



Hingham Commission on Disabilities

DATE: Wednesday, February 8, 2023

TIME: 7:00 pm

PLACE: Remote Meeting via Zoom

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

Members Absent: Mike Clancy

Staff Present: Art Roberts

Guests: Gary Tondorf-Dick of 1029 Main Street

Call to Order

At 7:06 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.

Review of Minutes - January 18, 2023

MOTION: S. Allen moved to approve the January meeting minutes with minor corrections.

SECONDED: K. Jermyn

ROLL CALL VOTE: S. Allen, aye; M. Baker, aye; S. Gertz, aye; K. Jermyn, aye.
None opposed. D. DeNapoli abstained.

MOTION CARRIES: 4-0-1

Budget/Finances

Account Balances

➤ Handicapped Parking fees	= \$ 792
➤ Gifts to the CoD	= <u>\$1,111</u>
TOTAL	\$1,903

Scituate Accessibility Event

➤ The Scituate Committee on Disabilities will vote February 9 on whether to proceed with holding a joint accessibility event with Hingham.

Town Mental Health Event

- On behalf of the Town, HUC Hingham Unity Council would like to hold a mental health event in April.
- They would like the Commission on Disabilities to co-sponsor the event at Hingham Town Hall.
- Members discussed participating in the planning and publicity of the event.
- Members discussed what would be the theme of the event.
 - Showcase what resources the Town has available.

- Those in attendance may include: Eileen Walsh, Town therapists, Aspire, school representatives, Hingham Working Dog Foundation.

At 7:22 pm, Keith Jermyn, SCPO left the meeting.

MOTION: **S. Gertz moved that the Commission on Disabilities will co-sponsor the Town of Hingham Mental Health Event with the understanding this is not authorization to spend funds.**

SECONDED: S. Allen

ROLL CALL VOTE: S. Allen, aye; M. Baker, aye; S. Gertz, aye; DeNapoli aye
None opposed

MOTION CARRIES: **4-0**

At 7:24 pm, Keith Jermyn, SCPO rejoined the meeting.

Update on FY 24 Budget Proposals

- The Town proposed the level budget, or cut budget, sometimes referred to as the balance budget.
- Chair Gertz suggested the Commission on Disabilities send a letter to the Town to express concern for the budget cuts to the Level Services Budget.
- Chair Gertz will write a letter to the Town in response to the Town's presentation on budget cuts to the Level Services Budget. The Commission on Disabilities will advise or express an opinion that the budget cuts will have an adverse impact on constituents.
- Members discussed which members would not be allowed to vote on the letter.
- Chair Gertz will present the letter at the March meeting and the Commission can vote whether to submit.
- DeNapoli asked Chair Gertz to refer to Carol Falvey's, Hingham Town Clerk, guidance which stated that the COD could not make a statement on the proposed override or the budget. Chair Gertz stated that she communicated with Carol Falvey on the matter and that Carol said the COD could send a letter about the proposed budget. DeNapoli asked to clarify if Sharon Allen could vote as she is an employee of the Town of Hingham.
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Town Warrant Report

- On March 9, the Commission on Disabilities will submit an annual report to the Town.
- Chair Gertz will provide the draft report for consideration by members at the March 8 meeting.

ADA Report

Art Roberts invited members' top observations on the ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan as well as the sidewalk analysis. This is the start of a public process that will lead to Town acceptance of the plan. The Town will then be eligible for different forms of grant funding to implement the plan to make facilities, open spaces, and programs more accessible.

- On-line feedback form at <https://hingham-ma.gov/1028/ADA-Self-Evaluation-and-Transition-Plan>
- A feedback form deadline will be tied to a public hearing date.
- After a period of availability to the public, the Town will come together with a consultant who will provide a high level overview of what they have seen.
- A final draft document will be prepared reflecting feedback from the community.

- The Select Board will review the plan to consider acceptance by May for implementation.
- The ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan will be publicized on the Town's newflash function as well as on the Town's Facebook page

Mr. Roberts navigated the web site for the ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan.

- The Glossary is an important reference resource (terms, concepts, standards, graphics).
- Three priority categories to study, fund, and fix: municipal buildings, outdoor spaces, schools

Sidewalk Analysis

- Identify what works and what needs improvement for 2.7 miles of sidewalk in Hingham Square and center to enhance accessibility.
- Status dashboard and/or on-line map

Commission on Disabilities members discussed the top three priorities:

- Promote the ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan, the sidewalk analysis, and Feedback Form on an accessibility compliant web site which the Town's web site is not compliant. The school web site was suggested.
 1. TRAINING - Teach Staff the importance of ADA and how to file a grievance and the procedure process interfacing in a way that is legal and compliant in a level appropriate for their position.
 2. WEB SITE - The Town web site, Police web site and Country Club sites are used to communicate with residents. These web sites are non-compliant. It is imperative the sites be ADA compliant.
 3. The GIS TOOL illuminates mobility concerns (walker, wheelchair) in downtown Hingham in the area of North Street to the town center, to the water, to Route 3A.
 - Have one path with clear access to every building, one appropriate parking spot, curb, cut doorway overhang in the next 3 Year Plan.

Members expressed appreciation to everyone involved with the Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. The detail is impressive. It is very readable and understandable.

- It would help to socialize the report findings publicly and with collaborative boards and committees in a joint session and find those top priorities and the working capital to move these along.
- Task the low hanging fruit projects first to have an immediate impact and create momentum.
- Demonstrate the inaccessible web site for citizens while making it accessible so people can see the changes being made and understand what inaccessible means.
- Members discussed inviting Bill from IT to discuss remaining web site items to be compliant.
 - Members were asked to give Mr. Robert a contact to translate the Evaluation into Braille.
 - National Braille Press, 88 Saint Stephen Street. Phone: 888-965-8965
 - Adobe Pro so the user can manipulate the font and background for viewing (dyslexia) in the Accessibility function.
 - The Town web site is not intuitive. Type something in the Search bar and 50 items pop up.
 - Ask citizens what they want to see on the web site; functionality from the lens of their disability
 - Possibly let citizens know the web site does not meet accessibility standards
 - Mimic the school web site

At 7:55 pm, Jane McGrath joined the meeting.

Mr. Tondorf-Dick is very impressed with the report because it gives a summary of conditions. The executive summary will be a major step in raising awareness on accessibility. He suggests sending the executive summary to different boards and committees to start awareness and suggested creating a presentation as well.

Next steps

- Members discussed whether to simplify the Feedback Form to include phrases with checkboxes and not empty boxes for free prose.
- Add demographics at the bottom of the form:
 - Do you have a disability?
 - Are you the caregiver to someone with a disability?
 - What is your disability?
 - Age
- Refine how to make the report available to the community.
- important for CoD to meet with the IT team for a shared understanding

Matters not anticipated by the Chair within 24 hours of the meeting - None

Next Meeting

March 8, 2023

Adjourn

MOTION: **WHO?** moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 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