

## FAIRHAVEN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Meeting Minutes September 22, 2022

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

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

Present at Town Hall: Marcus Ferro (chair), Pamela Whynot (vice-chair), Eleanor Chew (secretary), Angie Lopes Ellison (Town Administrator)

By ZOOM: Pamela Ferro, Sarah Buck, Donna Maino Lavalle, Jenna Benoit

Absent: Glenn Gabbard, Heidi Piva, Janice Alves, Sue Makepeace, Brian Rego and Diane Rocha.

Guests: Fairhaven Cable TV, Jessica Fidalgo

ALL VOTES WERE DONE BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

**I. OPEN MEETING:** Chair, Marcus Ferro called the meeting to order at 5:19 p.m.

**II. ROUTINE MATTERS:** Roll call, 7 members present which represents a quorum.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes from the Commission on Disability meeting on May 12, 2022 were sent to all COD members in advance by email. Pamela Whynot moved the adoption of the minutes with Sarah Buck offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. MEMBERSHIP:** Marcus Ferro said that we have three members who are not active and that he is going to ask people that have not been active to resign if they don't want to participate. He wants to keep numbers down and said this is the most active committee we have had in a long time and no one is asking to join at this point. Eleanor Chew said we need active people and there was an issue tonight as there are three people that are inactive and this could have jeopardized our meeting causing us not to meet and we need to contact them. Sarah Buck said that as far as membership we should delegate more rather than two or three people doing the work and this would cause people to show up to give a report. Marcus said he had spoken with Pamela W. and they were in agreement.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**V. TOWN ACCESSIBILITY:**

**A. Town Hall:** Marcus asked Pamela Whynot for an update. Pamela deferred to Sarah Buck and Eleanor Chew first. Eleanor Chew said they met recently with the new TA and it was productive. We talked about town hall accessibility and how hard it is to get around. Some things have been addressed like signage and the timing of the doors. We are working to see if we can get the cable going across the floor in this room to go up and around the room instead of across. She said we are working on needs and we will keep everyone informed. Sarah Buck asked if we knew how many people were disabled in town. Pamela Whynot responded that we were working on getting the information. Sarah commended the town administrator for her work, thanking her for all she has done for us. Marcus also thanked her. Angie Lopes Ellison said she appreciated all of the comments and that she does this because of DEI. We need allies to collaborate and she has a vested interest to see that town hall is accessible to all. Angie updated us saying she has asked Joe Booth to redo the 2019 assessment of town hall, entertaining options to traverse the building to the elevator. look at access to all floors with concern for the historical aspects. She said access to some parts is good. Angie also shared that she will present any changes to both the town and state Historical Commission's for approval. She continued by saying the thresholds are an issue and that we need to mark things as smaller and bigger and focus on the smaller items first. Eleanor asked Angie to let us know when she was presenting any items to the Select Board or the Historical Commission as members of the commission would probably like to go with her.

**F. Housing:** Pamela Whynot sad she is working with Janice Alves and that Pam reached out to Fairhaven Housing and that the COD wants people to know about their housing rights. Pam said they offered to let us put something in their newsletter to which Marcus responded that we need to capitalize on this, asking how often the newsletter is published. Fairhaven Housing said not many people come when they have meetings and Pam W. said that made sense if they had a fear of going to the event. She has spoken with Carol Alfonso, the Housing Authority chair and also reached out to Peabody Properties. Robin at Fairhaven Village said they have a process and are open to anything we want to share. Marcus and Eleanor offered to help with writing the information. Marcus said this needs to be on the next agenda.

**G. Social Media:** Marcus Ferro said Alyssa Botelho sent him the log in information for the web page and he will let us know when it is up and running. We need to send out invites to the page, write information making people aware of what we are doing and how they can help if they are interested. Only Pamela W and Marcus have access to the website but we need everyone to help. Jenna Benoit said she can send along the information she did for the website.

**H. Homecoming 2023:** Marcus Ferro said we need a subcommittee to do this. We need a very detail-oriented person to head this. Marcus asked Sarah Buck is she was interested and she will think about leading this subcommittee.

**VI. TREASURER'S REPORT/ LEDGER/BUDGET:** There was no report as the treasurer was not able to be at the meeting

## **VII. NEW BIUSINESS:**

### **1. Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) Update:**

Angie Lopes Ellison spoke about the MOD Disability Summit on October 27, 2022. Pamela W. asked if we could have a member of the Mass. COD come to a future meeting. The consensus was that this was a good idea.

**2. Member's Comments:** Eleanor Chew said she was set as Angie had addressed the need to update the Joe Booth study. Marcus Ferro said we need to meet monthly and asked if the second Thursday at 5:00 was good. It was agreed that this worked for people. Pamela Whynot asked if Eleanor could pre set these dates. Nick Fontaine from Fairhaven Cable said they could set this up on the schedule for cable tv. Pamlea W. read two paragraphs as to what the commission was according to the MOD expectations and requirements. Pamela W. asked about the Mission Statement and Marcus said the Mission Statement is done we just need to recheck it and it needs to be posted on the next agenda. Pamela W. shared a concern with meetings saying subcommittees need to work and asked if we should set up subcommittee meetings so we can move ahead more quickly at meetings. Jenna Benoit agreed it would be worth checking out. Sarah Buck said we need to meet as this prevents us from getting bogged down. She also shared she is doing food advocacy for the schools.

**VIII. NEW MEETING DATE:** Eleanor Chew moved the date of Thursday, October 13, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. with Jenna Benoit seconding it. It was voted unanimously.

**IX: Closing Comments and Adjournment:** Pamela Whynot moved the adjournment of the meeting with Eleanor Chew seconding this motion. It passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eleanor Chew  
Secretary