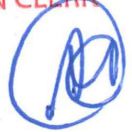


Town of Ayer Disabilities Commission

Meeting Minutes: Wednesday, September 22, 2021

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TOWN OF AYER
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In attendance: (Remote ZOOM Meeting)

Members: Laura Warner, David Cibor, Caitlin Gamache, Alan S. Manoian

Municipal ADA Coordinator/Town Manager: Robert Pontbriand

The Meeting of the Ayer Disabilities Commission was called to order at 6:00PM.

Item: Vote on Acceptance of Meeting Agenda

Motion: A. Manoian moves to accept Meeting Agenda as presented.

2nd: D. Cibor

Vote: Unanimous.

Item: Discussion, nomination & election of Commission Officers.

The discussion among Commission Members resulted in the following candidacy and nominations of participating members.

- David Cibor – Chairperson
- Laura Warner – Vice Chairperson
- Caitlin Gamache – Treasurer
- Alan S. Manoian – Secretary

Motion:

Motion: D. Cibor makes motion to elect the above members to the officer positions as listed.

2nd: Laura Warner

Vote: Unanimous

Item: Name of Commission

A brief discussion followed regarding the current and prospective name of Ayer's municipal Commission.

D. Cibor suggested "Ayer Commission on Special Needs", as the term "Disabilities" may not be acceptable/appropriate our community members.

L. Warner suggested that the term "Special Needs" may not be acceptable/appropriate for our community members.

L. Warner suggested considering the term "Accessibility".

The Commission members agreed to continue this discussion to determine the proper name for the municipal Commission going forward.

Item: Membership Composition

In addition, discussion followed regarding the Commonwealth of Massachusetts requirement under Article III: Membership:

1. The Commission shall consist of seven members appointed by the Mayor. The majority of members shall consist of people with disabilities. One of the members may be a member of the immediate family of a person with a disability. One member shall be either an elected or appointed official of the City/Town.

L. Warner suggested that our Commission do further research and gain better understanding of the definition of "Disability" – as it includes a broad range of human health/wellness conditions and far more than seemingly obvious physical disabilities & limitations. L. Warner stated, "It would not be appropriate to directly ask prospective new Commission members – "Are you disabled?"

R. Pontbriand will follow-up with officials of the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) to benefit from their guidance and advice.

R. Pontbriand will report back to Commission members following dialogue with MOD.

Item: Review of Current Operating By-Laws Template

The Commission members proceeded to review & discuss the Template of "Operating By-Laws" Articles 1-6.

Item: Review of (10) Current Goals

L. Warner proceeded to move on to Goals Review stating, "Let's look at Goals".

L. Warner inquired whether Notice of Accommodation is being properly posted for all municipal meetings, events, etc.

L. Warner inquired whether Sign Language Interpreters are being deployed at Ayer Town Meeting?

R. Pontbriand responded that Sign Language Interpreters are deployed at Ayer Town Meeting at the request of Town Meeting member/s.

C. Gamache suggested starting to establish working relationship between Ayer Disabilities Commission & municipal Building Commissioner/Zoning Code Compliance Officer.

R. Pontbriand suggested that the Ayer Disabilities Commission is to be fully integrated into the Interdepartmental Development Review Process Structure going forward.

R. Pontbriand suggested that the Ayer Disabilities Commission be added to the municipal department/board Distribution List for all pending development/building projects.

It was agreed by all participants that the Ayer Disabilities Commission should play a "key role" in the prospective Chapter 40B Residential Development Project located at 65 Fitchburg Rd.

It was also agreed that the Ayer Disabilities Commission will invite municipal department heads to join them (at regular meetings) in order to establish enhanced working relationships and heightened awareness of ADA principles, practices, standards and requirements relating to departmental operations & projects.

L. Warner inquired of D. Cibor what his hopes are for the Commission and Town as his son is "special needs"/"disabled" (wheelchair).

D. Cibor responded – “I hope we can make a positive impact on the improvement of non-compliant & obstructed municipal sidewalks, as well as accessibility barriers in and around public & private buildings in Ayer.

R. Pontbriand suggested that a priority Goal is to review & improve Ayer’s municipal ADA Grievance Procedure. We need to better understand and articulate “What is the Process”? And to better promote the municipal ADA Grievance Procedure/Process – engage in more Public Outreach/Communication.

R. Pontbriand suggests a full review of Ayer’s municipal ADA Grievance Procedure by the Commission & municipal staff.

D. Cibor inquires is the Ayer Commission on Disabilities and Ayer municipal staff would benefit from available Massachusetts State-Level Training Sessions on ADA Procedures/Requirements?

D. Cibor suggests that the Ayer Disabilities Commission & municipal ADA Coordinator invite a Massachusetts State ADA representative to the Town of Ayer for a Training/Presentation Forum/Session. (The entire Commission agrees).

A. Manoian suggested to research the Disabilities Commission “Mission Statement/Statement of Purpose” of various other Massachusetts communities to gain some insight and useful examples of well-crafted Mission Statements. (A. Manoian will follow-up on this activity); both Cambridge MA & Newton MA were cited as good examples.

R. Pontbriand suggested that the new members of the Ayer Disabilities Commission be issued municipal (email addresses) as a next step.

R. Pontbriand suggested as another priority activity - that the Ayer Disabilities Commission coordinate with municipal IT Director and selected municipal department heads to start reviewing and improving municipal Website/Content.

Item: Schedule for Next Commission Meeting

Discussion followed on meeting frequency schedule.

D. Cibor suggested that the next meeting be scheduled six (6) weeks from 1st meeting.

D. Cibor & A. Manoian will have follow-up discussion to set the date for the 2nd meeting.

Motion: To schedule 2nd meeting six (6) weeks from 1st meeting.

Motion: D. Cibor

2nd: C. Gamache

Roll Call Vote:

L. Warner – In Favor

D. Cibor – In Favor

C. Gamache – In Favor

A. Manoian – In Favor

Vote: Unanimous

Meeting Adjournment

Motion: D. Cibor

2nd: L. Warner

Vote: Unanimous.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:00PM.

Minutes Reviewed and Approved by the Ayer Disabilities Commission on November 4, 2021.

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Alan S. Manoian:

 9/22/21