



Marblehead Disabilities Commission

Meeting Minutes – October 13th, 2022

Members Present: Laurie Blaisdell, Katie Farrell, Amy Hirschkron (*remote*), Ed Lang (*remote*), Samantha Marino, Rich Ramos (*remote*)

Members Absent: Andrea Mountain, Cheryl LaLonde

Guests Present: Nancy Powell (*remote*)

Ms. Blaisdell called the meeting to order at 4:24 p.m.

1. Upon motion by Ms. Farrell, seconded by Ms. Marino, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 8th, 2022 meeting.

2. New Secretary and Board Positions. By unanimous vote Ms. Marino was appointed as new secretary after the resignation of Ms. Sue Harris from both the secretary position and Disabilities Commission last month. Ms. Hirschkron reported that by law, local disability commissions must have an elected or appointed official as an active member of the commission. Ms. Blaisdell will look into who may fit this criterion as the Commission currently has one open position to fill.

3. Chamber of Commerce Award. Ms. Blaisdell reported that she and Ms. Harris attended the Marblehead Chamber of Commerce dinner on September 27th, 2022, and accepted an award on behalf of the Commission. The Commission members expressed feelings of gratitude in being recognized for their hard work over the past year.

4. Letter to the Town Regarding Nonconforming Intersections. A Marblehead citizen wrote a letter to Ms. Blaisdell and the Commission expressing continued concern after having written multiple letters to the Town Administrator. The concerned citizen made note that the intersection of Beach St. and Atlantic Ave. has only a 3-way crosswalk and not a 4-way crosswalk, despite it being a 4-way intersection, with the orientation of the crosswalk signal buttons cumbersome as well. Ms. Blaisdell explained that Marblehead has reported they will correct the issues once the Town Administrator is more established and will additionally be forwarding the letter to the DPW.

Ms. Hirschkron noted that on Shepherd St. there is a sewer grate directly in front of the curb cut and where they repaved the sidewalk, there is a gap where individuals could trip; especially if they are visually impaired and/or using mobility aids such as canes or crutches. Ms. Blaisdell stated that she will create a spreadsheet to document new sidewalk locations, any ADA issues they may have, and if the appropriate stakeholders have been contacted about the issues. Both Ms. Blaisdell and Ms. Hirschkron will research the regulations for curb cuts.

5. Moderator Remote Study Committee. Ms. Blaisdell attended the Remote Study Committee where Article 44 was discussed. The Remote Study Committee has decided to pick 5 locations where all public meetings will be held and look into purchasing an OWL for each location to



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increase accessibility to all hybrid meetings. The Remote Study Committee chair assigned the Town Administrator to price the devices. Ms. Blaisdell noted that the town experiences frequent WiFi/broadband issues. The question arose as to whether the Town needs to purchase 5 OWL units or fewer due to the number of meetings that occur simultaneously on any given day. Additionally, Ms. Farrell explained that state law dictates any voting is required to be by roll call. The Commission will be researching other towns that are exploring remote voting capabilities, as well as closed captioning.

6. Letter Regarding Post Office Access. A citizen of Powder House Court wrote to the Commission expressing concern as to why there is not better access to the post office citing the door being too heavy and outward swinging onto the stairs, difficulty accessing the back stairs with a walker, and too far of a distance to go to the front doors/ramp from the handicap parking spots. Ms. Blaisdell stated she will write a letter back to the citizen, as well as forward the concerns to the post office.

7. Update Harbor Planning Board. Ms. Blaisdell reported that she attended the Harbor Planning meeting this past month. The meeting consisted of a recap and revote on what should be of priority in identifying next projects. On almost all voted items, ADA appeared to be of a priority with discussion consisting of access to beaches and boating.

8. Future Projects. Mr. Lang brought forth concern of limited to no access to the Town's baseball fields with no close parking, making it difficult for those with mobility issues. Ms. Farrell will talk to the facilities director, Todd. The Commission discussed having a brainstorming session next meeting to identify projects to work on in the future. Items mentioned thus far included: Having a kayak launch and ramp at Gashouse Beach or Devereux Beach (depending on tide/break) made of cement that enters directly into the water (similar to what Nahant has).

The Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:17 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 10th, 2022

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Marino
Secretary and Commission Member

Approved by unanimous vote of the Commission: _____

Appendix:

Documents available upon request:
Citizen Letter- Post Office Concerns
Citizen Letter- Nonconforming Intersection Concerns