

**Marblehead Disabilities Commission
Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2015**

Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell, Ron Grenier, Andrea Mountain, Caroline Curtis, Katie Farrell, Ed Lang, and Lloyd Caswell.

Approve Minutes of January 15, 2015 Meeting: Farrell moved to approve minutes; motion seconded by Curtis. **VOTE: 6-0 (Caswell could not vote).** **NOTE: The Commission did not have a meeting in February.**

Discussion with New Town Administrator: Blaisdell introduced John McGinn to members of the Commission. Blaisdell kicked off our discussion which covered a number of topics.

Foremost we emphasized the Commission's desire to be routinely consulted and included in Town sponsored capital projects and renovation project committees. This way we can provide input and pertinent information around issues of accessibility up front. Blaisdell provided specific examples of several projects where the Commission was not involved until late in the process which then can bring about hard feelings and a misunderstanding of the Commission's oversight role. Grenier explained that the chance of this happening is especially likely on projects where private funds are raised for a town facility or structure. He believes, as matter of procedure, there should be a mechanism whereby town officials are systematically reminded to consult with the Commission early on in a project's formation once funding occurs. It was pointed out that sometimes this happens as in the case of the most recent renovations to Abbott Hall and Fort Sewell because Lang sat on those committees thereby automatically representing the Commission's interests. But that does not always happen and we believe a process should be in place where the Commission is asked to appoint a representative to future project committees would go a long way in getting the Commission involved on a more timely basis.

McGinn expressed his support to get the Commission more involved as was expressed. He acknowledged that under the Town's highly decentralized governance structure it is perhaps a little more challenging but no less important. He said he will work with town officials who report to him as well as others in increasing sensitivity to issues of accessibility in every way including representation on appropriate projects.

Grenier spoke about one of the Commission's major goal is to be more visible in the community at large. He talked about perhaps a good place to start is by the Commission having greater visibility on the town web site.

McGinn said he has been thinking of changing or making updates to the town site to give more exposure to a number of other town committees. Blaisdell said that recently the Commission had developed a presence on Facebook as another way for the Commission to reach out to residents. She recognized the great job that Curtis had done in developing our Facebook page. Blaisdell said the name of the ADA Coordinator and the town's ADA grievance procedure could be among those things we could add onto the town's web page. McGinn explained that the town has a policy of not being on Facebook for reasons of security. But he was very willing to see if there was something that could be done about the Commission's presence on the town web page. He said he would be speaking with Linda Gifford (631-1703), who oversees the town web page about this. Once he does that we could follow up with a call to her.

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Grenier raised the Commission's interest in having an accessibility survey of all town facilities and structures. He shared with McGinn a draft survey and cover letter which the Commission approved at our January meeting. The results of the survey, Grenier said, can be used to update the Town's outdated ADA Transition Plan.

McGinn said he was willing to help by having town departments complete the survey. He will review the document and then advise us accordingly.

Another topic we discussed with McGinn was our list of priority curb cuts for 2015. Grenier gave some background. McGinn was also provided a copy of the priority list.

McGinn said he would check in with Art Graves about his plans to address these priorities and with Becky Curran on the need for a separate curb cut contractor. Blaisdell then referenced a situation at the high school where all handicap parking spots we're being taken up by non decal holders which caused a problem for her daughter who has one. McGinn made note of this concern. Farrell raised the matter of adequate police department training on mental health disability. Farrell said the police training academy only provides a small number of hours on the general topic of disabilities which she believes is not enough. She hopes the police department would consider additional training with a focus on mental health. Blaisdell added how fines from disability parking scofflaws goes to the Commission. Some of this in the past has been used to supplement police training.

McGinn was asked who he wanted to designate as his point of contact if the Chairperson needed to get in touch with him on complaints or issues important to the Commission. We agreed that this would be Kyle Wiley, the ADA Coordinator. It was also agreed to that we would invite Wiley to any meetings when we believed her attendance was deemed important.

The last topic discussed was regarding the status of Lloyd Caswell's membership status on the Commission. McGinn was provided with the relevant background and history of Caswell's distinguished and valuable service on the Commission. Caswell was described as the heart and soul of the Commission. McGinn was asked to explore some way for Caswell to remain on the Commission in some capacity, notwithstanding his having to take up residency in a Peabody nursing home. We explained that Caswell despite his physical challenges always is in attendance and his contribution as one of the few persons with a disability on our Commission is important to all of us. Moreover, he is in Marblehead on a regular basis to conduct business and participate in various community affairs.

McGinn said he would look into what options there are available to address this unique situation.

Facebook Page Update: Blaisdell again complimented Curtis on the wonderful work she did in linking the Commission with Facebook. By doing so we strongly believe the Commission is better connected to the community at large and we have a real time way of posting important information that comes to the Commission's attention.

Grievance Procedure Link on Web Page: Lang expressed his reservations with the "grievance button" which per our vote in January had been added to the Commission's web page, marbleheadable.org. In the interest of time we decided to put off further discussion on this subject to our next meeting.

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Opening Ceremony for Devereux Beach Playground Project: Blaisdell advised that this event is scheduled for Saturday, May 16th. She did not have a time as yet. Blaisdell hoped as many of us who could will attend.

Lloyd Caswell's New Contact Information: Caswell shared the following: Aviv Center for Living, 240 Lynnfield Street, Peabody, Ma 01960. Ph= 781-254-6469.

Adjourn: Grenier motioned to conclude the meeting; motion seconded by Farrell. **VOTE: 6-0.**

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 12th.

Respectfully Submitted
Ron Grenier