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Wilmington Commission on Disabilities Meeting Minutes

2024 APR -2 AM 11:51

January 23, 2024

TOWN OF WILMINGTON, MA

Present in the meeting: Chairperson Roberta Biscan, Dr. Dee Genetti, Gary DePalma, Robert Oliveri, and, Carol Hilbinger

- I. Meeting Called to order at 6:30 PM
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Minutes of December 14, 2023

Recording Secretary Thomas Donahue read the minutes aloud, as they had not been provided to the commission prior to the meeting. The committee noted spelling corrections throughout.

Motion made by Mr. DePalma to accept the minutes of December 14, 2024, as amended be approved, seconded by Mr. Oliveri, and unanimously:

VOTED: To accept the minutes of December 14, 2023, as amended

IV. Commission Correspondences or Inquiries Received

a. Any New Correspondences

Ms. Hilbinger explained that the IT Department had reached out to inform the commission of suspicious emails and phishing, and for everyone to be careful. Ms. Biscan shared her own experiences with phishing and recent upswings in scams on social media sites such as Facebook.

Ms. Hilbinger stated that there had been a communication reminding commission members to complete the annual conflict of interest training.

V. Topics for Discussion

Follow-up on Old Business

- A. Follow up on AAB Findings on complaint against local business specifically, Wilmington House of Pizza. Status of parking spots, signs, access (walkway), and required size/ footage next to parking spot update.

Ms. Biscan informed the commission that she had recently driven by Wilmington House of Pizza, and the handicap sign and traffic cones had been relocated. Dr. Genetti added that there had not been any progress and that she had requested a

hearing regarding the complaint and had not heard back. Dr. Genetti expressed her interest in finalizing the report conducted with Mr. Oliveri and submitting the report as a new complaint.

Mr. DePalma asked if Dr. Genetti had been in contact with the property owner. Dr. Genetti stated that the complaint was sent to the owner. Dr. Genetti expressed her concern about the long-time property owner not meeting ADA requirements, which were introduced in the 1990's. Mr. DePalma suggested working with the Building and Health Departments to require ADA compliance before issuing occupancy permits.

The commission discussed the logistics of filing a report. Dr. Genetti noted that 33 violations had been found. She added that loans and grants are typically available to help facilitate updates for a building to become ADA-compliant.

B. Update on filling commissioner vacancies and efforts to get the word out.

Ms. Biscan reached out to Wilmington Apple four times to assist with publishing the flier, and advertising vacancies for the WCOD; however, she had received an automated reply. Mr. DePalma offered to get the information and requested Robert Hayes at the Wilmington Apple to assist. Ms. Biscan stated that Mr. Hayes had posted about the commission, but not about the available positions. Ms. Biscan also distributed fliers at Market Basket, the SEPAC, and via social media platforms. Mr. DePalma suggested posting in the Town Crier.

Dr. Genetti offered to reach out to Beverly Dalton, Administrative Assistant to aid the commission in posting vacancies on the town's website. Dr. Genetti also added that this time of year is typically slow for community members to show interest in joining a board or commission.

C. Neurodiverse recreation programming

Ms. Biscan informed the commission that she had emailed Billerica but had not heard back. Ms. Biscan also reached out to Emma Jones, who works in Burlington as the recreation manager, and asked if she would be willing to present to the Wilmington recreation department and other committees to share what programming looks like in Burlington.

Ms. Biscan expressed her interest in the recreation department pursuing grants to help fund, staffing and programming to introduce neurodiverse programs. Ms. Biscan noted that she had reached out to Representative Robertson for grant opportunities as Mr. DePalma had suggested. Ms. Hilbinger asked if Ms. Biscan had looked to COMMBUYS.

Ms. Biscan reminded the commission that she had presented a grant opportunity to recreation director Brett Sawin, although he did not have enough information to complete the grant application at the time. Ms. Hilbinger added that there are programs to help communities to plan for grants.

Ms. Biscan noted that she is still working on compiling data from surrounding communities to develop a presentation to share with the recreation department and Town Manager. Mr. DePalma suggested waiting to present until a new Town Manager is appointed. The commission discussed the benefits of waiting to hold the presentation until a new Town Manager has joined Wilmington.

The commission discussed the possibility of obtaining a budget to assist with items such as grant writing, transportation, and conferences. Mr. DePalma explained that the town is currently in FY 24 and that FY 25 is nearly finalized. Mr. DePalma also informed the committee of potential budget restrictions in relation to the outcome of Section 3A funding decisions.

New Business:

A. MOD Networking Event April 10th, 2024

Ms. Hilbinger informed the commission that there was a networking event on April 10th, 2024, from 10-1 pm at Mass General - Brigham, Assembly Row, being held by the Disabilities Connections. Ms. Biscan added that the event is available via Zoom and open to the public. Dr. Genetti added that the event was in person, but would be live-streamed.

B. Process Sheet Review

Mr. Oliveri confirmed that all commission members had access to the Process Sheet. He noted that the sheet had not been updated since March 2022. Mr. Oliveri asked that commission members review the sheet, and provide suggested updates for their position on the commission.

VI. Open Discussion

Dr. Genetti informed the commission that she had completed her latest publication, which she wrote and designed the cover for. The book is written for traumatic brain injury survivors, friends, family, and caregivers; telling the story of her recovery from a TBI. *Blossoming Into Disability Culture Following Traumatic Brain Injury, The Lotus Arising* is available in hard copy or paperback on Amazon or Dr. Genetti's International Publishing House, with a 20% discount. Dr. Genetti recited a poem from the book. The commission congratulated her on this exciting accomplishment.

The commission reviewed and confirmed the upcoming meeting dates.

VII. Adjourn Meeting

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dr. Genetti, seconded by Ms. Hilbinger, and unanimously voted to adjourn.

VOTED: For the Wilmington Commission on Disabilities to Adjourn.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:32 pm

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Th. Donahue", is written over a horizontal line.

Thomas F. Donahue
Recording Secretary