



Hingham Commission on Disabilities

DATE: Tuesday, October 11, 2022

TIME: 7:00 pm

PLACE: Remote Meeting via Zoom

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

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: None.

Others Present: Brian Stack, 654 Main Street
Donna Keaney of 3 Black Horse Lane

Call to Order

At 7:00 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

- Brian Stack of 654 Main Street. The ADU proposal was originally a citizens' petition intended to serve the needs of older people, disabled people, and younger adult children that would not otherwise be able to live in Hingham for one reason or another. He believes a lot of Hingham residents could get behind this idea. It has morphed into a proposition to allow rentals. The issue as it relates to the two or three constituencies this was originally intended to protect is that it puts in motion a market-based process for whatever rentals would be permitted. These are not units that will be rent controlled. They are not deed restricted. There is every reason to think the rentals will be used up at market rate. The issue is self-defeating in view of the original purpose intended to protect the affordability of homes for these constituencies. Once you introduce an economic motive to do rental units, it will be much more pervasive than intended.
- Chair Gertz acknowledged Mr. Stack's comments. She said he is welcome to attend the Planning Board Meeting on 10/12/22 to voice his concerns. Members of the Commission on Disabilities will attend.

Opening Remarks

Chair Gertz would like the Commission to do some long-range planning.

Good & Welfare

Ms. DeNapoli heard the ADA Survey Report will be delivered to the Select Board in November. Mr. Clancy will connect with Art McKay to confirm. There was supposed to be an opportunity for public comment before presentation to the Select Board.

Status on ADU

Ms. DeNapoli gave an overview of how she expects the Planning Board agenda to roll out tomorrow. Emily Wentworth and Jen Oram will present. Questions will be entertained. The Planning Board always does a good job. She is looking forward to the deliberations after a year of preparation. We were the only group that did not unanimously agree with the rental component. We have posted an agenda in case we are

asked to deliberate. It is important members listen in case there is a need to speak up and join the conversation.

She described what she believed to be the process:

- The Select Board would have the warrant articles buttoned up by December 1.
- There may be a couple of Planning Board meetings prior to this.
- If they move forward, the matter would then go to AdCom and then the Select Board.
- If it progresses to the next stage, the matter will go to Town Meeting in the spring.
- It is important to stress that from our constituents' point of view, this will not serve them.
- This will create units in Hingham, but the units will be unaffordable for most individuals with disabilities.

She discussed the unit zoning as one-bedroom units of 875 square feet. The Commission is in favor of moving ADUs forward, but for familial use. There is value to having multi-generational housing.

Ms. Gertz thanked Ms. DeNapoli for the extraordinary work she has prepared for the Town to consider. The Commission on Disabilities is so glad to have Diane as our representative. She shared that she has appreciated being able to look at ADUs from one lens, from the standpoint of the Commission on Disabilities, and not the lens of generating income or the tax base. She realized there are lots of different lenses being brought to the table to give another perspective. She appreciates being given the opportunity to give the perspective of the Commission on Disabilities.

Funds/Budget

- Ms. DeNapoli reports the Town has not found a solution to deposit checks the Commission has received.
- CoD has two accounts - one for handicapped parking, the other for gifts.
- CoD received a gift from the Police patrolmen. She also received funds by selling flowers.
- The Town has not provided the balances of the funds for the Commission on Disabilities.

Members discussed possible reasons: gifts versus donations; we are an Advisory. They would like the Town to communicate what is the problem for depositing funds so a solution can be found.

Volunteer Projects

- Ms. Gertz started off the conversation stating that Hingham is ADA compliant, but the ADA is a minimum standard. Could we do better? How could the Commission get others to look at compliance?
- Members discussed whether to offer a volunteer opportunity to a non-disabled student to use a wheelchair to try to maneuver through school or downtown Hingham.

- Through the school yes; downtown - no
- Leave the location up to the Honor Society to supervise.
- What about supervision by the Best Buddies program?
- Ms. Allen said the schools have done this to increase empathy for the disabled. It is presented as a learning opportunity for community service for students to learn about different disabilities such as: site, mobility, hearing, dyslexia.
- The high school has unified sports so there is better understanding of differences in people and building a knowledge base for positive works.
- Ms. Gertz said empathy is great, but this would solidify more concrete actions that a younger generation could take to effect change. What if students discovered the flooring is not accessible?
- Ms. Baker will talk with Rick at the school about different volunteer opportunities with the CoD.

Secret Life of Pets

- Ms. DeNapoli said Bob Bonner, a Hingham resident, has offered to air ***A Secret Life of Pets***, a G-rated movie that explains what your pets do when you are not home. It would raise awareness about service animals in Hingham. We could arrange presenters to bring their service animals to a Community Event to showcase what the animals do. Have owners give a brief presentation about the animal, then show the movie. Bob Bonner would run all technical aspects of projecting the movie on a screen.
- Ms. Baker is part of the Hingham Working Dog Foundation which met for their first meeting. They will start with taking care of Opry who is currently based at the high school but make rounds to all schools with his handler, SRO Tom Ford. This group discussed having a non-touch "station" where people could see the different types of working dogs, a canine dog versus a dog that provides social and emotional support.
- They discussed whether N.E.A.D.S. would supply speakers for this March event. Ms. Baker will follow-up.
- Ms. DeNapoli will seek Town approval to hold the event.

MOTION: **S. Gertz moved to have D. DeNapoli seek Town permission to show the movie, *The Secret Life of Pets*, and to hold the event, *Hingham Is Going to the Dogs* at Town Hall in late March or early April.**

SECONDED: J. McGrath

ROLL CALL VOTE: S. Allen, aye; M. Baker, aye; M. Clancy, aye; D. DeNapoli, aye; S. Gertz, aye;
K. Jermyn, SCPO, aye; Jane McGrath, aye.

7-0 MOTION CARRIES

Statement for Select Board on National Disabilities Month

Chair Gertz will prepare a statement for member review to express gratitude for the various Town departments or organizations (SNAP, LAUNCH, Best Buddies) that have done a lot of work in Hingham to assist our citizens with disabilities, and for re-establishing the Commission on Disabilities. Also, thank people in Hingham who have disabilities. She will circulate to members for review before sending to Liz Klein.

Plan for October 2023/Other Events

- Members discussed how their lives are impacted by disabilities every month of the year.
- Would we like Emily Landau to be our speaker? Ms. Gertz will inquire about her availability and cost.
- The ADU Survey will keep members busy over the next year.
- It's time to think about public interface. Let's focus on the March movie event, *The Secret Life of Pets*.

Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting

Information not discussed or known 24 hours before the meeting

Approval of meeting minutes was left off the agenda. Minutes will be circulated prior to the November meeting.

Next Meeting Date

- November 9, 2022

Adjourn

MOTION: S. Allen moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 pm.

SECONDED: D. DeNapoli

ROLL CALL VOTE: S. Allen, aye; M. Baker, aye; M. Clancy, aye; D. DeNapoli, aye; S. Gertz, aye;
K. Jermyn, SCPO, aye; Jane McGrath, aye.

7-0 MOTION CARRIES

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary