



## Winthrop Commission of Disabilities Minutes

April 25, 2019 6:30 pm DeLeo Senior Center

### MINUTES

In attendance: Linda McGeorge, Andrew Carr, Susan Smith, Gerald DiFranza, Kathleen Kane, Jon Rodis.

Absent: Patricia Tacelli, Mike Sullivan

- A. Meeting was called to order by A. Carr at 6:50 pm.
- B. Old Business
  - a. L. McGeorge reviewed importance of documents provided at previous meeting that included: Disability Commission Guidelines, Mission Statement Review, Disability By-Law Review, and 2019 meeting schedule.
  - b. G. DiFranza reminded committee National White Cane Month is in October. Committee will look further into activities surrounding White Cane Day as we approach the date.
  - c. G. DiFranza reviewed the bills he has been working on (Senate 338 and 540). Future business will include further discussion regarding these.
  - d. A. Carr read a letter from the Revere Disability Commission in support of the Architectural Access Board bill (AAB). It was suggested by A. Carr that the Winthrop Disability Commission (WDC) send a thank you letter to the board once the bill passes.
- C. New Business / Commissioners Open Discussion
  - a. G. DiFranza suggests the commission send a letter connecting to and welcoming the new Commissioner of the Deaf.
  - b. A. Carr suggested (and commission agreed) to develop a list of items the commission would like to work on in 2019. Everyone will bring ideas to the next meeting and S. Smith will develop a master list and commission will prioritize items.
  - c. J. Rodis discussed the pending bill for the formation of the Massachusetts Rare Disease Advisory Council. He will bring additional information to the next meeting. Expressed concern about those that may be appointed to the advisory council when bill is passed. Hoping they will have knowledge and experience with rare diseases.
  - d. L. McGeorge shared notice of a region wide (Chelsea, Revere, Winthrop) community health survey. The commission has concerns about how the survey will be dispersed and will it be accessible to all?
  - e. The WDC has been offered the opportunity to do a monthly show on WCAT. The commission endorses the idea as a way to share different issues and services that affect the disability community. Program would be 30-45 minutes long. Commission members would take turns being guests on the show. Members are asked to bring ideas to the next meeting to continue discussion about this.
  - f. Similar to above topic, an idea to host a periodic "Coffee with the Commission" to introduce the community to the commission and the work of it. More discussion will follow at a later meeting.
  - g. The list that was previously put together of those in Winthrop with disabilities (especially important in case of a town wide emergency) appears to be missing. It is still being looked for but if not found the WDC will need to recommend a survey be done to reestablish this list.

- h. Winthrop Taxi has raised rates and there is a concern on the impact for people with disabilities. It was suggested to invite John to discuss rates and also talk about WAV (Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles). John also owns Ride Right in Revere and the WDC is interested to know the WAV capacity there also.
- i. Wish list discussion led by L. McGeorge. More research and information to be gathered:
  - i. Visible/audio signs at busy intersections (similar to the sign on Saratoga by Orient Heights). Intersections suggested include McGee's Corner and Washington and Winthrop.
  - ii. Beach wheelchair for Yirell Beach. Questions included where will it be kept and which is the best model.
- j. G. DiFRanza shared the National Federation for the Blind has a news line that one can have major newspapers (like the Boston Globe) read to them. Call 410-659-9314 and ask for news line.
- k. L. McGeorge indicated the senior tax is complete and 2 people have been assigned to assist with updating the handicap parking lists and signs in Winthrop. The WDC is grateful for their assistance with this project.
- l. J. Rodis noted to the group several projects he is working on that may impact the Winthrop disability community: poor care in nursing homes and the poor oversight of this with their licensing, the opioid crisis and considering it thru the lens of dependency versus addiction and their differences, work on chronic pain issues and is currently working with 3 authors on this topic.

D. Education and Social Issues/Opportunities

- a. S. Smith brought two upcoming educational opportunities to the commission's attention:
  - i. Therapy or Torture hosted by Amnesty International on May 7 at 7pm at the NonProfit Center (89 South Street Boston) The Judge Rotenberg Center in Canton, MA has been using shock devices to control the behavior of people with disabilities. The therapy is very controversial and has been condemned by the United Nations and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. A panel of experts will discuss the issue.
  - ii. Emergency Preparedness Training for People with Disabilities hosted by the Massachusetts Office on Disability and the Boston Disability Commission on May 21 at 1 pm at Boston City Hall, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Piemonte Room, 1 City Hall Square, Boston. From the event announcement: Attendees will learn how they can personally prepare, how local agencies prepare, and will have the opportunity to meet and ask questions of local first responders. The goal of this training is to ensure that people with disabilities are prepared in times of emergency. Attendees will also receive an "Emergency Go Pack" with essential items that might be needed during an emergency. As the WDC has discussed hosting a similar event there would be value to some attend.

E. Next meeting: Thursday, May 30, 2019

F. Meeting adjourned by A. Carr at 8:28 pm.

G. Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Smith, Secretary  
Winthrop Disability Commission