

Town of Dedham Commission on Disability Meeting

October 14, 2022 – 7:00 p.m. – via Zoom

Members Present: John Tocci, Bernie Chirokas, Ken Cimeno, Mary Nikolaides, Ellen Conway, Vicky Berg, Robert Carr, Bridgett Driscoll, Matthew Jameson, Dianne Loud.
Guest: Heather Sutcliffe.

John Tocci chaired the meeting.

1. **Treasurer's Report:** We do not have a Treasurer's report for October, Ken will provide three months of statements a November meeting.
2. **Riverdale School Playground:** Vote to donate \$7,500 for playground reconstruction: Vote unanimous.
3. **Sensory friendly opening for Dedham Day at Memorial Field.** Discussion of sensory friendly opening. Shari received feedback that one-half hour was insufficient. Shari gave Lisa Moran Dedham Parks & Rec a list of ideas for other improvements. DPD Chief D'Entremont and Fire Dept. were very good about allowing extra time for children on trucks. Vendors and ride operators only knew about early opening on Friday afternoon. Begin to work with Friends of Dedham Day again very soon to develop plans for next year. Ideas are not effective if the community does not know why the event is in place. Perhaps notify Dedham Times etc. Dedham Library had an event several years ago explaining disability, can think about this for next year.
4. **Autism Friendly initiatives. Heather Sutcliffe./Shari:** Dedham Square Circle had a discussion with Ryan McDermott regarding how we might provide broad training. Heather Sutcliffe has received a Croker Fellowship for a Community Inclusion Project associated with UMass and Children's Hospital, Boston

What is the Allen C. Crocker Family Fellowship? The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Network created the Allen C. Crocker Family Fellowship in 2012. The Fellowship celebrates the work of Dr. Allen C. Crocker and his devotion to families of children with disabilities. The fellowship is for family members of individuals with developmental disabilities. As a Crocker Fellow a project idea is developed with some assistance from staff from the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) project. These help development of leadership skills, knowledge on disability policy, disability services, and disability supports. What organizations are involved in the Fellowship?

- Institute for Community Inclusion at the UMass Boston
- Boston Children's Hospital (University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities)
- E.K. Shriver Center, UMass Chan Medical School (University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities)
- Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council
- The Disability Law Center.

With Heather's guidance businesses will go through a 30-minute inclusion training module and receive a certificate, business will get a certificated they can display. Shari and Ryan thought through many ideas with regards to inclusiveness training and advertising with a QR code that a business is Inclusion Certified. There is an Inclusion Consultant group- MERGE and they will talk with other companies who provide training, to develop a simple and sustainable program and focus on outreach to businesses.

5. **VFW Parkway Accessibility Discussion: Power point sent by John: Looking for comments. Number of questions we are asked to answer:** Collaborative work with City of Boston and Army Cory of Engineers to Develop from Charles River edge on Dedham side of Providence Highway to Center St. i.e., the light at the Dunkin Donuts. One and ½ miles of walkways that are accessible possibly with two bridges. Buffer between road and walkway. Some of the pathways may be paved and some may be crushed stone, similar to Fairbanks House to allow drainage. The proposed idea is somewhat like the walkway/park through Watertown and Newton on both sides of the river. **Motion to provide COD endorsement of the plan - Vote unanimous**
6. **Bridge Street:** Bob & Bernie from Ames to VFW Parkway along Bridge Street – road and sidewalk construction – this is state highway Route 109. Many complaints about impediments in sidewalks – utility poles and sign posts. Bernie and Bob to monitor.
7. **Rustcraft Road from East Street to Legacy Place** -portions of sidewalk are constructed and replacing existing sidewalk, not idea placement of poles etc. but DPW is correcting some of the work done by the contractor
8. **Paul McMurtry:** Rep. McMurtry called John T and indicated area of Milton Street intersection with River Street had no curb cuts. There are some “rolling” sidewalks where the sidewalk is almost flush with the road. There is a lot of encroachment from cars or cars parked on sidewalks. DPW is aiming to eliminate rolling sidewalks and replace them with curbed sidewalks. Joe Flanagan indicated DPW can do interim measures, to try and prevent this encroachment from also occurring with adjacent businesses and their vehicles.
9. **East Street Bridge: Reconstruction** will widen the underpass and improve the bridge, allowing safe pedestrian access.
10. **Motherbrook Art Center:** John submitted grant application to State MOD for \$250,000 for Elevator at Motherbrook Art Center (old Avery School). \$250,000 is the maximum warrant article at the Town Meeting for the balance of the money for the elevator construction. This will represent about ½ the money needed. John Tocci forwarded a draft of the endorsement to be presented at the Select Board and at the Town Meeting. Currently the Motherbrook Arts Center has a vertical lift only from the gymnasium to the main level. All four levels are being used by the art center. They have money from Dedham Savings Bank and need full accessibility Installation of the elevator will ensure the center is eligible for other state grants, such as from Mass Cultural Council, that can only be provided to fully ADA compliant buildings. The building is now run by a non-

town group of artists. **Motion authorizing John T to redraft endorsement letter and present to the select board and Town meeting- Vote- unanimous.**

11. High School Elevators:

- Vertical lift at left of Auditorium stage is fixed
- Limited use elevator from Gymnasium level to main school level -frequently out of order- inner concertina style door.
- Main Elevator near cafeteria serves C, D & E wings, very difficult controls- controls set up by employees.

Next COD Meeting: Nov 21, 2022, 7p.m. Zoom

Meeting adjourned.