



Sudbury Commission on Disability Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Kay Bell, Chair, called the virtual meeting to order with roll call at 6:37 PM

Members Present

1. Lisa Kouchakdjian, Vice Chair
2. Doug Frey
3. Caroline Santangelo (left meeting at 7:30 PM)
4. Karyn Jones
5. Kay Bell, Chair

Members Absent

1. Randi Korn
2. Jane Kline (joined at 6:57 PM, left meeting at 8:30 PM)
3. Leisje Quinto (joined at 6:45 PM)

Other Attendees

1. Nolan Schlessman, Eagle Scout Candidate
2. Peg Espinola, Council on Aging Liaison
3. Jennifer Roberts, Select Board Chair and Liaison

Opening

1. Kay stated that the meeting is a public virtual meeting that it is being recorded for future viewing and there should be no expectation of privacy. She explained that the agenda and meeting materials are available on the town website and that live transcript captioning is available by selecting that Zoom feature. She asked that if an attendee is to offer public comment that they please state their name and address or position in the Town.

2. Kay will take the minutes for this meeting.

Guest

1. Nolan Schlessman, Eagle Scout Candidate, shared photos and information about the project he executed, building two new picnic tables for use at the Senior Center that are designed to be wheelchair accessible. He followed part of the Boy Scout oath “to help others.” He solicited help from family and friends, received a discount on materials, raised funds online, and concluded with extra funds that he donated to the Friends of Seniors organization.
2. Doug asked about features of the tables and, having helped another Eagle Scout candidate last summer, forewarned Nolan that achieving Eagle Scouts will also involve some significant paperwork. Lisa told Nolan how proud she is of his work to include everyone. Caroline believes others beyond the seniors will also benefit from these tables. Karyn loves the design and that it shows that making things accessible is not so much more costly and that it’s beautiful. Nolan confirmed that it added very little cost and that really it only took “a little extra thinking.” Liesje believes her family which includes someone who needs that kind of seating space will enjoy these table, too. Kay added that this project is an example of Universal Design and thanked Nolan for presenting his project to us.

Reports

1. **Monthly Meeting with Town Manager:** Lisa and Kay met with Mr. Hayes on March 2. We learned that Mr. Barletta, Combined Facilities Director, is retiring and the COD can make suggestions about anything we would like to see in the job description. Lisa requested that the COD have a representative in the search and hiring group. We reported on our various inputs to the Permanent Building Committee on both ongoing building projects and the accessibility statement. We also touched on the progress for the accessibility of the website.
2. **Transportation Committee:** Doug reported that GoSudbury Uber and Taxi program going well. Uber provided 52 rides in February and 52% were

persons with disabilities. Ridership continues to increase. Committee is in process of securing more funding. Doug will need to leave the COD by the end of April as he is moving out of town. Members need to think about who is interested in transportation and can fill the COD seat on this committee that meets every two weeks on Friday mornings.

- Doug also has served on the Town Meeting Planning group just to bring the perspective of accessibility to arrangements, and someone may be needed for that.
 - Kay encouraged members to consider what involvements they are most interested in developing to serve in existing roles or even in building relationships they see as worthwhile.
3. **Brain-based Disabilities Subcommittee:** Kay reported that a meeting is scheduled to take place at 9:00 AM, Friday, March 4, 2020.
 4. **Disability Awareness Subcommittee:** Caroline reported that the subcommittee has not met recently and has some tasks pending. Kay will forward information related to requesting a town declaration, possibly, about October being Disability Awareness month. Caroline sees a need to sort out how to manage that October is also Domestic Violence Awareness month.
 5. **Council on Aging – Accessibility Statement:** Peg Espinola, liaison from COA, asked what COD wants COA to do. COD asked that the COA write a letter to the Permanent Building Committee and the Town Manager supporting the inclusion of the statement in all building RFPs. Lisa sees no negative in including an accessibility statement and it can serve as a kind of insurance contract if something is built improperly. COD is unclear about the timing of the Fairbank Community Center bid process, but inclusion in all projects going forward is the goal.
 6. **Transition Plan:** COD will meet with Bill Barletta at 6:30 PM on Tuesday, March 15, 2022 to discuss the plan, how the COD may become actively engaged in supporting the process, and more details of the intended uses of the \$200,000 being requested at the upcoming Town Meeting.
 7. **Diversity Equity and Inclusion Commission:** DEI is beginning to collect stories of lived experience of Sudbury residents. Karyn is working to learn and pass on how to create accessible surveys. Lisa encouraged all to feel

comfortable contributing their stories as the DEI Commission plans a very respectful process. DEI is “casting a wide net” to collect any experience a person might have had, with the goal being to make Sudbury as welcoming as it can be. Karyn suggests it could be possible to incorporate positive stories that are collected as a part of Disability awareness month.

8. **L-S SEPAC and SPS SEPAC:** Counseling Department at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School has worked with L-S SEPAC to offer a virtual college fair for high school students with disabilities at 7 PM on Thursday, March 31. Randi, who works at Lesley University, is assisting with that effort. L-S will directly send information and L-S SEPAC will post to social media soon. SPS SEPAC and L-S SEPAC both worked with student services at L-S and Curtis Middle School to host a Transition event for rising ninth graders that is happening simultaneous to this COD meeting. SPS SEPAC has hosted an outdoor event during school break and a virtual social evening for parents, both of which have been well attended.

Discussion / Possible Action

1. **Bylaws:** Proposed version is organized more traditionally and draws as much as possible from the enabling legislation. Three sections were highlighted as needing members attention and remote meeting participation was discussed.
 - a. **Name:** Members discussed aspects of possibly renaming the commission. It could be changed to express positivity such as “Accessibility and Inclusion Commission.” There are other towns who have done so. The word disability can conjure a negative image. Most other towns do use Commission on Disability and changing names has the potential to have us lose our identification. The statute states “may establish a Commission on Disability.” Without specifically saying “shall” it leaves an option. Words like accessibility/inclusion/advisory were discussed. Rebranding a group is or could be a big project. We could consult Mr. Dougan from the Massachusetts Office on Disability. Members expressed that we should carry this idea to a future meeting.

- b. **Officers:** Members discussed if a treasurer is needed. Since there is infrequent financial activity, we have operated with the chair overseeing any transactions and keeping in touch with the Town accounting department and no one sees a need to change that. Duties of a secretary have been handled by the vice chair or chair keeping a roster and members rotating as minute takers. Members expressed the desire to continue with rotating taking minutes.
- c. **Term limit of Chair:** Lisa described advantages of having change of leadership – different style, fresh ideas, prevent burnout. Members considered that two years may be too short as it takes a while to get up to speed. They noted that the annual meeting is in place to elect officers and at that time serving in an office can be reconsidered, so no one sees a need to specify a limit.
- d. **Accessible Meetings:** Karyn expressed concern that meetings should be available for remote participation. Jen Roberts explained that the ability to meet as a quorum of members in person with others attending remotely has been an option for a long time and that if the current option for full remote participation is not continued in July, the old option would remain. She also expressed the expectation that the option for remote participation will continued. She and Kay both affirmed that Commissions on Disability are permitted full remote participation in Open Meeting rules. Technical details were also discussed as to member and public participation.

Motion: Lisa made a motion to approve the Bylaws as amended. Doug seconded the motion.

1. Doug Frey: Aye.
2. Karyn Jones: Aye.
3. Liesje Quinto: Aye.
4. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye.
5. Kay Bell: Aye.

Vote: 6-0. Motion carried.

2. **Capital projects:** The Capital Projects Subcommittee has created and delivered the accessibility statement to the Permanent Building Committee;

they have offered input regarding accessible bathrooms throughout Fire Station 2; and responded to the Fairbank Community Center working group about location of a limited number of automatic door openers within the building.

3. Web site and document accessibility:

- a. **Karyn has spoken with Mark Thompson, Director of Information Systems**, to learn about the Town website. An evaluation two years ago showed that the website is 63.8% accessible. The software to make the site fully accessible costs \$3,500 per year with additional cost for a professional to perform work. What was approved was to spend \$6,500 annually to work on 2500 pages of the website. It will take years to reach 90% as the goal. Documents being generated now are not accessible. If the COD learns how to generate accessible documents and offers guidance for that to other boards and committees that would help. The COD can consider formulating a Town Meeting warrant article for the next Town Meeting (after May 2022) to procure the funds to employ the outside service to get the conversion of older documents done more quickly and take that task off Mark's list.
- b. Kay and Karyn have searched for and are finding resources that will help get us started on making Word documents accessible.
- c. Karyn has vetted various survey tools seeking what is most user-friendly for making a survey that is accessible. It seems Survey Monkey is the best. We have connected with the Low Vision Support Group and some members have offered to test a sample survey Karyn is creating and give feedback on how it works with screen readability.
- d. Once instructions are formulated Karyn would like to get a training video created as a resource for all to use and review.

Approve Minutes

Minutes pending from meetings on February 3, 2022, and February 23, 2022 were not yet available. They will be considered at the next regular meeting.

Future Meeting Dates

1. A special meeting is scheduled for 6:30 PM, Tuesday, March 15, 2022 to discuss the ADA Transition Plan with Bill Barletta, Combined Facilities Director for the Town.
2. Regular meetings are scheduled for 6:30 PM on the first Thursday of the month for April 7th, May 5th, and June 2nd.

Future Agenda Items

1. Items that were not closed in the present agenda will carry forward.
2. Invite Jeff Dougan, Assistant Director of Community...MOD come to a future meeting to...for some professional development as we have so many members
3. Invite Sudbury's State Representative CG and State Senator JE for a legislative night.
4. Consider seeking a Town Meeting article for funds (\$35,000?) for hiring an outside company to implement web conversion.
5. Select a member to serve on the Transportation Committee.

Adjournment

Motion: Lisa made a motion to adjourn. Karyn seconded the motion.

1. Doug Frey: Aye.
2. Karyn Jones: Aye.
3. Liesje Quinto: Aye.
4. Lisa Kouchakdjian: Aye.
5. Kay Bell: Aye.

Vote: 6-0. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.