Ms. Wiley made note that allotted variances that have been granted within the town, were not included in the Collin's Center report, therefore, not all areas may be out of compliance as listed on their action plan. This report will be provided to the members of the Disabilities Commission, while Mr. Keizer determines how to best disseminate the report to the public, so it may be updated as changes are made/remain as a working document.

Ms. Blaisdell verified that the Disabilities Commission's input in identifying top projects of utmost importance, will be taken into consideration by the town. Mr. Keizer confirmed this and additionally indicated that he will be attending subsequent Disabilities Commission meetings intermittently to provide an update to any changes implemented from the transition plan.

3. Change of Compliance: 71 Atlantic Ave. The Marblehead Building Department forwarded this case to Ms. Blaisdell. The facility in question was required to add a handicap accessible ramp to comply with ADA regulations; however, the cost of the new ramp went over the value of the building, which then employs the requirement for the building to be fully ADA compliant (e.g., bathrooms, doorways, lips on the doorways). Additionally, the owner of the facility applied for a change of use to the property, changing it from residential to commercial. This change in use additionally requires strict and full adherence to ADA regulations. The Architectural Access Board will be asking the Disabilities Commission to provide a formal opinion on this matter.

The Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:28 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 8th, 2023

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Marino, Secretary and Commission Member

Approved by unanimous vote of the Commission: _____

Appendix:
N/A