

**Marblehead Disabilities Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes of Thursday, September 10, 2015**

**Members Present:** Laurie Blaisdell, Ron Grenier, Andrea Mountain, Caroline Curtis, Ed Lang and Katie Farrell. Also attending Lloyd Caswell and Will Dowd from the Marblehead Reporter.

**Approve Minutes of June 12, 2015 Meeting:** Mountain moved to approve minutes; motion seconded by Curtis. **VOTE: 6-0.**

**Membership:** Grenier and Blaisdell each reported on their separate discussions with the town clerk and the ADA Coordinator about the status of our membership.

Blaisdell said she received confirmation that all appointments are in order at this time. Grenier referenced two memorandum he wrote. One memo cited the difficulty other local commissions are also experiencing with getting a quorum which was mentioned at the statewide meeting of local disability commissions. The other memo Grenier distributed was concerning the problems our commission was facing due to low attendance by some members. Grenier argued that we need to get to the bottom of what number of members officially constitutes our membership in order to proceed appropriately when determining we have a quorum for a meeting.

According to Grenier the determining factor hinges on whether the Town enacted a separate and distinct by-law when it established a specific membership number for the Commission; or whether the Town adopted the sample by-law the state Office of Disabilities suggested. In the latter's language membership is referred to as constituting "no less than 5 members and greater than 9 members". Grenier said he was unable to talk with anyone who could say with a degree of certainty how the Commission was enacted. However, Grenier believes in the absence of a specific by-law that stipulates a membership total of nine members; we could have more flexibility in establishing our quorum, assuming the town adopted the state's open ended language as contained in Chapter 40. Farrell was the only member of some long standing who thinks the Commission was established using the state language. Everyone agreed we need to get to the bottom of this concern. Blaisdell was asked to contact the

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former chairperson Mary Levine to see what she recalls or if she has any record or documentation that addresses this specific issue. We also need this information because the state Office of Disabilities is updating their database on local commissions and it wants the same information.

**Statewide Meeting of Local Commission's:** Grenier briefly reported on some of the issues raised at this meeting which he indicated were specified in his memo to the Commission. (see attachment)

**Accessibility Survey Results:** Grenier summarized the findings of the survey using the report he prepared. Various members asked relevant questions or made pertinent comments about the results. Blaisdell pointed out a factual error which Grenier said he will correct in the final report. Following a lengthy discussion the Commission decided it wanted to take further steps to share the report. Based on that discussion **Grenier motioned and seconded by Farrell to transmit the report with appropriate attachments and distribution to the Town Administrator and the Superintendent of Schools. VOTE: 6-0**

**Monitoring of On-going Town Projects:** Grenier said he believes a handful of large projects are in the development pipeline which merit the Commission's monitoring. He indicated several of these have recently received funding or are at a stage where the Commission's input through a presentation to us by the appropriate town official should be requested. One of these he said is the proposed assisted living facility on Pleasant Street. He also mentioned Phase II of the on-going Drain project. Grenier said he believes the Commission already has input on the Fort Sewall project since Ed Lang also sits on that project's oversight committee. Lang volunteered to give us a presentation next month.

Blaisdell inquired about the accessibility status of a relocated restaurant in Village Plaza and whether the Commission should also equally be involved in monitoring their adherence to ADA accessibility requirements. Everyone agreed that town supported projects should have a high degree of monitoring. While recognizing that the building inspector has an obligation to ensure private/commercial projects meet ADA requirements everyone agreed that we should still bring to the

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building inspector's attention any accessibility concerns we may have on these types of projects. As part of this discussion Blaisdell suggested that it might be helpful for the Commission to two standard letters of inquiry about receiving project presentations; one would be for public projects and the other would address requests for receiving additional information and/or a presentation on commercial projects. Everyone agreed this was a good idea. Grenier said he would prepare something for the Commission's review at the next meeting.

**Future Invitations of Town Officials:** As a result of the previous discussion above members agreed that it would be helpful to invite several officials involved with some of the projects whose monitoring we discussed. As previously stated Lang said he would be glad to bring the plans for Fort Sewall to the next meeting so he could explain what's being proposed. Grenier would like to invite someone from the Drain project to specifically ask which streets will be impacted in Phase Two and exactly where handicap curb cuts will be installed to ensure their installation at appropriate locations. There was also discussion about re-inviting Bob Ives again since we had to cancel his attendance to a previously cancelled meeting. Blaisdell mentioned perhaps inviting one of the selectmen as well to a future meeting. Everyone agreed we should plan to invite these officials. Blaisdell will take lead on planning to have a selectman attend our November meeting.

**Change in Monthly Meeting Time:** This topic came about while we were discussing inviting town officials to future meetings. Lang pointed out that if the Commission's meetings were earlier it might enhance our ability to facilitate these meetings. Everyone agreed that we should try to have our next meeting at 4:15 pm.

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

**Next Meeting:** 4:15 pm, Thursday, October 10th

**Respectfully Submitted**  
**Ron Grenier**