



Marblehead Disabilities Commission

Meeting Minutes – August 10, 2023

Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell, Dee Cuffe, Brigitte Duffy (*remote*), Amy Hirschkron (*remote*), Cheryl LaLonde (*remote*), Samantha Marino (*remote*), Andrea Mountain (*remote*)

Members Absent: Ed Lang

Guests Present: Dan Albert

Ms. Blaisdell called the meeting to order at 4:17 p.m.

1. Upon motion by Ms. Cuffe, seconded by Ms. Blaisdell, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 8th, 2023 meeting.
2. Updates from Departments: Building/Highway. Ms. Blaisdell is concerned that correspondences have gone unreturned, and would like more feedback from the Building and Highway Departments with special regard to any courses of action that they sanction, or progress made on projects that the MDC had been jointly involved.
3. Washington Street Garden on Sidewalk. A complaint had been submitted regarding a section of a garden that had overgrown onto the sidewalk abutting Washington Street. This section of garden has now been removed by the owner following receipt of a letter from the Highway Department asking to do so. The sidewalk is now deemed passable. Ms. Blaisdell notes, she has recently personally viewed this area and feels it is in compliance.
4. 139 Pleasant Street. Ms. Blaisdell provided a brief summary of the ongoing open complaint regarding handicap accessibility for 139 Pleasant Street for the newly appointed Commission members. In February 2022, the owner of the property had been requested to supply drawings/plans in how the site build would be made handicap accessible at the request of the Architectural Access Board during a hearing in response to a formal complaint filed. At the present time, no plans have been submitted, therefore, the MDC continues to question what further action will occur as the Pleasant Street property owner has since completed the build, and is now open for business. Ms. Blaisdell and Ms. Hirschkron will draft a letter contacting Director Joyce of the Architectural Access Board inquiring how the AAB will proceed in this case.
5. Signage for 'No Parking'. Ms. Blaisdell made note that the Fire Department has been displaying reminders to refrain from sidewalk parking, on their electronic sign at the station. Mr. Dan Albert attended tonight's MDC meeting to discuss ticketing for parking on sidewalks. Mr. Albert explained that he helped to sponsor a traffic safety committee and feels that this parking issue is not just disability-related, but a traffic mobility issue, and would like to collaborate on this initiative. He proposed questions such as what would a specific measure of success look like for this initiative, if the sidewalk parking issue can be remedied, and what are specific laws regarding what is



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appropriate to enforce. These questions will be addressed through the traffic safety committee in conjunction with the MDC.

Ms. Hirkshron met with the Chief of Police to walk Jersey Street between the cross streets of Ramsdell and Guernsey to observe the ongoing sidewalk parking issue and how it affects access to the sidewalks. During this meeting with Mrs. Hirschcron, the Chief reported that he will be allocating more resources to this issue. Although he prefers education (stating to Ms. Hirschcron that it is better for cars to park in the street to slow the passing traffic, rather than parking on the sidewalk to allow for roadspace, increasing the likelihood of speeding), ticketing has recently increased. Additionally, the Police Chief asked Ms. Hirschcron to call the station at the end of her frequent walks to report on the current parking situation in her immediate area.

6. Brainstorm Topics for Upcoming MOD meeting with Jeff Dugan. Mr. Dugan will be joining the commission for its September meeting via Zoom. Ms. Blaisdell is interested in discussing sidewalk reconstruction and if that has a ripple effect triggering side-to-side paving, as well as increasing education for the MDC regarding various laws, regulations, and variances. Ms. Hirschcron is curious about who to contact about laws, regulations, and variance questions at the local and state level besides him, as well as seeing if there is a list of boards, what they do, and how to contact them, that would be related to MDC's duties. Mrs. Blaisdell requested that the Commission reach out if they brainstorm any additional questions prior to the September meeting for Mr. Dugan.

7. Riptide. Mrs. Blaisdell was invited to a collaborative meeting of various boards in town regarding the new buildout of the Riptide. Blueprints shown at that meeting demonstrated that rear handicap accessibility will be in compliance, with wheelchair/different mobility access now in a more appropriate position (and not through the kitchen or work areas as in the past). Ms. Blaisdell noted that a variance for front door access is still undecided, as there are space limitations for a ramp on the sidewalk, as well as how the door swings (inwards vs. outwards). Ms. Blaisdell will continue to collaborate with the project leads and update the MDC as appropriate.

8. Town-Wide ADA Survey. The report from the town-wide ADA survey has been completed. A request was made for members of the commission to meet with Kyle Wiley, Town Clerk, to review the report and its findings prior to presenting it to the Selectboard. A date for this meeting has not yet been set, Ms. Blaisdell will inform the MDC when Ms. Wiley schedules it. The Commission members will be requesting copies of the report prior to this meeting.

9. Devereux Beach. Mrs. Hirschcron brought forth a concern regarding the ramp and path around the playground being questionably accessible and unsafe at Devereux Beach. Ms. Hirschcron will contact the Parks and Rec. Director, Peter James, to inquire about this grave safety issue.

10. Board Appointment Update. A summary was provided by Ms. Blaisdell regarding the Selectman's inquiry as to whether the procedure for board appointments throughout the town will change or stay the same in the future. Updates will be forthcoming, and will be provided to any affected MDC members by Ms. Blaisdell.



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The Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

Next Meeting: September 14th, 2023

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Marino, Secretary and Commission Member

Approved by unanimous vote of the Commission: _____

Appendix:

N/A