



## TOWN OF WINTHROP

NAME OF PUBLIC BODY: TOWN OF WINTHROP  
COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

DATE AND TIME: THURSDAY, September 21, 2017  
@6:30-8:30pm

LOCATION OF MEETING: ROBERT DELEO SENIOR  
CENTER

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The meeting of The Winthrop Commission on Disabilities for the month of September was called to order at 6:37pm by Chairperson Linda McGeorge. *In attendance were the following: Linda McGeorge, Patricia Tacelli, Gerry DiFranza, Jon Rodis, Susan Rowe, Andrew Carr, John Morgan, and Aicha Hamada. Absent were: Kathleen Kane, Michael Sullivan (medical leave) and Richie Currier (leave of absence).*

The chair then proceeded with an overview of the events of the month of September and a preview of coming events for the month of October. She then outlined the agenda for this evening's meeting and reminded the group that the procedure used at previous meetings, where every member is accorded 12-15 minutes to present bits of information/insight relative to the disabled community has been invoked.

Ms McGeorge expressed the hope that everyone had a wonderful August, which had been designated the commission's vacation month. September arrived and with it all types of programs: On September 8-10, the Abilities Exposition was held at the Boston Convention and Exposition Center and

proved to be quite enlightening for those who attended; the following week MOD offered an event at the State House on Disability Employment Opportunities. Many non-profits and their constituents attended.

Individual presentations were shared with members of the committee.

One of Susan's main concerns about the program was getting to the State House! Many within the disabled community have access to THE RIDE, a paratransportation service for those without means of transit. What proved troubling was the lack of awareness on the part of drivers for THE RIDE since many did not have an accurate address to handicapped access to the the State House. Therefore, in some cases return transportation was unavailable and other means were needed, e.g., subway, cab, Uber, etc.

Next, John Morgan's issue of great import has been the matter of safely traversing the streets and roadways of our urban and suburban centers. John has been requesting an audio/sound at crosswalks so that the visually impaired are alerted to traffic flow at crossings and concomitantly motorists are alerted to the presence of human beings trying to cross the street. N.B. Scarfa Bridge on Saratoga Street in East Boston.

Linda referenced Winthrop's CFO and grant writer to requisition monies for the procurement of accessible tennis courts AND crosswalks. The commission is hoping to receive some compensation to defray expenses in this particular area.

Patricia at this point raised the following question: Why when a law is already on the books should it be necessary to provide additional authentication from an agency such as MOD to ensure compliance? Why is it not sufficient for motorists to know the laws of the road and obey them?

Jon spoke to his activism in the area of connective tissue disorders. One who never leaves a matter unexplored, Jon frequently is the catalyst who gets professionals talking. Jon also shared his enthusiasm with having a Disabilities Fair in the Spring as a way of getting people thinking about cures, medications, stem cell therapy.

Chair McGeorge indicated that Jeanne Maggio wants to collaborate with Chief Flanagan and Barbara Bishop in setting up an information session for WCAT: what to do in an emergency? How does the town know who needs help? Keep in mind that the funds formerly earmarked for the Medical Reserve Corps are now directed to the Winthrop Board of Health. This ties in with an earlier suggestion by Patricia that some on the Commission on Disabilities might choose to preside at a question and answer Forum on Local Cable Channel WCAT.

Gerry told of his upcoming meeting with the Mystic Valley Elder Affairs Council. And he promised to browbeat the Commission on Blindness and the Commission on Deaf and Hearing impaired "to talk to each other." To listen to what each side has to say.

Andrew reported on the paratransit vehicles for the disabled and informed our commission that he had accompanied his brother to the Ability Expo in September courtesy of Easter Seals. Several helpful tips were given by Andrew to some of us who have difficulty holding a thought. Clever word groups, alliterative word groupings, etc.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to end this evening's commission meeting at 8:33pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Rowe  
Recording Secretary