



Hingham Commission on Disabilities

DATE: Wednesday, January 18, 2023

TIME: 7:00 pm

PLACE: Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present: Stephanie Gertz, Chair; Sharon Allen, Treasurer; Megan Baker, Secretary; Keith Jermyn, SCPO; Jane McGrath

Members Absent: Mike Clancy, Diane DeNapoli, Vice-Chair

Staff Present: None

Call to Order

At 7:03 p.m., Chair Gertz called the meeting to order, read the Open Meeting Law statement, and asked whether anyone is recording the meeting. No response. The Town of Hingham is recording the meeting.

Public Comments

There were none.

Opening Remarks

There were none.

Review of Minutes - November 9, 2022

MOTION: J. McGrath moved to approve the November 2022 meeting minutes.

SECONDED: S. Allen

ROLL CALL VOTE: S. Allen, aye; M. Baker, aye; S. Gertz, aye; K. Jermyn, aye; Jane McGrath, aye.
None opposed.

MOTION CARRIES: 5-0

Hingham Working Dog Foundation

Foundation members:

Mary Ann Blackmur, Chair	Kevin Gaughen, Jr., Vice-Chair
Michelle Grady, Treasurer	Megan Baker, Clerk

- February 5, fundraiser at Untold Brewing Taproom (2:00-6:00 pm) (flyer available)
- Web site under construction www.hinghamworkingdogfoundation.org
- They do have a Facebook and Instagram page.
- Michelle Grady attended an "Anxiety & Teens" event at the high school with her therapy dog, Taco.
 - Dogs from Cohasset Working Dog Foundation (& town comfort dog, Opry) were also present.
- Michelle is hoping to bring new therapy dogs to the Town (comfort, therapy, reading).
- The Town of Hingham does not financially support the Police Comfort Dog, Opry.
- Hingham Working Dog Foundation (HWDF) has been assembled to support the work of these dogs.
- Expand the availability of comfort/therapy/reading dogs in our community.
- Develop a team of therapy/reading dogs who visit nursing homes, hospitals, schools and libraries.
- Provide funds to ensure these dogs are trained to a high standard.
- Make grant funding available for Hingham residents who may need a trained Service Dog.

Update on TAC

TAC is a funding source in Town which funds benefit the elderly and disabled population. Presently, there may be a \$50,000 balance. TAC is unstaffed. Members are welcome to volunteer to join TAC or recommend to others who may be interested. This could be a funding resource for the disabled.

Budget/Finances

Members met with Art Roberts to go over procedures for the Commission on Disabilities. The procedure list will be made available to CoD for future reference.

Account Balances

➤ Handicapped Parking fees	= \$ 792
➤ Gifts to the CoD (includes sales of flowers created by Ms. DeNapoli)	= \$ 111
	TOTAL \$ 903
➤ Expected Gift from Officer Murphy for the golf outing this past summer	= \$1,000

Mr. Roberts stipulated the Commission on Disabilities is an Advisory Board to the Town.

- He will provide a quarterly balance for these two accounts.
- Funds received will be as handicapped parking fees or gifts/donations.
- There should be no fundraising for an Advisory Board.
- There is a process to request money in advance for future purchases.
- Requests for advanced funds shall be discussed in detail and voted on at a CoD meeting and recorded.

The following items will need clarification from Art Roberts:

- Donations will be accepted by cash or check through a specific walk-in process at Town Hall.
- "Letter stuffer" checkmark donation mechanism for the CoD is available on the tax payment voucher.
 - Taxpayers may donate to TAC using the checkmark "little stuffer" on the tax payment voucher.
 - This donation method has been made available to residents by special legislation to allow discretionary funds to be donated by this method only.

Members discussed potential ways to spend the HP parking fees and gift donations:

- Beach mat estimated at \$2,000 (possibly pursue grant funding)
- Necessary items according to the ADA Survey
- Costs for hosting the Accessibility Event

Members will spend down the funds gradually so they get a better sense of annual expenses.

Scituate Accessibility Event

- Scituate holds an event every 18 months. The next event will be in March of 2024.
- Athena Brodsky of Scituate loves the idea of hold a joint Accessibility Event with Hingham shadowing.
- Both Towns use many of the same organizations.
- Event location could alternate between Scituate and Hingham.
- It is a wonderful opportunity for Hingham to hop onto something that is working.
- Members discussed trying one event and reassessing if the partnership remains beneficial to Hingham.

- Members discussed whether there would be conflicts with duplicate Town libraries or SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council). Most agreed there would be synergies rather than conflict.
- Mr. Jermyn volunteered to lead the Hingham effort with Scituate.
- Chair Gertz will put them in touch with Athena Brodsky via e-mail.

ADA Report

- The February 8th CoD meeting will be a working meeting with Art Roberts.
- The Town would like input from the CoD before the Town goes into public meetings.
- The Town has prioritized features of the Survey according to program and safety.
- Members are to prioritize what they thought was most important in the ADA Survey.
- Members were asked to become very familiar with the Summary documents and Town list of priorities.
 - Divide priorities on which to focus (schools, land, municipal buildings) according to whatever topic members care most about.
 - Members will email Chair Gertz prior to February 8th with the topic they care most about.
 - Though not in attendance, Mike Clancy is slated to be the point of contact for new construction.
 - Ms. McGrath agreed to make herself available to assist.
 - Chair Gertz agreed to assist Mr. Clancy to navigate accessibility to any building from the perspective of a person living with a disability.

Matters not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 24 hours in advance of the meeting

- A non-Hingham resident complained to Ms. Gertz that the Talbots building was not accessible.
- She inquired of another CoD member who was entering the Talbots building at the time.
- A Talbots employee said because the building is historic, they do not have to comply with accessibility.
- Loring Hall is another historic building that is inaccessible.
- Much of the downtown area contains inaccessible historic buildings.
- There are some venues in the area that are accessible.

ADA Coordinator

- Art Roberts was recently appointed ADA Coordinator for the Hingham municipality.
- As a Hingham employee, Mr. Jermyn described his experience being presented an ADA form to sign one day after Mr. Roberts had been appointed ADA Coordinator.
- While receiving 21 days of training for his service dog, he was presented with an educational component on legal requirements for ADA compliance which was presented by an attorney versed in ADA compliance.
- The attorney suggested the Hingham form is sorely outdated according to Massachusetts state law.
- Mr. Jermyn became aware of a Massachusetts course for ADA Coordinators.
- He forwarded the link to Tom Mayo and suggested Town residents and management could benefit if the ADA Coordinator took the course to come up to speed on Massachusetts ADA law.

Next Meeting

February 8, 2023

Adjourn

MOTION: Ms. McGrath moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 pm.
SECONDED: S. Allen
ROLL CALL VOTE: S. Allen, aye; M. Baker, aye; S. Gertz, aye; K. Jermyn, SCPO, aye; Jane McGrath, aye. None opposed.
MOTION CARRIES: 5-0

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary