

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK
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FAIRHAVEN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Meeting Minutes May 11, 2023

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

Contact: cod@fairhaven-ma.gov

Present: Town Hall: Eleanor Chew, (secretary), Pamela Whynot (vice-chair), Annemarie Chagnon and Keith Silvia (Select Board Liaison).

ZOOM: Marcus Ferro (chair), Ronnie Medina, Donna Maino Lavelle and Cameron Durant, (Staff Liaison)

Guests: Fairhaven Cable TV

ALL VOTES WERE TAKEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE

I. CALL TO ORDER: Pam read the call to meeting state guidelines and the closed captioning announcement. Marcus called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m..

II. MINUTES: Pam moved the acceptance of the minutes with Annemarie seconding this. The motion passed unanimously.

III. BOARD REORGANIZATION: Marcus said he liked the current officers and structure and he will have more availability in the near future. Marcus made the motion that we re-elect Eleanor Chew as Secretary with Ronnie seconding this. This passed unanimously. Marcus moved that we re-elect Glenn Gabbard as Treasurer with Pam seconding this. This passed unanimously. Marcus moved that we re-elect Pam as the Vice-Chair with Eleanor seconding it. This passed unanimously. Eleanor moved that we re-elect Marcus Ferro as Chair with Annemarie seconding it. This passed unanimously.

IV. MEMBERSHIP: Marcus said there is one opening and we need a person that is going to be active and involved. He asked people to send emails to he and Pam if they were interested in joining the COD. He asked if one member was still interested in serving. She is.

V. TOWN ACCESSIBILITY:

A. TOWN HALL: Eleanor said Angie has continued to reach out to Joe Booth, receiving an email that he is away and Eleanor will send an email to Angie next week in follow up.

B. PUBLIC SAFETY: Marcus said he had nothing specific and said he thought seat belt covers were given out, Eleanor said she brought them to the FRC and told Morgan to let her know if they needed more. Cameron was going to put some in his office but with the stairs that did not make sense so they are in the TA's office and people just need to ask for them. Marcus thanked Tom Hodgson for the donation and said he wants to do more to publicize the fact we have them along with the Registry we worked on with the PD. We need to publicize these as they are important for safety. Marcus said he would do this. Annemarie spoke about the parking around the high school. We re-discussed options and ideas and Marcus said he would reach out to the School Committee Chair to discuss how we resolve this.

C. INFRASTRUCTURE: Marcus said with the warmer weather this is not an issue. Pam said she and Donna need to compile a list of contacts for the locations and write a letter and then mail the letters. She said she would like to use money from our budget for the letters and postage.

D. SPECIAL EDUCATION: Marcus said we have talked about addressing the accessibility at

E. HOUSING NEWSLETTER: Marcus said we have been talking about this for awhile. Pam stated this is a passion project for her as it was brought up by a former member as she wanted people to know their rights. Pam said she still wants to put an article in the Fairhaven Housing Newsletter saying we could gather up resources but this is difficult with Janice no longer on the board. Donna said there is also concern with private owners as some rules are difficult for them. Donna said she had an issue with one group having to get a lawyer to remind the manager about rights. They have to consider the disability and Donna thought that this was what Janice was talking about. Donna suggested we invite SCLS(South Coast Legal Services) to come and talk to us about this which Marcus agreed about. He asked what we could do to let them know they have rights, asking when we could schedule SCLS to come. Annemarie asked if fear comes into this from people. Pam asked how we communicate this. Annemarie asked if there is an advocate someone could go to and Marcus said not in town and Eleanor said possibly MA COD. Cameron said Janet Falone is the new Fairhaven Housing Director and that Council on Aging Director, Martha Reed, may be resources for us. Martha was the ADA Officer when she worked for Catholic Social Services. Donna said people had connected her to resources and asked if we could get some of their brochures to the housing complexes in town. We need to remember that working with the town and private developments is two different things even though the laws are the same. Eleanor said she was going to help Pam with the letter but after doing a MA COD training on this I felt like I was in over my head trying to write a letter. Pam said that Know Your Rights under HUD/MA has information.

Marcus welcomed Keith Silvia as our Select Board Representative and thanked him for being our support.

F. SOCIAL MEDIA: Marcus said that we are on social media and asked how to make people more aware. Pam thanked everyone for contributing information for the sight and encouraged people to reach out, find us and like us on Face Book. We need to see what people's needs are and how we can address them.

G: BY-LAWS: Marcus said he needed to work on this. He said he would do this for the next meeting so we have a clearer picture and once done we need to go to the Select Board. Pam said that in addition to the Mission Statement, the By-Laws are important and that all members need to have input so everyone is heard. She felt we could not do this in a regular meeting and that we may need to allow for additional time so we can really communicate our expectations and goals. Marcus said we need a draft that is brought to the commission and then we could make amendments, vote on it and then go to the Select Board for approval.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT/BUDGET: Marcus shared that Glenn was away. Eleanor said he had sent her information about the budget amounts which we were all aware of. She also said Glenn told her about grant opportunities from the state that we could apply for. Glenn offered to spearhead this as he has experience writing grants on a state and federal level. He expects that the application will be available late spring or early summer.

Chair, Marcus Ferro, left the turning the meeting over to Pamela Whynot, Vice-Chair to lead.

VII. MEETINGS WITH DEPARTMENT HEADS: Eleanor said that she and Glenn have a list of questions to ask and want to meet with Council on Aging, Veterans Office, Recreation Department and the School Department heads or representatives first. Glenn has also suggested that we reach out to other groups and agencies in town that work with the disabled. Our goal is to

VIII. NEW BUSINESS: Cameron had one item but because it was not listed on the agenda it was suggested that he share this under the comments sections.

IX. COMMENTS: Cameron said the Belonging Committee had reached out to us about the Disability Pride Event they are planning. Eleanor offered to contact their chair, Jessica Fidalgo, for information saying Jessica had mentioned this to her in passing but had not contacted me again. Eleanor spoke about the MA COD trainings she has participated in, encouraging others on the COD to look into these and to sign up as they are well done and very informative. Pas said she uses her phone to take notes, so people did not think she was just texting during the meeting.

X. NEXT MEETING DATE: Eleanor moved the date of Thursday, June 8, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. with Annemarie seconding it. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: Donna moved that we adjourn , with Ronnie seconding it. The motion passed unanimously. We adjourned at 6:58 p.m...

Respectfully Submitted,

Eleanor Chew
Secretary

