

FAIRHAVEN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK

RCUD 2023 NOV 7 AM 8:45

Meeting Minutes September 14, 2023

Held at Town Hall, 40 Center St., Fairhaven, MA. 02719

Contact: cod@fairhaven-ma.gov

Present: Town Hall: Marcus Ferro (chair), Pamela Whynot (vice-chair), Eleanor Chew (secretary), Ronnie Medina and Annemarie Chagnon, Martha Reed (staff liaison), Keith Silvia (Select Board Representative)

ZOOM: Glenn Gabbard (treasurer)

Absent: Donna Maino Lavalle

Guests: Fairhaven Cable TV. Cara Viveiros and Nikia Gonsalves

I. CALL TO ORDER: Marcus Ferro, chair, read the meeting call to order and the state guidelines and chair, Marcus Ferro called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Ronnie made a motion to accept the minutes and Pam seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. MEMBERSHIP: Marcus shared that Cara Viveiros is going to be joining us pending the vote of the Select Board. Pam said that Cara spends time here on the weekends but lives in New Bedford during the week but the Select Board said that is not allowed. Pam stated she has called Jeff Dougan from MA COD about this. Marcus said he wanted Cara to join us but understands the need for residency. Keith said he would like to see her on the board as she would be great. Marcus agrees if it was permissible. Pam said she wanted to point out and educate the town that some people do not have a choice where they lived due to housing, if the town does not housing for them. Eleanor said this may be a town requirement.

IV. TOWN ACCESSIBILITY:

A. Parking at the High School: Annemarie said there are less cars in the area but there are still two cars in the teacher's lot in the HP spaces without HP identification. One car was blocking a curb cut making it hard for a wheelchair to get by. Marcus said he had reached out to the school and that he would follow up with the school committee chair.

B. Town Beach Accessibility: Marcus said he had nothing new to report. Martha explained that we need to work with the planner and BPW to address this. The CPC deadline for this year is September 25, 2023. Marcus reminded us that we got the beach mats through the Capital Planning and town meeting. Martha said it would be good to meet with the planner to see if there is something else we can consider. Pam said at times the mats are underwater. Martha said it would be good to meet with the planner to see if there is anything else we can do that would not be dependent on all the money coming from town meeting. There needs to be a guard rail there. We need to work with the BPW to make adjustments. Ronnie said before brush is cut back we need to speak with Bruce (the Conservation Agent). Eleanor said we need to go to the BPW for any needs as the beach is under their purview, not ours with Marcus restating that.

We went back to the prior item here as Glenn joined the meeting late with him asking since it is illegal to park in a HP space do we need to go to law enforcement? Marcus said he would like to go to the School Resource Officer first. Annemarie offered to talk to the SRO asking if we need to go through a specific channel. Annemarie said she would email the SRO.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT/BUDGET: Glenn reminded us that we had \$1,000.00 left in our budget as the last purchases have not been taken out and once that is done we will have about \$900.00 left

VI. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Meetings With Department Heads: Marcus said he, Annemarie, Pam and Martha met with the town administrator to discuss the grant program and they discovered it was the town that had to submit not the COD. He said Angie liked the idea with Pam saying it was a combined effort which Marcus said has been great. He said Kyle Decicco-Carey from the library and Stephanie Fidalgo provided information for the application. The application was submitted today by the TA and the request was for \$85,000.00 to look at all aspects of accessibility in the town. Marcus said they looked at other towns when deciding the amount and that implementation will be the real work. He reached out to MA COD who said it was better to ask for more and to return money than to not have enough and he commended Pam, and Annemarie for their work. Glenn asked when we would hear. Pam responded that the review was in October with the awards being done in November or December. He asked how the Select Board would be notified with Eleanor answering that the TA would probably find out and notify them at a meeting. Marcus said he knew that Angie was on top of this and knows what needs to be done. Glenn wanted to be sure this was on the SB's radar. Martha said the planning and transition process was less and she thought the fight would be going forward when we try to prioritize what we get from the transition plan, feeling that this would be when there will be more feedback. More discussion about what will come first. Glenn said that makes sense but wants to get people involved early on so there are no surprises. Martha reminded us that Angie is the ADA coordinator for the town and that she is very on top of knowing what needs to be done. She also stated that we can not keep pushing things off and what need to be done, mentioning the last study was done in 1994. Eleanor responded that there was a study done on town hall since then. Martha said new ADA regulations were done in 2010.

B. Department Head Meetings: Eleanor said she continues to work on scheduling more meetings.

C. Social Media: Glenn wants to post daily and spoke about ARC's grant on the Face Book page. He updated us saying the number of followers is 189. Pam said she sent him postings for Deaf Awareness Month. Annemarie said she sent him some videos and that she encounters the same challenges with hearing at meetings as the deaf do. Eleanor said all the postings are great if we are familiar with the groups we are posting, asking how do we make this more local and about us in Fairhaven. Eleanor said she hoped we knew something about all of these

agencies we were posting about as not all agencies are legit just because they are an agency. She asked how do we bring this in as we are the Fairhaven COD. How do we bring it in and make it more about what's going on here. She said she was on Face Book today and 95% of posts no one has liked or commented on with the things that are local being the ones people commented on. We need more local than state, national and international. Let's post the Mission Statement and ask people what they think, post who we are and what we're doing. Let's ask people about their experiences. If we want to be inclusive then let's bring it back in as we need to focus on us, who we've been appointed to work with and for. Marcus agreed this was good and said we could post about what each meeting included such as highlights and the work the commission is doing in town. He said it's good to highlight ARC etc. but more localized stuff is a good idea. Pam said if anyone had ideas to send them to she and Glenn. Glenn said he doesn't disagree and that Face Book is one of many platforms but it may not trend to all. He said cross postings are easier than new postings. He felt that people need information to help them and that some national groups are also state level. Annemarie said the more postings the higher the page will go. We need posts to engage people. Glenn said look at the numbers of followers which is increasing. He said he is looking at other areas of town and what other towns are doing. Annemarie asked when we post do we also cross post with the answer being yes.

D. COD Email Address: Marcus said this is not working and the emails are not going to anyone. Ronnie said the Select Board is working on this. Marcus asked about having an independent log in. Eleanor asked anyone who had sent an email to us to go onto Face Book and resend the message to us.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Proclamation: Glenn said that October is Disability Employment Awareness Month and there is a national opportunity to be involved in this. He would like to ask the Select Board to do a proclamation. Pam moved that we send the proclamation to the Select Board with Eleanor seconding it. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Family Fun Day: Eleanor moved that we participate in this event the Tourism Department was doing with Annemarie seconding it. Eleanor moved that we purchase materials for this event not to exceed \$150.00 in total with Pam seconding it. The motion passed unanimously. Annemarie said she could help that day.

C. In Person Accessibility of Closed Captioning: Annemarie said that having the pad in front of her was great noting that anyone who was deaf would need one also. She said she has not been able to see the closed captioning on the tv screen. Marcus asked if someone brought their phone or tablet if they could be logged into the system with cable saying yes.

D. Agenda Process: Pam said she wanted to be clear about the process asking if it has changed. Marcus asked that people email agenda items to him by noon the Tuesday of the week of the meeting.

E. Deaf Awareness Month: Can this be announced in with social media conversations

VIII. New Meeting Date: Eleanor moved that we meet Thursday, October 12 at 6:00 p.m. at town hall with Annemarie seconding it. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Closing Comments/Adjournment: Eleanor made a motion that we adjourn at 7:04 p.m. with Ronnie seconding it. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Chew
Secretary