

DRAFT

Marblehead Disabilities Commission
Meeting Minutes – July 8, 2021

Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell, Preston Ford, Amy Hirschcron, Katie Farrell, Ed Lang, Sue Harris
Guests Present (who consented to be identified): Rich Ramos, James Ashton (Marblehead Community Boating Center Initiative), Nancy Powell (League of Women Voters observer)

Laurie called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

1. The minutes of the June 3, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.
2. Marblehead Harbor. Laurie reported that she had received an email [*Laurie – correct?*] from Harbormaster Mark Souza dated July 6 reporting that: (1) transition plates on both docks at Tuckers Wharf have been installed; (2) keypad for rear door access to the Harbormaster’s office has been ordered; (3) accessible route to back entrance to Harbormaster’s office cleared and interior barriers have been removed; 4) issues relating to accessibility of parking areas near Harbor Master’s office have been resolved by removal of yellow ropes; (5) ramps have been ordered to allow access between Tucker’s Wharf area and State Street landing area without steps.

Rich Ramos attended the June 7 Harbors & Waters Board meeting and reported that he raised the issue of installing a Hoyer lift, which the Board discussed, focusing on Stramski’s as a good location, but did not reach any conclusion. The Commission agreed that it would push for installation of a lift both on the Salem side and the Marblehead Harbor side, perhaps at the proposed new Parker Boatyard. James said that accessibility to the water is part of the plan for the proposed new Parker’s Boatyard. Laurie will continue to try to get in touch with Susan Roper about her proposal to seek private funding for such a lift. The Commission agreed to write a letter to the Marblehead yacht clubs seeking their support in working toward accessibility to the Harbor.

The Commission also agreed to continue to work toward obtaining a commitment from the Harbors and Waters Board to work with the Commission to comply with the ADA 2010 Design Standards relating to harbor matters. The Harbors & Waters Board agenda for the July 12 meeting includes a discussion of Harbor accessibility issues. Laurie, Amy, and Katie will attend.

3. 139 Pleasant Street. Sue updated the Commission on the status of the building at 139 Pleasant Street. The Zoning Board granted the owners’ request to rezone the property as mixed use – commercial on the first floor and residential on the two upper floors on June 15, 2021. The Commission was not notified of the decision until June 25, 2021. Since then, we have been in contact with the MOD to determine the current official status of the temporary variance granted on February 5, 2019, since the owners subsequently withdrew the request. No response from the MOD has been received to date. After further discussion, the Commission decided that it would continue to monitor this property and report to the MA Architectural Access Board if the property is not in compliance by 2/4/22 as required by the temporary variance.
4. Fort Sewell Update. Ed provided an update on improvements completed at Fort Sewall, including the new paved paths that make the Fort accessible, and several pending items. Rich mentioned that the new binoculars are difficult for him to use. Ed will discuss this issue with the Fort Sewall committee.
5. New School. Katie reported that she can arrange a tour for the Commission of the new Marblehead Elementary School. She will provide the Commission with possible dates. Laurie will invite Jeff Dougan to the tour. Katie will look into obtaining a measuring tool for ramp slopes. The Commission agreed that she can use funds available to the Commission from handicapped parking violations to purchase this item.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 9, at 4:15 p.m. [*Laurie – we did not discuss. Are we skipping the August meeting as we usually do?*]

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Harris, Commission Member