

**Westport Commission on People with Disabilities**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Thursday June 18th, 2020 - 9:00am-10:00am**  
**ZOOM MEETING**

**Attendance:** Jim Ross, Marina Derman, Stacie Curran, Joe Anastasi, Doug Rivkin, Tom Holleman, Diane Johnson - Present from Human Services: Elaine Daignault - (reviewed virtual meeting guidelines) & Michelle Bottone

9:07am - Call to order.

Guests/Audience who choose to identify themselves: Tom Tarrant, Howard Lipper, Dick Lowenstein, Jane Tarsy,

**AGENDA MINUTES**

**Item 1: APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Marina - 1st - Tom-2nd - All in favor

**Item 2: P & Z – Proposed Text Amendment #778 re: Special Needs Housing on Town Owned Land**

**CPD is circling back to last month's discussion with Rick Redness who has submitted the amendment, to get a status update on the RTM's actions and to determine whether or not to support the amendment.**

Dick Lowenstein, RTM District 5 – shared his reasoning for his appeal of the text amendment and the ultimate withdrawal of his appeal. According to Lowenstein, the text was amended to his satisfaction having been expanded to include: ANY Town Building & Town Property - and an additional text change to adding the word "Autism" to the disability definition.

If members have additional questions on the amendment, Mary Young P & Z Director may be able to answer them.

Discussion – Commissioners seemed to agree that the ADA definition of Disability includes autism so questioned the reasoning for adding it again. Seems redundant. This also brought up the question of who would be eligible for the housing if the amendment passes

The topic is scheduled for a P & Z hearing on July 23rd

Housing Q- Accessory Dwelling units are another vehicle to adding to the affordable housing stock for people with disabilities. Elaine noted that the P & Z Affordable Housing Subcommittee is exploring an expansion of the regulations which could enhance options in town.

**Elaine will inform CPD of future** affordable housing sub-committee meetings and encourage commissioners to get involved.

Reminder: Anyone can go to Town website to subscribe to town meeting notifications and read meeting minutes.

Update on the hospital care & the Disability Population policies during COVID-19- Marina reported that the state has amended the regs to allow caregivers to stay with their special needs loved one.

Public: Sal Liccione, RTM District 9 mentioned that the Town is considering temporarily closing Church Lane Main Street to parking (discussion at 11am today) and urged commissioners to follow the developments, keeping the disability population's best interests and access issues in mind- if no vehicle traffic, we will have to raise handicap access question.

Commission noted the new sidewalks on Myrtle Ave, which CPD advocated for. Tom: adding it is much easier to walk Myrtle Ave - the project has added value to downtown's accessibility

Town Hall is still closed to the public due to COVID-19 but Elaine reports that DHS is managing to provide services quite efficiently w/out face to face contact.

CPD's April **Municipal Advocates meeting** was cancelled - do we want to do it in Zoom? To be discussed later.

**Remarkable Theater Update on efforts to create a Drive-In** on the imperial lot....went before the Board of Selectman to gain approvals (for 4 events to start) which follow distancing protocols ( no concessions at the start, hope to ease those in) Many local non-profits are asking to partner, Westport Woman's Club will be first partner and will benefit from ticket sales. Check your Facebook, get on our website mailing list, [remarkabletheater.org](http://remarkabletheater.org). Plans to partner with local restaurants for boxed dinners, etc to come.

**Commission process regarding voting on new items:**

As a guideline, the group agreed not to vote on a new topic without due time to consider all sides, but will reserve the right if circumstances pose necessary

It's important to note that all Commission businesses/discussions with more than 2-3 people in attendance must be properly noticed and held in public to allow for public input.

Special Meetings - also need notice but need not be on original calendar.

Executive meetings are only acceptable in a very narrow definition.

If Commissioners plan to take action on an item, the agenda must reflect that intent.

Question by Doug R: Covid Test Sites:

More accessible locally - walk-in locations and St. Vincent's in Town, can get testing, but need doctor's prior orders. Jim R: Where your doctors are affiliated, may dictate where you need to go for testing.

Jim Ross mentioned a possible future speaker: Maddie Carusone, a Sophomore student at SHS, who has put together a compelling presentation on equal access and fun in education, challenges, and opportunities for the special needs population.

For next time:

22nd & 23rd - AAPD reps - Michelle & Elaine will follow up and send us.

Get your absentee ballot early for upcoming election.

Elaine D will: provide Election update, street closure info, special need housing info.

Dick L - will get us the P & Z changed text amendment & letter

Marina - will provide RT update.

Meeting Adjourned - Diane 1st- Marina- 2nd

10:00am