

Sudbury Commission of Disability (COD) Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2022

Virtual Meeting

Members Present

1. Kathleen Bell, Chair
2. Karyn Jones
3. Jane Kline
4. Randi Korn
5. Leisje Quinto
6. Caroline Santangelo - arrived 7:30 PM

Regular Session Meeting - Chair Kay Bell opened the meeting at 6:35PM *(at the earliest)*.

Open Statement

1. Chair Bell performed a roll call and made an announcement that the session is being recorded, shared live for the public to see and hear on SudburyTV and there should be no expected right to privacy, as this is a public forum.

Public Comment

1. No public comment.

Discussion / Potential Action

1. Open seats: Bell requested members consider reaching out to community members who may be interested in filling one of the three empty seats on the COD.
2. Subcommittees: Bell requested that Capital Projects, Disability Awareness, and Brain-based Disability Subcommittees submit

outstanding minutes. Bell explained need to complete the form to define the scope of each subcommittee for COD approval. Jones suggested creating a Transition Plan Subcommittee. Bell explained that it's an option for an individual to do research or formulate ideas and bring them to the whole COD or for a subcommittee to be formed to do that using Open Meeting Law practices.

Legislative Discussion

1. Senator Jamie Eldridge and Representative Carmine Gentile gave updates about:
 - a. S1629: An Act building a more accessible Massachusetts. It would strengthen the MA Architectural Access Board. Eldridge reported it has been sent favorably to the Senate Ways and Means Committee
 - b. H2419: An Act removing barriers to work that discriminate against persons with disabilities, mobility impairments, and seniors. Eldridge reported it has been sent favorably to the Senate Ways and Means Committee as was 2420. Gentile explained that the Joint Committee on Homeland Security worked on the redraft that was reported out.
 - c. H2420: An Act relative to expanding the availability of adaptable housing for consumers with disabilities, mobility impairments, and seniors.
 - d. S2614: An Act relative to education, knowledge and communication that builds on our existing food allergy law by requiring food servers to have basic training on food allergies. Gentile is a primary sponsor and this act is also out to Ways and Means.
 - e. S1083 and H1711: Bills to prohibit discrimination against

adults (parents) with disabilities in juvenile and family court proceedings. Eldridge chairs the Judiciary Committee and reported these out of committee to Senate Ways and Means and is optimistic for passage.

- f. Actions related to 101 CMR 309.00 (01-01-20) Rates for Personal Care Attendant Services, such as changes to minimum wages. Gentile has seen the gap between individuals eligible for care and available care attendance widen from 2000 to 3000 due to very low pay and now with the pandemic the number is 5000. In the last 2 years incremental raises have been achieved.
- g. Actions related to making civic engagement more accessible to persons with disabilities. Eldridge reported that the House and Senate are considering the VOTES Act that includes early voting and voting by mail. The Senate version includes same day registration. Gentile said the House version is being reconciled with hopes of passage.
- h. Eldridge supports funding for the Carroll School and the MA Commission for the Blind in the budget, and for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program. He encourages companies to employ workers with disabilities and his office is celebrating the 9th year of Melissa Riley, office assistant who is a great advocate. His office is hoping to leverage funds coming in to improve availability of accessible public transportation.
- i. Gentile explained the "Fair Share" or millionaires tax bill has been approved for the ballot in November. He also spoke of the young people with disabilities who have been aging out of educational services during the pandemic, when they could not

receive full services. He and others procured funds to extend compensatory services. He also explained efforts to improve support for families who are engaging in self-directed care for the loved ones with disabilities.

2. Kline raised a concern that the Disabled Persons' Protection Commission ends its coverage when a person turns 60 years of age. Kline asked Eldridge and Gentile why Sudbury is not included as The Program of All Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) community.
 - a. Gentile said he would look into it and get back to the commission about it.
 - b. Eldridge believed it was a town decision of whether or not Sudbury becomes a PACE community. Bell said she would reach out to Select Board.
3. Korn asked Eldridge and Gentile to speak how their work is helping change structures around equity around people with disabilities.
 - a. Gentile described visiting U Mass Amherst and discovering that at the brand new student center, though restrooms were marked as accessible, not a single one was. He encourages us all to be vigilant and that local CODs are important in doing that.
 - b. Eldridge is shocked how far we are in design and not including access at the design phase of a building. Community needs to be vocal to get bills passed into state legislature law.
4. Linda Faust, 189 Boston Post Road, asked about if voting electronically can pass so a blind and visually impaired person can vote electronically at home. Mail-in ballots for many people require a person to come to the home to help do ballot. Electronic voting is available in Cambridge,

Boston, and Worcester.

- a. Gentile, filed a bill to allow electronic voting some years ago, but it went nowhere. He said if this can be done somewhere else, there is no reason this cannot be done in Sudbury.
 - b. Eldridge hopes more bills will pass in the future.
5. Quinto asked about if there is any progress being made in making Masshealth disability benefits easier to get for people with disabilities.
 - a. Gentile will look into it. He has cosponsored a bill to arrange for a single application that would work for MassHealth and other benefits programs.
 - b. Eldridge spoke to the systematic issue with Masshealth trying to control their budget by putting up barriers like the application complexity.
6. Quinto asked about what assistance is available for people who need to make home modifications due to a family members disability.
 - a. Gentile described the Sudbury Housing Trust program that helps with critical repairs for homeowners.
 - b. Eldridge asked Quinto to email his office and he would send her information about the Affordable Housing Bond Bill.
7. Lisa Kouchakdjian, Meadowbrook Circle, read resident Nicole Arperian's statement regarding food allergy legislation, Bill S-2614. After her son suffered a serious event four years ago as a restaurant server was not properly trained, she has worked for four years to get this bill passed. Ms. Arperian's requests the support of Eldridge and Gentile for passing that bill.
8. Santangelo asked what can be done to assure buildings under

construction actually end up being compliant. Gentile suggests greater direct involvement in overseeing the building projects.

9. Jones said early intervention (EI) services sometimes does not offer the appropriate therapies or services for some specific diagnoses. Gentile said that if necessary services are being denied, do reach out to his office and he will pursue the issue. Another problem is the refusal of some medical services to accept MassHealth for payment.
10. We thanked Gentile and Eldridge for their time. Gentile encouraged members to consider visiting legislators at the State House.

Discussion / Potential Action Items

Future Meeting Dates

Will be considered at our next meeting on June 2, 2022.

Membership

Caroline Santangelo will not apply to serve another term.

Transition Plan Working Group

1. One member of the COD can be part of the town's working group which will make decisions regarding the \$200,000 the town has to make ADA improvements.
2. Jones nominated Quinto to be the COD's appointed representative on the working group. Quinto accepts.
3. Korn suggests Bell mentor Quinto to help prepare her for when the working group is up and running.

4. Bell suggests starting a subcommittee to mentor Quinto so Quinto can represent the COD in the town's working group.
5. Jen Roberts, Select Board Liaison, wondered if the working group could instead be a subcommittee in order to accommodate two COD members. Bell reviewed the definition provided by Town administration sourced from Open Meeting Law.

Motion: Jones makes a motion to create a subcommittee called Transition Plan of July 2021 Subcommittee where members will study the transition plan in preparation for participation in the working group to be appointed by the Town Manager. Korn seconds the motion. Roll call vote:

- a.) Kathleen Bell, Aye
- b.) Karyn Jones, Aye
- c.) Jane Kline, Aye
- d.) Randi Korn, Aye
- e.) Leisje Quinto, Aye
- f.) Caroline Santangelo, Aye

Vote: 6-0; Motion passes.

Motion: Korn makes motion that Leisje Quinto, Karyn Jones, and Kay Bell will be assigned to the Transition Plan of July 2021 Subcommittee to prepare for the town appointed working group. Quinto seconds. Roll call vote:

- a.) Kathleen Bell, Aye
- b.) Karyn Jones, Aye
- c.) Jane Kline, Not present
- d.) Randi Korn, Aye

e.) Leisje Quinto, Aye

f.) Caroline Santangelo, Aye

Vote: 5-0; Motion passes.

Motion: Jones motions to adjourn meeting at 9:31pm. Quinto seconds. Roll call vote:

a.) Kathleen Bell, Aye

b.) Karyn Jones, Aye

c.) Jane Kline, Not present

d.) Randi Korn, Aye

e.) Leisje Quinto, Aye

f.) Caroline Santangelo, Aye

Vote: 5-0; Motion passes.

Thank you for your service, Caroline Santangelo!

Respectfully Submitted, Karyn Jones