

**Marblehead Disabilities Commission
Meeting Minutes – December 9, 2021**

Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell, Amy Hirschkron, Katie Farrell, Ed Lang, Sue Harris

Members Absent: Andrea Mountain, Samantha Marino, Cheryl LaLonde

Laurie called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

1. Upon motion by Amy, seconded by Katie, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2021, meeting.
2. Harbor Updates. The Harbor Planning Committee, to which Amy is the Disabilities Commission's representative, has not yet met. Amy reported that Mark Souza reported that he had ordered and received an interim keypad lock for the rear door of the Harbor Master's office, but has not yet installed it. We will keep in touch to monitor the status. Amy also reported that she and Sue visited the Marblehead Yacht Club and determined that it is not a suitable location for a Hoyer lift due to issues such as lack of parking, an inaccessible doorway onto the rear deck, and steps leading from the deck to the gangway. Amy and Sue are now researching providers of Hoyer lifts and will continue to work with Mark to find a suitable vendor. Once all information and a plan, including fundraising, is in place, the Commission will schedule a time to go before the Harbors and Waters Board for approval.
3. Library. Abbot Library plans to use Coffin School as a temporary location during Library renovations, and has committed to making this location accessible for library users. The Commission will continue to monitor the situation, and to stay involved as the town determines ultimate use of the Coffin School property, particularly if it is for public housing. Katie mentioned that there currently is a bill pending in the Massachusetts legislature that would require public housing projects to be ADA compliant. She will obtain more information and the Commission will continue to monitor and advocate for this bill.
4. Board of Selectmen Awareness. The Commission discussed how best to raise awareness with the Board of Selectmen of the need to insure that town committees, boards, and private groups working on public space take accessibility into account and how the Board and the Commission can make this happen. It was agreed to invite Board members to attend a Commission meeting soon to discuss these issues. Meanwhile, Commission members will work on a list of specific issues, examples of town projects that have not considered accessibility, and proposed options for improvement, as well as what the Commission can do to help the Board on this matter. The Commission will discuss ideas at the January meeting.
5. 2021 Accomplishments; 2022 Goals. The Commission reviewed 2021 accomplishments, including installation of Hoyer lifts for water access; meetings with Harbors and Waters Board and with Mark Souza about harbor access; appointed member to join Harbor Planning Committee; meeting with State Rep. Lori Ehrlich and Jeff Dougan; advocacy for sidewalk and street repair issues; meeting with Terri McDonough, Marblehead Counseling, on tenant survey and housing updates; advocacy for accessibility at Pleasant Street business requesting a variance; website updates; participation in Community Access Monitor Training; advocacy regarding Fort Sewall renovations; met with residents regarding access at more of Town beaches; advocacy for accessibility at Brown School; work with Tree Warden about tree placement in the downtown area; meeting with Robert French of Marblehead Conservancy about areas of mutual concern.

The Commission also discussed goals for 2022 and established the following: sidewalk accessibility; installation of a Hoyer lift at Tucker's Wharf; monitoring the library renovation project to insure accessibility at temporary locatoin; continued involvement with Complete Streets; insuring that a deaf interpreter is hired for Town Meeting and other public meetings; work with Chamber of Commerce to implement a Town map of accessible locations; continued work on beach accessibility; and invite Board of Selectmen to a meeting to discuss how best to insure attention to attention to accessibility issues with Town departments, boards and commissions.

Upon motion by Amy, seconded by Katie, the Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, January, at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Harris, Commission Member

Minutes approved: 1/13/2022 by unanimous vote of the Commission