

## **Marblehead Disabilities Commission Meeting Minutes for February 14, 2019**

**Members Present:** Laurie Blaisdell, Katie Farrell, Andrea Mountain, Caroline Curtis, Sue Harris

**Guests Present:** Preston Ford

Laurie called the meeting to order at 4:25 p.m.

1. Minutes from the January 10, 2019 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.
2. Handicapped Water Access. As part of its 2019 goal to further handicapped water access in town, the Commission discussed the possibility of renovations to the existing public concrete ramp into the water next to the Marblehead Lobster Company. Laurie reported that she had talked with Mark Souza, Marblehead Harbormaster, about access generally. She also shared information about accessible, portable docks available from EZ-Dock. The Commission agreed to investigate applicable laws (Sue), particularly with regard to whether there is any requirement to make all public water access in Marblehead accessible if any location is made accessible, and the possibility of obtaining a variance if necessary, and to find out who owns the parking lot and ramp at Marblehead Lobster Company (Laurie). Laurie will invite Mark Souza to our next meeting to discuss applicable law, permitting issues, procedure for obtaining required approvals, etc. Part of the plan would be to obtain private funding for any required work.
3. Abbott Hall Repairs. The Commission received a letter and related documentation requesting the Commission's support for the continuation of the "permanent" variances granted in 2014 with respect to the Abbott Hall clock tower repair project. The current request is in connection with the Town's variance application to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) relating to structural and other repairs needed to Abbott Hall, the cost of which will exceed 30% of the building's assessed value thus triggering the need for compliance with Massachusetts accessibility requirements. After review of the variances the Commission supported in 2014, the Commission unanimously agreed to support the continuation of those variances and to send a letter to the MAAB that effect.
4. 139 Pleasant Street. The Commission received a letter dated January 17, 2019, from Allen Warren, owner of the property at 139 Pleasant Street, relating to his variance application, submitted in August 2018, for the first floor commercial space for this property. That variance petition was denied, as had been recommended by the Commission in a letter to the MAAB dated September 27, 2018. At a subsequent hearing on October 29, 2018, the MAAB voted to continue the matter until July 1, 2019, and requested the owners to submit a test drawing for accessible entry to the commercial unit and a surveyed plot plan. Mr. Warren's letter to the Commission enclosed the drawing and plot plan. The drawing of the proposed accessible entrance shows a ramp to the front entrance which appears to exceed the maximum allowable slope by 49.9% and concludes that "a ramp cannot be constructed in conformance with 521 CMR to access the front entrance. . ." After discussion, the Commission decided that we cannot support a variance without more information about other options, such as adding an accessible entrance to the rear of the building. The Commission agreed to write another letter to the MAAB to that effect and to let the building owner know that we are happy to have him attend a regular meeting to hear him out.
5. Marblehead Accessibility Map. Caroline reported that she has been visiting businesses that are Chamber of Commerce members to determine if they are handicapped accessible. The Commission discussed creating a list of all such businesses (not limited to Chamber members) and public spaces in Marblehead to post on the Commission's website and its Facebook page, as well as publishing a printed list, possibly with a map, to be distributed via the Chamber of Commerce booth and office and by leaving copies at various places in town. Caroline will continue to work on creating this list of businesses, and Laurie will visit open spaces in town to determine the degree of their accessibility.

6. Commission Funds. Katie reported that current funds in the Commission's account (derived from fines paid by violators of the handicapped parking law), total \$940.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, March 14, 2019 at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Harris, Member