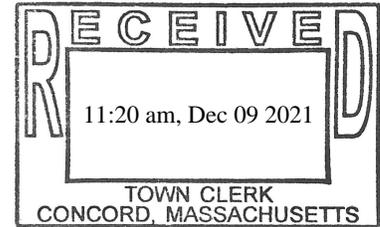


Concord Commission on Disability Meeting

Minutes

January 14, 2021



Present: Jean Goldsberry, Chair, Bonnie Albright, Marybeth Barker, Janet Beyer, Jennifer Brooke, Lloyd Price, Meryl Schwartz, and Karen Young (via Zoom)

Absent: Jane Hotchkiss

Guests: Bob Andrews, Lauren Baretta, Nancy Crowther, Kate Hodges, Carmen Jaquier, Brandon Kunkel, Edward LeClair, Ryan Orr, John Straggas, Bob White, Alan Whitney

Minutes from the December 18 meeting were approved as written.

Old Business

White Pond Plans: Kate Hodges began the presentation and introduced representatives from Weston & Sampson, the design and engineering firm hired for this project. Two public forums have been held to present the goals of the project and a third is scheduled for February 2, 2021. The focus of tonight's presentation and discussion is accessibility based on universal design concepts while adhering to state and federal guidelines, as well as related issues of storm water management and erosion control. Kate pointed out that tonight's presentation includes updated images following several iterations of the plan. According to the ADA and the Massachusetts AAB, access from top to bottom and bottom to top follows Universal Design concepts ensuring accessibility to the greatest extent for the greatest number of people. She pointed out improvements to access via the new walkway which will follow the topography of the hillside, taking into account all persons who are disabled, children, strollers, those who are temporarily disabled and those experiencing slight mobility issues to ensure that everyone takes the same route and arrives in the same way and with dignity.

Brandon Kunkel, landscape architect with Weston & Sampson, addressed several aspects of the project including tree removal in the upper parking area, inclusion of walkout mats from the walkway to the beach in the lower parking area, and integrating the ADA compliant restroom via a decking system that will blend with the environment.

Questions and comments were solicited from the members of the Commission. Jean asked if it was possible to add a third parking spot in the lower parking area. This has been researched and determined to not be feasible due to the requirements for emergency vehicles turnaround space. The existing slope is such that adding an additional space in that location would require cutting down even more of the hillside and additional trees, which goes against the goals of the project. From the plan, it appears that there are additional spaces adjacent to the beach but it was explained that these spaces provide access to the state boat launch, which are part of different programming, are not town property and therefore cannot be touched.

Jennifer asked if other solutions to access the beach have been explored, given the length of the new walkway and the slope which makes going uphill much more difficult. Ryan Orr explained that the incline elevator was considered and has been determined to be inappropriate for several reasons, among them: it is open and exposed so would require fencing, providing necessary power is an issue, additional staffing would be required to monitor usage, the significant expense of installation and ongoing maintenance, and the much larger footprint it would require on the hillside, including removing an additional 13-15 trees. Jennifer offered several design suggestions, some of which will be incorporated (rest areas/benches that are located off the main path) and others not previously considered, such as providing interactive experiences along the path (musical instruments, nature exhibits, etc.) Meryl asked about providing direct access to the beach from the drop off area. Kate responded that these excellent suggestions will be taken up for review.

Town Accommodations for Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Bob Andrews reported that he met with Jane Hotchkiss and Bonnie Albright following the December COD meeting and they are preparing a report to present to the Select Board (date to be determined). Recommendations include adopting a formal policy regarding hearing accessibility that is ADA compliant, and ensuring that availability of equipment and training in its use is provided in all town venues where public meetings are held.

Kate Hodges reported that the town has made some progress on this topic. A pilot project is planned for the Harvey Wheeler building to provide access for the hearing impaired, and a request has been submitted for the next fiscal year's budget to include between \$75-100K to upgrade and install equipment. Kate also asked that the draft of the recommendations be sent to her prior to presenting to the Select Board. Bonnie urged that a stronger

statement be incorporated into the recommendations around making the best use of existing equipment, promoting availability and training in its use.

Due to time constraints discussion will be continued at the next COD meeting.

Parking at 136 Sudbury Road: Jean wrote the letter to the appropriate persons involved and Jennifer will prepare additional information referencing specifications for the required handicap accessible parking space on the property.

New Business

There is no new business on the agenda.

Correspondence/Miscellaneous: Jean reported she received a letter from the Massachusetts AAB approving the Library's request for a variance pertaining to two existing elements in the library building: retention of the historic, secondary entrance facing Concord Center, and the configuration of the built-in bookstacks.

Public Comment:

None

Next meeting: February 11, 2021 at 5:00 p.m., via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Young