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TOWN OF AYER
TOWN CLERK

The Ayer Disabilities Commission (ADC)
Ayer Town Hall, One Main Street, Ayer MA 01432

Ayer Disabilities Commission

Minutes of Meeting – Thursday, July 20, 2023

Location: Ayer Town Hall, 1st Fl. Meeting Room

Time: 6:00PM

In Attendance: D. Cibor, M. Titus, C. Gamache, B. Boisseau, R. Anderson, A. Manoian

Participant: Town Manager/Municipal ADA Coordinator, Robert Pontbriand

Item - Call Meeting to Order at 6:02PM:

Chair-D. Cibor called the Ayer Disabilities Commission meeting of Thursday, July 20, 2023 to order.

Item - Vote on Acceptance of Agenda:

Chair-D. Cibor requested members to review posted Agenda, and if acceptable to make motion for acceptance of Agenda.

Motion by D. Cibor to accept Agenda

Second: by R. Anderson

Discussion: (None)

All in Favor: (Unanimous)

Item – Review of Minutes of the May 18, 2023 Meeting of the ADC.

Motion: by R. Anderson

Second: by M. Titus

Discussion: (None)

All in Favor: (Unanimous)

Public Comment: C. Cibor announced the opportunity period for Public Comment.

S. Withee of 11 Groton-Shirley Rd., inquired about the upcoming Item on the Agenda titled "Downtown Ayer Main Street & Columbia Street Re-Design & Re-Construction Project". S. Withee inquired - "Who is producing these plans? And will there be an opportunity for public comment on the plans? Is it the town or the State?"

A. Manoian, Dir AOCED & ADC member responded – "The project plans were produced by our project consultants, formerly World-Tech, which was acquired by Tighe & Bond. The project consultants are now producing a 25% design plan, which is preliminary & conceptual, which will be submitted to MassDOT so they can comment, and then a "very robust" local public comment process with public forums and downtown public walking tours

OLD BUSINESS

Item: Coordinate and conduct review & update of Town of Ayer "Personnel Manual" for ADA content and to compose/produce a Town of Ayer Municipal Reasonable Accommodation Policy.

The ADC members and Town Manager/Municipal ADA Coordinator engaged in a brief review and discussion of the need for an updated Town of Ayer Municipal "Personnel Manual" and a "Municipal Reasonable Accommodation Policy".

Robert provided & distributed the Town of Ayer's municipal "Grievance Policy" for the Committee's review, comment and suggested update/s. Robert also provided & distributed the Town of Ayer's municipal "ADA Public Notice" for the Committee's review, comment & possible update. Robert encouraged the Committee to suggest additional ways of getting the "Public Notice" more accessible and visible for the benefit of the general public.

Robert then addressed the need to update the Town of Ayer's municipal Personnel Manual which was last updated in 2011. Robert informed the Commission that the update process for the Personnel Manual is underway. Robert confirmed that all municipal departments, boards, commissions will be participating in this the update process. The Town of Westford's municipal Personnel Manual will serve as a good model/template.

Robert then proceeded to review the Commonwealth of MA six (6) areas of responsibility for municipal ADA Commissions; - including,

- Research local problems of people with disabilities.
- Advise and assist local officials with ADA compliance.
- Coordinate and carryout programs for people with disabilities in partnership with MOD. Review and make recommendations of policies, procedures, services, projects, activities, etc. in the town.
- To provide information, referrals, and guidance.
- To coordinate activities off/in the town.

Robert suggested for next steps – Commission review & comment on the municipal 2018 ADA "Public Notice". The template/model Personnel Manual will be provided into the Fall season for Commission review, comment, and content. Robert stressed the importance in moving forward together is communication, education & coordination.

Robert also addressed the opportunity to make ongoing improvements to the Town of Ayer's municipal website to be fully compliant with visual & audio device aids. He stressed that if there are items/devices the town needs - let's start producing a list and provide them.

R. Anderson then brought up a concept/project that he has been wanting to see advanced – whereby the Ayer Disabilities Commission could accept donations of

disability aids/equipment such as walkers, crutches, wheel chairs ramps, scooters, etc., and identify a location to safely store aids/equipment, and then make them available at no cost to people in need who may not have the financial means to purchase them. The Commission members then discussed potential logistics/oversight/liability/policy/waivers of such a proposed program. Commission members agreed that the need exists in the community of Ayer for such a program, and that are a number of local businesses, as well as individuals & families who would like to participate/contribute/donate to such a local ADA program. The Commission members with Robert agreed to start advancing the planning & coordination of the proposed program – and will advance at ongoing meetings.

M. Titus also encouraged the town/commission to provide a list of places currently offering assistance/equipment/aids on the municipal website – so if the town/commission cannot immediately provide – there are other places/organizations that may provide such aids/equipment immediately.

Robert then informed the Commission that the Town has recently created the new position of Social Worker, and that the town has been successful in hiring Brittany Beaudry as the new municipal Social Worker who will begin her service on July 24th and that we will be working together with Brittany.

The Commission members discussed the benefit of being issued municipal ID Badges (with photos) as they will be in public spaces/in the field identifying various ADA deficiencies and opportunities – and that ID Badges will be most useful. Municipal staff will follow-up and schedule time for portrait/pictures to be taken and badges produced/issued.

Robert acknowledged that the Ayer Disabilities Comm. can accept donations/gifts of property/equipment or funds, subject to approval by the Ayer Select Board.

The Commission members discussed the opportunity to have a Festival Booth at the upcoming Newton Street Festival on Oct. 7th.

Item: Update on Ayer Parks Commission Meeting with participation of Ayer Disabilities Commission re: ADA Design Review/Recommendations for new Pirone Park Playground.

A. Manoian displayed the visual Playground Layout Concept Plan & List of Playground Equipment/Structures provided by the Ayer Parks Director.

Commission members proceeded to review and discuss the plan/documentation provided.

Items discussed were the playground fencing treatment/design, the number of entrances/gates, height of play structures, ground surface material, amenities for adults

(sit and watch kids/grandkids), landscaping design, access to/from parking lot, trees preserved, etc.

R. Anderson & B. Boisseau inquired if there is a wheelchair accommodation fixture for the proposed Zip-Line play structure?

D. Cibor stated – my child is confined to a wheelchair – how do we get to the Zip-Line?

Commission members inquired – what is that Path surface? Gravel would not be good.

C. Gamache stated that it would be beneficial for the Commission to be provided with a detailed Landscape Plan.

C. Gamache inquired if the Commission would just be reviewing/commenting on public development projects, or would it also include private development projects?

Robert responded that it would be all projects, both public and private that would come before the Ayer Planning Board and other boards/commissions.

New Business:

Item: ADC Design Input on Main Street/Columbia St. Redesign & Reconstruction Project.

R. Anderson stated that it is not necessary (at this point) for ADC to conduct a joint meeting with DPW/Police/Fire/etc.

D. Cibor stated that once we get the approved 25% Plans from MassDOT – then the ADC will regroup and engage in review & comment for project.

The Commission members agreed.

Robert encouraged a discussion with DPW Director on the improved design of crosswalks.

D. Cibor stated that sections of sidewalks need to be addressed – specifically the length of sidewalk between the Mobil Station & Ayer Liquor Store in front of Berry's surface parking lot at Depot Square.

Robert also recognized the opportunity/benefit to introduce "hawk beacons" at crosswalks, locations with challenging slopes, polling water, etc. – and let's look at all areas where we can make progress to improve access.

Motion:

D. Cibor makes motion to adjourn.

2nd: R. Anderson

Discussion: None
All in Favor: Unanimous

The ADC Meeting adjourned at approx. 7:15PM.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Alan S. Manoian, Dir. AOCED/ADC Member

Date Minutes Approved: 9/21/23

Signature Indicating Approval: Mark L. Cote