

**Sudbury Commission on Disability (COD)
Minutes of March 2, 2023**

Virtual Meeting. All attendees present remotely.

Members Present: Kay Bell (Chair), Pat Brown, Cameron LaHaise, Liesje Quinto

Members Absent: None.

Also Present: Select Board Chair Charlie Russo

Kay Bell, Chair, called the meeting to order by roll call at 7:38 pm, and reviewed the protocols under which remote meetings are conducted. Pat Brown will draft minutes for this meeting.

Public Comment: Karyn Jones, 27 Pendleton Road, expressed her pleasure that Sudbury is such a welcoming community actively engaged in accommodating people with disabilities. She supports the Town Meeting article to provide Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) at the new Fairbank Center. She believes the town should appropriate money for the COD annually so COD can support items like the ALD article and other projects.

Updates: Kay reminded new Town Manager Andy Sheehan that COD is short-handed and asked that he interview and appoint applicants. He has not yet been able to do this. He was also unable to attend the monthly update meeting with COD Chair and Vice-Chair scheduled only a few days after his official

start date. The OML guidance Kay obtained is available in supporting documents: final versions of minutes and other documents must be crafted in open meeting. The Transportation Committee has relaxed some of the caps previously imposed on ride use. SEPAC is holding social events and will have a special event for parents of children with autism later this month.

Mara Huston of the Park & Rec Commission was unable to attend; that presentation was deferred to a future meeting.

Goals Refinement: Cam LaHaise shared the COD goals spreadsheet as shared in the packet. The COD discussed the goals as she captured them on the spreadsheet. Kay supplied updates on the 30th Anniversary Celebration of Sudbury COD and associated items. She added that the Wayland-Sudbury Domestic Violence Roundtable (DVR) asked COD to collaborate on an educational event this spring to discuss relational abuse and disability, which was added to the COD goals. In particular, COD could enhance their event by engaging an ASL interpreter. There was a long discussion about what could or should be posted on the website. Warrant articles and website composition will be discussed in April. As part of a discussion on grants, Cam volunteered to find out grant application schedules from some local foundations, including the Sudbury Foundation.

Web Fixes, FAQs and Documents: Pat Brown presented the updates made to the COD webpage since the last meeting.

Tonight's focus is on the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) page. The proposed list was modified to remove the "grievance procedure", add a link on how to get a handicap placard, and reorder the items. Observing a FAQ concerning donations, Select Board Chair Charlie Russo cautioned the COD that soliciting donations can run afoul of legal restrictions, but Kay Bell responded that donations are permitted under the specific legislation enabling the COD and Pat Brown had tested this process previously. As Mr. Russo had been promoted to panelist for this discussion, the next agenda item was taken out of order.

Funds request for design of additional AV & ALD for the Fairbank Community Center: Select Board Chair Russo explained that at the February 7 Select Board meeting one concern was identifying funding for the Fairbank AV article. Subsequently \$13,640 to fund the design of the upgraded system was allocated from ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act). However, that uncertainty caused Mr. Russo to propose that the COD, in light of its support for the article, put some of its funds toward this effort and he was following up on that commitment.

Kay Bell shared our (COD) appreciation that funding for this design has been secured. She discussed historical COD revenue and expenditures included in the meeting packet.

Mr. Russo asked directly whether the COD was interested in contributing funding for the Fairbank AV article. Kay Bell

responded that the COD would like to collaborate by supplying input early in the process focused on accessibility for all town construction projects. Specifically on this project COD would like to contribute input and to discuss contributing money.

Pat asked whether this design effort would be available when presenting the Fairbank article at Town Meeting. Chair Russo confirmed but said that money remained tight and that a contribution by the COD would demonstrate concrete support. COD thanked him for attending and Chair Russo left as a panelist. Kay requested that any decisions by COD on spending money be deferred until a later meeting after the Commission considered the financial information presented in this evening's supporting materials. After a discussion about funding COD initiatives in other communities, the topic returned to website updates.

Web Fixes, FAQs and Documents (cont): The Proceedings from Town Meeting 1993 when the Sudbury COD was created and the text of MGL Chapter 40 Section 8J which defines the Commission's role in state law have both been added. Kay shared the memo containing the legal opinion from Town Counsel Corbo concerning the Role of Disability Commission – ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan from January 8, 2021. The opinion states that the COD does not implement policy for the town; the COD provides input and recommendations to the town.

Kay also shared a document included in the supporting materials that the COD had previously discussed from the New COD Meeting March 2, 2023

England ADA Center. This is the Action Guide, which describes the implementation of an ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. She proposed that this document also be included on the COD Documents Page.

Pat summarized the **proposed changes to the web page**:

- 1) Reorder the FAQ questions as shown in the supporting documents to this order: 2b, 2d, 2a, and omit 2c (public grievance procedure) entirely until COD has had a chance to develop such a procedure with Town Staff.
- 2) Insert **prior to** the 2b item in the FAQ above (that is, first thing on the list) “How do I get a placard?” linking to the DMV page.
- 3) Post both the memo from Town Counsel about the role of the COD and the Action Guide from the New England ADA Center on the COD documents page.

Pat moved that COD make the changes outlined above and Liesje seconded. Cam requested that the public grievance procedure be placed upon a future agenda. **It carried unanimously on a roll call vote.** Kay noted that the Transition Plan Subcommittee could do some work on developing a grievance procedure to present at a future COD meeting.

Remote Meeting Exception This item--should the COD write a letter or otherwise request that the remote meeting provisions introduced under COVID be continued?--was deferred to a future meeting.

Draft letter from the COD to the Town Manager (Transition Plan Subcommittee) The Transition Plan Subcommittee (TPS), consisting of Kay and Liesje, provided a draft letter reaching out to the new Town Manager and inviting him and ideally Facilities Manager Sandra Duran to discuss how he handled collaboration on the ADA transition plan at his previous post and how he will proceed on this task in Sudbury.

Discussion focused various times which COD could propose for a meeting with the Town Manager to discuss the Transition Plan and editing the letter to describe the COD intent for this meeting more specifically.

Cam moved that the Commission send a letter to Mr. Sheehan inviting him to a future meeting, and also Sandra Duran. Liesje seconded. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Community input: SMILE Mass request. Kay has acknowledged the request, but discussion was deferred until COD discusses its financials next month.

Kay updated the Commission on a controversial statement made by the Chair of the Framingham Democratic Town Committee concerning children with disabilities.

Public Comment: Jennifer Roberts from the Sudbury Select Board said that the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Commission was meeting on the second Thursday of the

month, and that COD appoints an advisory member of the DEI Commission.

Approve Minutes:

The January 26, 2023, COD minutes were accepted as amended (moved by Kay, seconded by Liesje) unanimously by roll call vote.

The February 2, 2023, COD minutes were accepted as submitted (moved by Pat, seconded by Liesje) unanimously by roll call vote.

Kay received an invitation to participate in the Sudbury Chamber of Commerce “Market Place” event on March 15. Kay asked for a sense of the Commission authorizing her to attend using the same materials Kay had collected for the COD table at the “Sudbury Doing Good” event last fall. The COD very much approved, and Liesje can possibly attend with Kay as well.

Motion to adjourn made by Liesje Quinto, seconded by Pat Brown, **unanimously approved by roll call vote at 10:27 pm.**