



WELFLEET COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
300 Main Street – Town Hall
Wellfleet, Massachusetts 02667

The Wellfleet Commission on Disabilities met on July 19, 2023 remotely via Zoom

Members Present: Kate Clemens, George Harris, Jim McAuliffe, Suzanne Grout-Thomas, ADA Coordinator

Absent: Fred Gentner Also attending: Valerie Fletcher, Executive Director of Institute for Human-Centered Design (IHCD)

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

Old Business

1. The minutes of the June 14, 2023 meeting were approved.

2. *Massachusetts Commission on Disabilities Grant Application*

a. *Initial Review and Information Needed*

Mr. Harris reported that he reviewed the *MCOD Municipal Planning Grant Application* and commented that Wellfleet appears to meet all of requirements in *Section 2-Qualification* including Responsible Employee, Posting of Public Notice about Wellfleet's ADA Policies and Procedures, Posting of Wellfleet's ADA Grievance Procedure, Duly Established COD, Self Evaluation and Transition Plan (dated 1994), Member of Community Compact, and Matching Funds (for the project grant application to make the stage on the Pier handicapped accessible).

Concerning *Section 3-Planning Grant*, Mr. Harris noted that information about Wellfleet's renovation/construction history (if any) is needed in 3.1 and an estimate of the number of persons with disabilities residing in Wellfleet is needed in 3.2. The information in 3.3 about Wellfleet's grant submission team and history of interactions with state and/or federal agencies requested in 3.3 is readily available. The Town's history of interactions with the state's Architectural Access Board (if any) needs to be ascertained.

Mr. McAuliffe reported that he viewed a video of a webinar entitled *Why it Matters: Stories of Tackling ADA Transition Plans* (moderated by Valerie Fletcher Executive Director of ICHCD) featuring Commission on Disabilities members from the municipalities of Barnstable, Randolph, Salem, Melrose and Andover. The participating Commission members commented that the support of the ADA Coordinator and municipal officials was critical to their successful efforts to secure grant funding.

WCOD members agreed that it was important to reserve time on the Selectboard agenda to make a presentation on the opportunity to apply for ADA planning and project funding and to request Selectboard approval to go forward with both grant applications in collaboration with ADA Coordinator Suzanne Grout Thomas and town officials.

Mr. Harris moved to request time on the Selectboard agenda on August 1 or 15. Mr. McAuliffe seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Mr. Harris moved that Mr. McAuliffe circulate his one-page summary of ADA grant funding opportunities offered by the MCOB for Commission review and approval. Mr. McAuliffe seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Ms. Grout Thomas reported she has all of the information required for the project grant. The project components are estimated at \$15,000 and the DPW will make in-kind contributions. Ms. Grout Thomas will

provide this information to Mr. Harris.

b. Discussion with IHCD Executive Director Valerie Fletcher on Challenges and Best Practices

Ms. Fletcher joined the meeting as an invited guest. IHCD has conducted ADA self-evaluations for a number of Massachusetts municipalities including some on Cape Cod. In response to questions from Commission members Ms. Fletcher made the following remarks and observations:

- This is a great year to apply for MCOG grants since the MCOG has three-times more funds to distribute in 2023 than in any previous year.
- The total square footage of all of the public buildings is a good gauge for the funding needed for a facilities review. Beaches, ponds, trails and fields may be included in the review, since Wellfleet is an outdoor community. Streets and sidewalks may also be included.
- It is important to identify all of the programs and activities offered to the public and consider how to make the venues for them accessible to everyone (by renovating, relocating, or changing/augmenting the mode of participation, e.g. adding on-line to in-person participation)
- Public participation and comment during the review is important, especially by people with disabilities. Town officials should hold an opening public meeting about the review, including the Commission on Disabilities members; inform the community about which facilities will be reviewed and when; and hold a closing meeting.
- The team conducting the self-evaluation should have excellent references and qualifications. Consider agencies hired by other municipalities.
- Program and policy priorities should be reflected in a Transition Plan.
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3. Follow up Discussion with feedback from Town Administrator

Mr. Harris reported he has not received a reply to his emails to the Town Administrator about actions taken to inform department heads about the ADA grievance procedure and non-discrimination policy. He will forward these emails to the Selectboard Chair.

4. Update on Discussion with Interim Building Commissioner on Non-Conforming Ramp at Hatches

Ms. Grout Thomas reported that a previous Building Commissioner approved of the ramp at Hatches and the interim Building Commissioner is reluctant to reverse a prior approval, The interim Commissioner added that there is a difference between state and federal standards and confusion about which to apply. Complicating the matter, Hatches may lack the space to accommodate a conforming ramp. Ms. Fletcher offered to provide an interpretation of this situation by the ADA Center at IHCD free of charge. Ms. Grout Thomas will follow up with Ms. Fletcher as soon as possible since this matter has lingered without resolution for many years

New Business

None

It was moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:38 p.m.

Next meeting: October 12, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James McAuliffe, Secretary