



Town of Concord
Commission on Disability
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2026

Meeting Location: Zoom

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm

Present: Jessica Porter, Assistant Town Manager, Jean Goldsberry, Chair, Janet Beyer, Jennifer Brooke, Andrew Kirkpatrick, Justine Martinelli, Peter Nobile, Robert Simon, Laura Will

Guest: Emanuel Andrade, KMA Project Manager

Karen agreed to take minutes

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the January 15, 2026 meeting were reviewed.

Motion was made to approve the January 15, 2026 minutes.

Motion seconded and minutes approved by consensus.

Jean began the meeting by asking that we address one agenda item only and move all other items to the next meeting so that the majority of the meeting would be devoted to the presentation by Emmanuel Andrade of the ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. Jean also announced that she wanted to try to connect to the Massachusetts Historical Society's presentation about the Fernald School in Waltham, scheduled to begin at 6:00 pm and invited Commission members to join her.

Old Business

Update on AAB variance request for the Gleason Library

Jean reported that the AAB variance request was granted. They were very happy about this and sent a letter thanking the Commission for our support.

ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

Jessica introduced Emmanuel Andrade, Associate Principle, KMA LLC Architecture + Accessibility. KMA is a design and consulting practice that specializes in accessibility compliance and inclusive design. The firm was chosen to work with the Town of Concord and the Commission on Disability to create a self-evaluation and transition plan for the Town.

Emmanuel, who will be the Project Manager, is a licensed architect whose career has been spent working in Massachusetts with municipalities, state government, and in the private sector. His purpose was to share the plan and the firm's approach to this project, and to describe the work which will be performed in the next 5 months. He provided information about KMA's experience with ADA Self-Evaluation plans, introduced the project team, and encouraged communication with him as the point of contact.

A slide presentation followed. Emmanuel walked us through the steps, which included several slides that provided a brief overview of ADA, followed by a Project Overview, which has 9 tasks. The final plan is due to be completed by the end of June, 2026.

Task 1 is this Kick-off meeting, followed by monthly progress meetings in March, April, May and June. Ideally the progress meetings will coincide with the Commission meetings.

Task 2 is a self-assessment survey and staff training. The training is in the form of a 60-minute recording, shared with all Department Heads, to promote an understanding of ADA. An administrative survey will be completed by the ADA Coordinator (Jessica Porter). This will provide

information essential to understanding the level of accessibility provided by the town. Public surveys will also be a part of the project.

Task 3 is a review of existing policies and procedures. This will involve data gathering of the town's departments, programs and services, written policies and practices, as well as personnel policies, followed by data review.

Task 4 covers programs and activity surveys. A list of 8 buildings and 5 outdoor facilities that will be surveyed was discussed. There was brief discussion about the inclusion of the Thoreau playground, which may be omitted as it is considered school property. It was agreed to omit the Town House because that facility has received a lot of attention in the recent past, although auditory issues in several meeting rooms remain unresolved. There was a request to add Gerow Park to the list. Jean asked about access to EV charging stations. Checking public charging stations will be included. They need to be accessible, i.e., are the controls reachable, but the stations do not have any special parking restrictions as they are meant to be used by everyone.

Task 5 is an evaluation of digital accessibility. This will cover a review of the top 5 webpages and a review of web applications, portals, and interactive tools. There was discussion about how to identify the top 5 webpages, and will involve the town IT Department. Jean and Jessica noted that Commission member Andrew Kirkpatrick is an IT accessibility expert and would be an excellent person to coordinate with for this task. Emmanuel noted that a review of the 5 most accessed webpages is usually a good indication of accessibility of all of the other webpages.

Task 6 addresses Model Policies and Procedures. This involves a review of findings from Tasks 2 and 3, the self-assessment surveys, and existing policies and procedures. Also included here is the development of model policies and procedures covering such things as service animal policies, employment practices, ADA training for staff, how-to-guide for accessible meetings and events, language for contractors, removal of patronizing/stigmatizing language from documents, signage, etc., and snow removal—for ex. Prioritizing plowing accessible parking spaces. Some

additional specifics mentioned by members included accessible polling places, town meeting, and farmers markets. Things such as bi-annual building maintenance checks to be sure door handles and stall closures are functioning properly are included here. If there is guidance, employees will know where to look and when to perform tasks. In addition, there will be a review of employment practices, with guidelines about where to go for additional assistance and accommodations.

Task 7 is a complete draft of the Self-Evaluation Report in May which covers programs, services, activities and facilities and is typically 40-60 pages. This document will be shared with the Commission, with an opportunity to review and provide comments.

Task 8 is the Complete Draft ADA Transition Plan. Once we are satisfied with the self-evaluation report, the recommendations are extracted and turned into the transition plan. The plan will be formatted as a spreadsheet, with a schedule to fix deficiencies in both buildings and programs, such as training, website, policies and procedures, that discriminate against people with disabilities. It will address physical barriers that limit accessibility to the town's programs, services or activities and provide methods to remove barriers, the schedule to complete the work, and the names of those responsible for the implementation of the work.

Tasks 9, 10, and 11 are the Complete Final ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan, due by June 30. The deliverables will be available by June 15, with two weeks to review the documents and incorporate any public comments. The final plan includes an executive summary, information about the state access code as part of the regulatory context, project methodology, and the majority of the report which is the findings and recommendations, as well as a summary of public surveys, and appendices.

Robert asked a question about the surveys. Emmanuel said that the departmental surveys are not released because it is not considered appropriate for the public to see the potentially divisive issues between what employees said and remembered and what department heads said and remembered as often these discrepancies are not true. The public

survey responses will be released. The survey is not related to the self-evaluation report or any of the documents, but rather is usually about five questions related to the public's experience and their sense of the overall accessibility compliance in the town. Examples of questions include "have you ever had a problem entering a building" or "have you ever needed reasonable accommodations and do you know how to request them". Emmanuel will provide a sample of the public survey for us to review and the Commission will have input into the questions. Robert asked if there will be a separate survey for those who identify themselves as disabled, or if we will know if those responding have a disability as this may affect the results. Emmanuel said that this is a public survey and these questions cannot be asked and could have legal complications, although some people may self-identify as having a disability. However, it is possible to market the survey in such a way that it is widely available to the people with disabilities in the community and we can encourage their participation. He pointed out that it is primarily those with disabilities who respond to the survey, so they will be well represented. Robert offered to help with the survey in any way needed. Laura spoke to the importance of creating the survey for distribution as soon as possible and asked if we should hold a special meeting to come up with a marketing plan. There was discussion about scheduling the next Commission meeting to be sure we address the survey in a timely manner. Target publication date of the survey is mid-March.

Laura said she is planning to write an article for the *Concord Bridge* about her reasons for joining the Commission to promote greater visibility and awareness of the Commission and she will reference the survey to generate interest in participation. Commission members enthusiastically supported this approach.

Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 9, 2026 at 5:00 pm

Meeting adjourned at 6:03 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Young

Commission member