



Marblehead Disabilities Commission

Meeting Minutes – January 12th, 2023

Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell, Katie Farrell, Amy Hirschcron (*remote*), Samantha Marino (*remote*), Andrea Mountain (*remote*)

Members Absent: Ed Lang, Cheryl LaLonde

Guests Present: Nancy Powell (*remote*)

Ms. Blaisdell called the meeting to order at 4:16 p.m.

1. Upon motion by Ms. Mountain, seconded by Ms. Hirschcron, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the December 15th, 2022 meeting.

2. Collins Institute Survey. The commission members expressed concern about the way questions were worded as it may skew the data/results as it selectively included those who are disabled or care for someone with a disability. This excluded advocates and other members of the community that may have helpful input yet do not provide direct care to a disabled individual. Members of the commission will review the survey once more and provide feedback to the Collins Institute if needed.

3. Sidewalk Parking. Ms. Hirschcron expressed concern about community members having to walk into the street because of frequent parking on sidewalks around town. This is especially dangerous for those with disabilities (including but not limited to: auditory, mobility and/or vision). When called, the Police Department in the past has come to ticket the illegally parked cars; however, this does not appear to be a routine procedure the Police Department follows. Ms. Blaisdell proposed asking the police chief to a future MDC meeting to discuss these concerns along with enforcing handicap parking violations and ensuring that cars are parked at least 20 ft from an intersection due to visibility concerns when crossing streets. Ms. Hirschcron proposed increasing public awareness as well as police education surrounding these issues. Ms. Blaisdell and Ms. Hirschcron will be reaching out to local newspapers to see if a friendly reminder may be submitted in regard to refraining from parking on town sidewalks.

4. Future Projects. An open discussion resulted in the following ideas for the Commission in the upcoming months:

- Harbor planning ideas included kayak launch, as well as additional accessibility for community members that would like to swim.
- Town meeting being remotely accessible - A few other Massachusetts towns have implemented this, paired with voting via biometrics/vetted remote voting companies.
- Increase the Commission's visibility by doing such things as tabling at the farmer's market, reinstating MDC's "Accessibility Awards" to businesses around town, and become more active facebook page.



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- Revisit the accessibility map initiative from last spring. Ensure there are ample copies where they are needed around town. Ms. Blaisdell will reach out to Ms. Sue Harris for a copy of the PDF.
- Redesign the Commission's website with updated logo, resource links, accessibility map, etc.
- Due to the inability to access the Commission's old Facebook page, creating a new page in its place with a name that aligns with the Town-appointed title of the Commission: Marblehead Disabilities Commission. Ms. Marino will work on this project.
- Suggesting the Post Office to install a door push button/plate for handicap accessibility on the outside of the building. Interior door is now accessible.
- Potentially increase awareness re: Council of Aging bussing around town and to local stores in abutting towns for individuals that are 62 or older. Ms. Mountain will gather more information as to whether this may also be available to individuals younger than 62 years of age who are disabled.
- Invite Mr. Thatcher Kezer (Town Administrator) and Ms. Jenny Armini (State Representative) to upcoming Commission meetings.

5. Guest Concern. In a Planning Board meeting to discuss Accessory Dwelling Units held yesterday, a guest to the Commission's meeting expressed concern with the wording used to identify disabled individuals ("Handicapped, physically challenged, and disabled"). Education regarding correct terminology will ensue as the term, "Disabled" is all-encompassing. Commission members were in agreement.

The Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 p.m upon motion by Ms. Hirschcron and seconded by Ms. Mountain.

Next Meeting: February 9th 2023

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Marino, Secretary and Commission Member

Approved by unanimous vote of the Commission: _____

Appendix:

N/A