

## **FAIRHAVEN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY**

Meeting Minutes May 12,2022

Held at Fairhaven Town Hall, 40 Center Street, Fairhaven, MA

Contact: [cod@fairhaven-ma.gov](mailto:cod@fairhaven-ma.gov)

Present: Town Hall; Marcus D. Ferro (Chairperson), Eleanor Chew, Janice Alves, Heidi Piva.  
ZOOM: Pamela Ferro, Sarah Buck, Donna Maino Lavallee, and Glenn Gabbard (Treasurer), Pamela Whynot(Vice-President),  
Absent: Sue Makepeace, Brian Rego, Diane Rocha, Jenna Benoit  
Guests and Other Attendees: Fairhaven Cable Access  
All votes except the final one were by roll call vote

**I. OPEN MEETING:** Chairperson Marcus Ferro called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

**II. ROUTINE MATTERS:** Roll call, 9 members were present which represented a quorum.

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The minutes from the Commission On Disability meeting on March 10, 2022 were sent to all COD members by email. Janice moved that the minutes from the COD meeting on March 10, 2022 are approved. It was seconded by unable to determine by video. Motion passed with 6 in favor and 2 abstentions.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**IV. COMMISSION BOARD MEMBERSHIP:** Marcus Ferro welcomed new member, Heidi Piva to the commission. Heidi expressed her desire to help

**V. SECRETARY ROLE:** Marcus asked if anyone was interested in serving as secretary to the commission. Eleanor Chew offered to serve. Pamela W. made a motion to appoint Eleanor Chew as secretary. Janice Alves seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**VI. TOWN HALL ACCESSIBILITY:** Marcus explained the reason for this need with the Tax Collector's office. Marcus said the new Town Administrator is excited to make town hall more accessible and this is one of her priorities. Marcus said she is vexed as to why it is not more accessible. Pamela Whynot said she has a meeting set up with Ms. Ellison Lopes on May 19, 2022 at 3:30 p.m. at town hall. Pamela would like to have a working meeting on May 17 at 12:00 p.m. at the library to discuss strategy. Pamela W. said she has the COD copy of the ADA study done in 1994 that we can review. She said it breaks down need by each building and that it has recommendations for addressing the needs, some of which have been completed prior to this. She said the issues are expansive and all building in the town need to be looked at. Marcus said he has the plans for the DPW. Marcus wants us to work on one thing at a time to keep it from being overwhelming. Marcus told us that Angie will be pivotal in bringing in others as needed. Glenn thanked Pamela W. for checking this out and he encouraged us to think about ADA Compliance/Universal Design. Glenn said that even with ADA Compliance it can still be hard to navigate. He said when he voted at town hall, he entered the building as if he was handicapped and was surprised how hard it was to get around the building. He asked if we could go to a higher standard than the ADA compliance. Janice talked about her experience trying to get into the room for our meeting tonight and how hard it was even with assistance. Marcus explained that the Select Board needed the room downstairs tonight. Janice said that transportation to and from this meeting is an issue as the busses

will drop her off at Huttleston Ave. and she has to get here from there. Marcus responded that this was a much bigger issue. Pamela W. asked if the funds in the COD account for transportation could be used for members to get to these meetings. Marcus asked if we could vote on this as it was not on the agenda, stating he did not have an issue with the funding. Marcus moved that we use COD funds to provide transportation for members to and from meetings as needed. Janice seconded this. Donna asked if SRTA could provide transportation at a minimal cost. Janice stated that program stops at 6:00 p.m. by SRTA. She said that some insurance companies offer this but they also stop at 6:00 p.m... Glenn asked what the best way was to get transportation after 6:00. Donna asked if we could use cabs or the COA van. Janice said they help more than UBER. The motion passed unanimously.

**VI. PUBLIC SAFETY:** Marcus said he has not talked to Lt. Kobza since the last meeting. Lt. Kobza was working on getting the Known To Wander Form. Marcus saw the sheriff and he has more seat belt covers if we need more. Heidi said she had the form when she had a land line but the service does not cover cell phones. Lt. Kobza is working on getting the Known To Wander Form so he can update it, making it broader based. The option is to put it into the town data base with special information. Janice asked where people could get the form, Marcus said it is on the PD website or can be picked up at the PD office. Sarah offered to help with this. Sarah shared about the Vial of Life and asked if we could have a Disability Tent at the Marketplace to get information out where people could get their photo taken and get information. She said we could do an obstacle course as well or could we do this at Home Coming Day. Marcus suggested that we look into this for next year as he felt we were not ready procedurally. We need to do a needs list of equipment and we should check with the COA. Pamela F. asked if we have a 911 plan for Heidi. Marcus said he would work on this for the next meeting.

**VII. TOWN BEACH:** Marcus explained the need for mats to the beach, and the parking space mats. He said this passed the Capital Planning Committee and this needs to go to town meeting for a final vote. He said the BPW is looking into the cost of a beach wheelchair. Sarah spoke about the chairs the Buzzards Bay Coalition have with huge wheels and said we could do a field trip to see them. Pamela W. said this was a group project and she thanked Donna for initiating the beach mat project

**VII. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE/ADOPT-A-STOP:** Pamela W. said she reached out to SRTA and they reported there were 21 stops used by people in wheelchairs in the last six months. Pamela W. said maybe we could start with 10-12 of the stops to start but said that if people were using all 21 stops then we should do all 21 stops. Eleanor agreed that all stops should be accessible and felt that we cannot pick and choose the ones that are accessible. Marcus explained the concept of this as Heidi was unfamiliar with the plan. Pam said that when the plows come through again the curb cuts are no longer accessible. Can we reach out to people that have the ability to clear the snow. Donna said she reached out to one person and asked about his helping and how it would be good publicity for him. Pamela W. said she has given Donna a script she can use when talking to people and that there was a delay in getting this to Donna. Pam W. said she spoke with FF Rocha in follow-up from the last meeting and Pam said FF Rocha was willing to coordinate the clearing around the fire hydrants as this can be done with a shovel but that the sidewalks need more complex equipment. How can we work together to support each other? Pamela W. said Janice had told her the busses only have 2 wheelchair spaces per bus and if they are both in use, someone must wait for the next bus, which can be a wait of 30-60 minutes. Pam W. reached out to Mandy Aquino, SRTA's ADA Compliance Co-ordinator to invite her come to a meeting. Donna asked if we could post signs on the stops being cleared thanking people for their help. How can the housing authorities and complexes help with this?

**VIII. SPECIAL EDUCATION/FPS:** Pam W. sent out a template as to how we can set up the information. Jenna is putting together a list of Post 22 Services. Marcus reported that our Face Book page

should be up and running today and also said the committee needs to meet prior to the meeting to get the information ready for the next COD meeting. Sarah said that Charlie Murphy is a voice in town and asked if we could do an interview with him and if we could get him involved.

**IX. HOUSING:** Pam W. has reached out to the town's housing authority. Janice said she is setting up a meeting with Carol Alfonso regarding housing and things being done that are not proper. Janice talked about issues with both state and town owned properties and the conditions saying people also are afraid to say something for fear of losing housing. Sarah offered to serve on this also. Donna said that one group does not cover the other and that Peabody is not the housing authority. She said people are waiting a long time for housing in town housing, and the problems are the list is now a statewide list and not a local list. Donna explained that the town is holding apartments for people to move into other apartments as they remodel units. Donna said she found that when legal services get involved then tones change. Marcus said when bringing up issues and then getting evicted is retaliatory and illegal. Pam W. said she hoped the joint meeting could be collaborative and to see what we can provide residents with such as information about their rights. Marcus said the issue of equality in housing is a national issue.

**X. SOCIAL MEDIA PAGE:** Pam W. asked who could post on this page. It was decided that it should be the chair and vice chair should do it. To post something on the page email both Marcus and Pam W...

**XI. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:** Marcus said the form is posted on the website and he said that he emailed it to everyone. Sarah asked if it should be anywhere else as well.

**XII. TREASURER'S REPORT:** Glenn said we have \$1,000.00 left on our budget and asked for needs that we could spend it on. We will put this on the next agenda. Sarah asked when we apply for the money. Marcus responded that we need to do a budget for the next year in January or February of 2023. Marcus said he is hoping the DPW will be able to pay for a beach chair. Sarah asked if we have access to federal funds and Marcus said probably not us, but the town may, Glenn asked if we could look at funding options. Heidi asked if we could contact the Commission of the Blind. Donna said that one problem is that the town has to request and that we cannot ask for more money when we don't use what we have. We need to widen the view of who we are, trying to engage and focus on all groups. Heidi said there is a support group for the blind that meets in New Bedford and that people in town don't go and she asked if we could get transportation for them. Marcus asked what the cost would be. Donna asked if we could contact one of the agencies around and contract with them to get people to meetings in the area. Donna asked if we could do a day of training together next year with Marcus agreeing that we need more training for members as well as the community.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**XIII. MA.COD:** Marcus shared a MA. COD update saying there is a meeting Thursday June 9 from 10-1 and it is a Regional COD Hearing with a registration deadline of May 27th. Pam W. asked about Community Access Training and how to survey buildings and advocate.

#### **XIV COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

Sarah said she is working with Community Servings in Marion which creates meals at no cost to people who need food. Marcus asked Sarah to email us information. Sarah said that food insecure people have the option to get fruits and vegetables through the SNAP Program and to be reimbursed. It is called the HIP Program. She asked if we could move the mailbox to the street that's at the post office. Marcus asked if that was within the town's purview. Donna said there are other mailboxes that are accessible from your car around. Heidi asked if we could do an edging on the steps around town. Pam W. said the

COD Mission was sent to the Select Board's Office with the directive/purpose. She asked if we should do a resources tab on our Face Book page. She asked if we could do a ZOOM transcription so people can access the minutes in ways that are best for them? She asked if the COD would be willing to reach out to for Community Preservation Fund for support. She asked about doing a handicapped accessible playground as people have approached her about this. Marcus said these are really expensive. Pam asked if we could modify the one in town with CPC funds and she asked if we could do a lending library. Donna said she had spoken with the Library Director who wants to expand their materials and asked if we could give him a list of items. Marcus said we should start with the library director and Donna said there are lots of good ideas and we need to get the town involved as it is not all ours to do. We need to give people glimpses into our goals. Eleanor said she did not get a copy of the Mission Statement and Marcus said it was done prior to her joining, she also said she is not gutting copies of emails.

**XV. NEXT MEETING DATE:** Sarah moved that the next meeting be held on July 14<sup>th</sup> and Eleanor seconded it. It was voted unanimously.

**XVI. ADJOURNMENT:** Glenn moved that we adjourn and Eleanor seconded it. It was voted unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.

Eleanor Chew  
Secretary