

Remote Meeting via Zoom

**In attendance:** Chair, Stephanie Gertz; Vice-Chair, Diane DeNapoli; Secretary, Megan Baker; Sharon Allen, Mike Clancy, Jane McGrath. **Absent:** Keith Jermyn, SCPO.

**Guests in Attendance:** None. **Participating Remotely:** Everyone.

**1. Call to Order**

At 7:00 p.m., Chair Gertz called the meeting to order, performed roll call of members in attendance, and read the Open Meeting Law statement. No one is recording the meeting but the Town of Hingham.

**2. Public Comments**

There were no comments from the public.

**3. Opening Remarks**

Chair Gertz always liked that the Jewish holidays coincide with the start of the new school year. This is the time when, especially parents refresh, take a deep breath, and say 'this is our new thinking'. She wished members a happy new year and a good, smooth start to the school year. If it hasn't gone well, I hope it will greatly improve.

**4. Good & Welfare** - No one had anything to share.

**5. Updates on Meetings**

**a. Meeting with Aileen Walsh**

On August 4, Ms. DeNapoli met with Aileen Walsh of the Hingham Police Dept. and Nes Correnti, School Committee Vice Chair. Discussion items included:

- Ms. Walsh's role and how she interfaces with the schools (mostly with teenagers)
- Ms. Walsh plans to contact the Police Chief to have him meet with Dr. Adams, School Supt.
- Discussed holding a Panel discussion that may include the Board of Health, Veterans Affairs, Schools, and Commission on Disabilities so people know who to contact when one is in crisis
- Hingham may need an MOU (memorandum of understanding) specific to Ms. Walsh's role
- They discussed how the two new social workers interface with the Police Dept.

Ms. Allen suggested the role of social workers should be posted on the school web site. Elementary schools have a police officer with direct connect to each school principal, assistant principal, and school psychologist. Members discussed whether the Town should own this task.

**b. Meeting with Dr. Margaret Adams**

Jane McGrath and Chair Gertz met with Dr. Adams to acquaint her with the following:

- The role of CoD in the community versus SEPAC for students with special needs
- CoD is a community resource
- Police Department has the Exceptional Needs Registry as a tool for families
- CoD would be interested in speaking to a group of students about inclusivity

**c. Meeting with Art Roberts**

Chair Gertz met with the Assistant Town Administrator. ADA Survey reports will be summarized for CoD review in approximately 3 weeks. A public comment period will follow.

Mr. Clancy said the ADA Survey discovered there is an **international sign for handicapped individuals** named in the Architectural Access Board Rules and Regulations book.

- Sign should be visible at 60 inches from the floor, illuminated, and next to the left-hand door handle at the exit or emergency egress door.
- In 35 years in the building trade, neither Mr. Clancy or his colleagues were aware of this rule
- He spoke with State and area Town electrical inspectors; no one is aware of the rule
- He has been speaking with the Vice-President of Southeastern Massachusetts Building Officials who has never seen the international handicapped sign at any building.
- Mr. Clancy has arranged to speak at their next meeting about the sign to an expected audience of 150-200 building officials

Vice-Chair DeNapoli suggested Mr. Clancy notify the Foster and Safety Building groups since they are building new facilities. Mr. Clancy agreed.

Mr. Clancy plans to enforce every new drawing and plan review that comes across his desk for a new commercial building to add the international handicapped sign per the rule in the book.

Chair Gertz stated that ADA Compliance is a minimum standard. Handicapped accessible bathrooms may meet the ADA compliance code, but are the bathrooms actually useful to the handicapped? She specifically meant opening and closing bathroom doors. Why not have a push-button door panel to automatically open and close the door? It is much more accessible.

## 6. Funds/Budget/Grant Opportunity

Chair Gertz and Art Roberts discussed the budgets. She feels CoD has two separate money funds:

- Under \$1,000 fund for small expenditures for events (refreshments, supplies)
- Over \$1,000 fund. There was a \$1,000 gift from Lieutenant Murphy at the golf tournament. Suggestions for this fund could include:
  - Formal requisition for a grant requisition
  - Beach accessible wheelchair
  - Town purchase of a portable ramp
  - Substantial gifts could go to this fund
  - Purchase sensory kits for the Library
- Per Jean Montgomery, CoD has two accounting codes: Fundraising or Handicapped parking tickets which latter funds are restricted to benefitting handicapped persons
- CoD needs instruction from the Town how to access funds (petty cash, gifts, donations)
- Ms. Allen suggested asking Carol Falvey what line items petty cash can cover.
- Ms. DeNapoli will share CoD By-Laws with members via email or web link.
- Ms. Allen said CoD is not a 503(c) who should be raising funds. They are a Commission that works for the Town. They should not be raising funds as a Town Committee.
- Chair Gertz suggested anticipating expenses beforehand then request Town approval to spend.
- Chair Gertz will secure more detail from Art Roberts this month.

Ms. DeNapoli discussed a grant opportunity for \$5,000, the Goodridge Research Grant with the Hingham Land Conservation Trust. One criterion is "improve access to encourage residents to enjoy and respect the importance of parklands and recreation areas." Members discussed area and handicap equipment ideas to create access.

Ms. DeNapoli will send to Art Roberts a link to the grant opportunity.

Ms. Allen suggested it is difficult for the Town to introduce projects along the coastline as it involves approvals at the State and Federal level along with "coastal zoning", i.e., Weir River Estuary Park.

## 7. Volunteer Projects

By October 1, Meghan Baker would like members to suggest ideas for student volunteer projects in Town and how students might benefit from the experience. She will speak with Rick Swanson, High School Principal, to let him know Commission on Disabilities is looking for projects for volunteers. Members discussed Student Council or National Honor Society may be interested.

## 8. ADU Update

Ms. DeNapoli recapped:

- Hingham voted to allow attached ADU's, meaning in-the-home for familial use. We have 16 units.
- A resident requested from the Planning Board a detached ADU for his structure.
- Town Meeting approved an ADU Study Committee consisting of representatives of COA, CoD, but not HAHT because they didn't feel the intent was to create affordable housing.
- The ADU Study Committee discussion has evolved from its original purpose to assist adults to age-in-place or to house adults with disabilities to a different intent to create affordable housing because there is a housing crisis.
- She discussed the definition of "dwelling" unit, 6-month occupancy; avoiding short-term rentals.
- She recommended adding the rental piece creates complication.
- Thus, the letter from the CoD to the Chair of the Accessory Dwelling Unit Study Committee.
- The Committee is moving toward ADUs as rentals. CoD fears disabled persons and the elderly will be "priced out" of their family homes to renters at market rate. The rules are complicated.
- She suggested this new intent goes beyond recommendation of the Town's Master Plan. The document did not recommend ADUs as rentals.
- Why did the Planning Board staff the group the way they did? This was not about affordable housing, but about families who have disabled members or elderly persons.
- She suggested embracing this original intent with attached ADUs to pass at Town Meeting.
- Ms. Allen suggested the By-Law will go to the Planning Board then to Town Meeting to be voted by 2/3 vote. She feels positive the Building Committee and residents will see the word "family" has been removed from the By-Law and will not give their support.
- Members discussed suggested edits to the ADU Study Committee By-Law Draft.
- The ADU Study Committee asked CoD to discuss how they feel about the person with disabilities living in the primary house and renting out the ADU. Members discussed the property asset cap of no greater than \$100,000 for a disabled person. You don't want a disabled person in Hingham having their name on the deed of a home worth \$900,000. This opens up many issues with services provided to them.
- Ms. Allen reminded members there is a cap on the number of allowable ADUs in Hingham of 160 plus allowed to date with a cap of 2.5%. There exist 16 ADUs to date.

**MOTION:** Diane DeNapoli motioned that the Hingham Commission on Disabilities respond to the Accessory Dwelling Unit Study Committee that we are concerned that should the language of the familial be removed for potential Accessory Dwelling Unit By-Laws, it does no longer prioritizes occupancy for disabled residents for occupancy in the unit. Seconded by Stephanie Gertz.

**Vote:** All in favor: (Diane DeNapoli, aye; Stephanie Gertz, aye; Sharon Allen, Megan Baker, aye; Jane McGrath, aye). Mike Clancy abstained. None opposed.

Roll-Call-Vote: 5-0-1. **Motion carries.**

**9. Hingham/Hull Religious Leaders Talk**

Chair Gertz' husband is a member of the clergy at Temple of Hingham. He is also Chair of the Hingham Hall of Legislators Association. They would like a member of Commission on Disabilities to present to local clergy on accessibility and inclusivity. Although your heart may be in the right place, if you don't have a disability, you may not understand the challenges.

**10. Information not known 48 hours before the meeting** - There were no items discussed.

**11. Next meeting date**

Wednesday, October 12, 2022 at 7:00 pm

**13. Adjourn**

**MOTION:** Stephanie Gertz motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 pm. Seconded by Diane DeNapoli.

**Vote:** All in favor: (Stephanie Gertz, aye; Diane DeNapoli, aye; Sharon Allen; aye; Megan Baker, aye; Mike Clancy, aye; Jane McGrath, aye). None opposed.

Roll-Call-Vote: 6-0-0. **Motion carries.**

**Meeting Materials used** - None

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud,  
Recording Secretary