

Marblehead Disabilities Commission  
Meeting Minutes – September 8, 2022

Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell, Amy Hirschkron, Samantha Marino, Cheryl LaLonde, Rich Ramos, Sue Harris

Members Absent: Katie Farrell, Andrea Mountain, Ed Lang

Guests Present: Nancy Powell, Kyle Wylie (for one discussion as noted below)

Laurie called the meeting to order at 4:19 p.m.

1. Upon motion by Cheryl, seconded by Amy, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2022 meeting.

2. Town Working Group on Remote Access to Public Meetings. This group voted to include a member of the Disabilities Commission as a member, and the Commission approved Laurie as that designated member. Commission members suggested issues to be addressed, including insuring that the remote user can hear and see all participants and easily share input and full access for hearing or vision impaired users to fully participate. Based on the first meeting of this group, none of these issues were adequately addressed.

3. Harbor Plan Working/Study Group. Amy attended the first meeting remotely as the Commission's representative, but reported that the remote access technology was not adequate to allow her to fully participate. Kyle Wylie joined the meeting to report that the Town is working on remote access issues with remote access and that Amy, as a member of the group, will have full access. Amy agreed to continue as the Commission's representative and attend the next meeting remotely.

4. Chamber of Commerce Award. The Chamber of Commerce has awarded the Disabilities Commission and the Harbors and Waters Board with the Harbor Award for 2022. Laurie and Sue will attend the Chamber's annual meeting on September 27 to accept the award.

5. Telephone Poles. Laurie spoke with Joe Kowalik, General Manager of the Light Department, about two recent instances of telephone poles being placed in the middle of sidewalks, blocking access. Both are Town owned poles. He agreed that the curb cut at the Harris Street pole will be widened to allow access and that the pole on a sidewalk near the Charter School will be moved as part of the next drilling cut contracted by the Town. Laurie also raised the issue at the Department heads meeting she recently attended. She believes that her inclusion in these meetings going forward will result in more awareness of and attention to Town accessibility issues in the future.

6. Marblehead Department Meetings. Laurie requested and was granted access to invitations to all Town department meetings.

5. Grant Application for Future Accessibility Projects. Possible future projects include looking at handicapped access to public parks in town, improvements to the ramp that accesses the Devereaux Beach restaurant, and addressing the lack of maintenance of the Mobie mat, ramp and boardwalk providing access to the Devereaux Beach playground. All property at Devereaux Beach is owned by the Town. Laurie will speak to Becky Cutting about applying to the Massachusetts Office of Disability's \$50,000 grant program. Applications are due in September.

6. Update on Stramski's. At the request of Linda Rice-Collins, Recreation & Parks Commissioner, Laurie met with her at Stramski's regarding improvements being made there by the Recreation & Parks Department. The building being renovated will be completely accessible and will include ramp access to the building and three accessible bathrooms, one on each floor. Ms. Rice-Collins also expressed an interest in making the beach there accessible by installing a Mobie mat and/or a cement walkway to the water, and in making the water accessible to disabled kayak users.

7. Update on Accessible Locations Brochure. Sue reported that she dropped off about 500 copies with the Marblehead Chamber of Commerce, which will make them available at the Information Booth and at its Pleasant Street office, and 25 copies each at Abbot Library, the COA (Community Center), and the Abbot Hall gift shop. A recent check showed that most of the copies remained at these locations except for the Community Center, which had none left. Sue left another 25 copies there. The Commission will continue to monitor these locations and re-supply as necessary.

8. Annual Report. Sue reported that the MA law establishing disabilities commissions (M.G.L. c. 40 §8J) requires commissions to file an annual report to be printed in the town annual report. The Commission agreed to create this report in the future and ask that it be included in the Town annual report published before the annual Town Meeting.

9. ADA Coordinator Position. The Commission discussed the role of ADA Coordinator, including best practices and what other cities and towns in Massachusetts are doing. (See report prepared by Sue and list of all ADA Coordinators in MA provided by Jeff Dougan, sent to all members prior to meeting.) The Commission agreed that talking with Kyle Wylie, current ADA Coordinator, to get her ideas and perspective is a good first step, and after that, to meet with the new Town Administrator to see if greater Town resources can be dedicated to this role.

The Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 13, 2022

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Harris, Commission Member

Approved by unanimous vote of the Commission: \_\_\_\_\_