



## Annual Town Meeting, Commission on Disability May 2, 2022      Articles on which we express a position

### **14. Funding Go Sudbury! Taxi and Uber Transportation Programs for FY 2023**

The Commission on Disability voted 8-0 in favor of recommending passage of Article 14.

We appreciate the micro-transit program supported in this article with hopes that the data it is accumulating will help jump start (see what I did there?) a broader, more complete public transportation system in Sudbury and connect us to our neighboring communities and beyond. The disability community certainly needs ways to get to all the same places everyone else goes.

### **16. Funding of a Land Use Consultant for the Sewataro/Liberty Ledge Property**

The Commission on Disability voted 8-0 in favor of recommending passage of Article 16.

There seems to be so much positive potential for residents and visitors to enjoy that lovely park-like setting, it is only logical to analyze the possibilities so they can be developed. With a human centered design approach from the start, that property will better serve the all of us, including those of us with various disabilities.

## **22. Fairbank Community Center Audio-Visual Equipment Funding**

Anyone using the Community Center will benefit from 21<sup>st</sup> century technology that plays such an important part in many programs, including making many activities available remotely.

The pandemic played two parts in making this article so important:

By crashing the supply chain it sent costs into high altitude and forced the Permanent Building Committee to move more and more pieces of the project off the list to preserve the structural needs with integrity. That's why obviously important audio-visual equipment was defunded.

AND

Everyone learned how to participate in and get access to activities and programs using remote technology. For people with disabilities who couldn't even participate before, the remote option opened the doors to new opportunities.

The Commission on Disability voted unanimously in favor of recommending passage of Article 22.

## **27. Noyes Elementary School Classroom Sinks Replacement**

The ADA, a civil rights law, requires all government entities, in our case a municipality, to conduct a self-evaluation – that is, a thorough inspection and assessment – of all facilities, policies, programs and activities to identify where there are lapses of compliance.

After that they are required to produce a Transition Plan and work with staff and stakeholders to formulate action steps to implement the Transition Plan.

For nearly 30 years Sudbury, like many towns, did not fulfil that requirement, but when Mr. Barletta came to work here as Combined Facilities Director he saw to it that Sudbury hired a topnotch group to perform the self-evaluation and write us a Transition Plan.

Along with municipal buildings and parks, all Sudbury Schools were covered. The total number of items to address in the five school buildings is 655. Peter Noyes School has 104 items to remedy.

All that is to let you know that article 27 represents an action step to address eight significant items. Mr. Barletta used an efficient approach to this. He and his staff executed a prototype project first to test the design and determine unit cost. Now the town can take advantage of economy of scale to implement the successful design in multiple classrooms. This article proposes to use our tax money efficiently to make a dramatic improvement in accessibility for the children and staff at Peter Noyes Elementary School.

The Commission on Disability voted unanimously in favor of recommending passage of Article 27.

## **32. Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan Recommendation**

About 2 min

DOJ settlements and the ADA require that Sudbury address the Transition Plan of July 2021 within three- to five-years. The New England ADA Center guidance directs towns to work with staff and stakeholders to formulate actions steps to implement the Transition Plan.

The Transition Plan has a database of 1382 line items related to the built environment. The built environment includes everything from our municipal and school buildings to our ballfields, playgrounds, and the Camp Sewataro/Liberty Ledge property.

The Transition Plan of July 2021 also includes a substantive report addressing compliance issues related to policies, practices, and procedures including effective communication which encompasses, but is not limited to, website accessibility.

Of the sixty months available, fifty-one months remain. There is some urgency for tackling this work and Town Manager Hayes has made a verbal commitment to the Commission on Disability to convene a working group immediately after this Town Meeting to launch a collaborative project to look at the whole of the transition plan and set up priorities, sequencing, and strategies for accomplishing full compliance.

The Commission on Disability voted unanimously in favor of recommending passage of Article 32.

With this funding the Town Manager and the next Combined Facilities Director's working group will have a budget to apply to the highest priority and first feasible work to get the accessibility compliance ball rolling. The clock is ticking.

### **34. On-Call Architectural engineering “House Doctor” Services**

The Commission on Disability voted unanimously to recommend passage of Article 34.

The funds requested in this article will be spent on services of a highly skilled architectural and engineering professional to design modest municipal building modifications. The Commission on Disability anticipates that there will be some such projects needed to address items that appear in the ADA Transition Plan of 2021 that will require design services.

One example is the renovation or replacement of the single user restroom on the second floor of the Flynn Building. The report reads: Renovate and enlarge toilet room or add an accessible single user toilet room on this floor.

There are a number of similar scale restroom projects at Featherland Park and Feeley Field. The conservative estimate is \$24,000 for each of these restroom projects.

Having a designer readily available who could draw up the plans would expedite getting those items completed when they come up in the sequence.

As I said before, the clock is ticking. Fifty one months left.

## **51. Community Preservation Act Funds – Open Space & Recreation Plan and Athletic Fields Needs Assessment**

Individuals who live with disabilities, whether those disabilities are visible and obvious or unseen conditions of a physical or mental nature, all can garner great benefits from activities in, or even just quiet visits sitting in, the wonderful outdoor places we all love so much here in Sudbury.

We appreciate the Community Preservation Committee's willingness to devote funds to strong planning that will help put together maintenance and improvement projects to make our open spaces useful to everyone. We predict that the ADA Transition Plan of July 2021 will be helpful to the effort because it has reports on Broadacres Farm, Sewataro/Liberty Ledge, Davis Field, Featherland Park, Feeley Field, Grinnell Park, Haskell Field, Heritage Park, Ti-Sales Field, and Wills Lake Access.

It is not lost on the Commission on Disability that so many staff and volunteers on boards and committees are consistently considering accessibility in their discussions and actions. This mindset is the foundation for making Sudbury more and more inclusive and welcoming.

Accessibility is a benefit to us all - because the truth is we are all just one accident, one serious illness away from living with a temporary or permanent, a mild or a severe disabling condition. In fact, we all age into reduction in our abilities and none of us wants to be kept away from the beautiful open spaces and the recreational opportunities in our community.

The Commission on Disability voted unanimously in favor of recommending passage of Article 51.

**57. Hire Land Use Consultant for Liberty Ledge/Sewataro Property (Citizen Petition)**

[Though the COD voted to support, the article was withdrawn.]

**58. Creation of Sustainability Director Position (Citizen Position)**

[Though the COD voted to support, the Ms. Bell was not recognized to speak so did not read a statement.]