

Commission on Disability

May 20th, 2021

Present: Jean Goldsberry, Chair, Janet Beyer, Jennifer Brooke, Bonnie Albright, Karen Young, Mary Beth, Jane Hotchkiss, Lauren Barretta.

Absent: Lloyd Price, Meryl Schwartz

Guests: Ryan Orr, Kate Hodges, Richard Fahlander (BFRT co-chair), Barbara Pike,

Minutes: Minutes from April 8th meeting were approved as written.

Old business

Cognitive Disabilities

Lloyd was unable to attend the meeting but had spoken to Jean prior, suggesting a sub-committee be formed to speak to Carmin Reiss, Town moderator regarding accessibility. Kate Hodges volunteered to participate in the sub-committee with Lloyd.

White Pond Update

Kate reported that the bidding climate has changed, and the bathrooms alone came in \$120,000 over expected. The Town sent out bids again and a second bid came in \$100,000 less. Cost of lumber has increased and has affected the cost of the project. In 2019 the Town thought it would be possible to do all projects. However, Kate and Ryan are meeting Weston and Sampson Monday for new cost estimate. The Town is considering delaying the project by 6 months to see if bidding climate is better in the spring.

Kate shared the site drawings. There are plans for a beach mat that can be extended when waterline is low. There is a 25-foot no-build zone from the water's edge. The Town is requesting a waiver from the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) for the sloped part of the path. The NRC needs to give a waiver for the buffer zone.

The parking area boat launch spaces will remain, but don't count as accessible spaces. Van space, ADA spaces and emergency vehicle spaces will be added.

From the parking area to the beach the stairs have been reimagined, with an added railing on one side with a new rendition of stairs to beach.

The drawing demonstrates the newly designed pull-off areas, rest areas, with natural play structures.

Jennifer asked how the delay in plans for the White pond project will affect it being open this summer and next summer. Kate responded that the Town has an obligation to make the site accessible. Storm water is also a priority. However, the parking area at the bottom will be included in the first stage and temporary benches may be in place. Storm water is in two phases in the plan. The intent is to capture most of the run-off. The hillside rain gardens would be delayed.

Karen inquired where the restrooms fit into the initial plan. Ryan responded that Town plans to continue using the restrooms that are there at the moment. Currently there are two ADA bathrooms. New

bathrooms would require three systems. The recreation department owns the bathroom trailer and will add decking.

It was asked what the Town plans to do to maintain **access to** the pond in the winter. Ryan explained that they cannot maintain the road, as they are unable to salt or sand it, essentially it turns into **an** ice rink on the way down. They will be able to snow blow a path, but again there is risk as they **cannot** salt or sand a path. The pond is used mostly for ice fishing in the winter.

Funding Process & Requests

Bonnie & Jenifer have done a lot of work on developing a request process. The commission has funds available from parking fines and ADA violations. This income source fluctuates. The commission would like to create a grant to fund projects related to accessibility. Jennifer proposed questions to the commission.

1) Why are we doing this? What are the commissions priorities? What area would they like to impact?

Jennifer and Bonnie proposed that the mission of the grant funding aim to: provide direct funds to further accessibility of a group or individual experiences, creating opportunities for education, and meet above-the-line-accessibility needs (things that are not covered by ADA). A few examples offered were: a summer camp scholarship for a child, self-care opportunities for individuals, theater or art accessibility, ways of providing opportunities above and beyond things that are required by ADA laws.

Meryl pointed out that the commission does not have materials describing the commission and its mission. There are potential needs for the commission, and a need for more public relations and creative ways to get the word out to people.

Bonnie stated that a grant application process is a great public relations tool. An annual schedule for grant approval also provides exposure for the commission to a larger audience.

Mary Beth questioned whether the commission is able to give money to a private. At a Disability Benefits Consortium people were talking about the process to award people, and that they can't give to individuals. Bonnie and Jennifer agreed to look into the legality of awarding grants to individuals.

2) Is a critical criteria for awarding a grant that the recipient is connected to Concord? Do we want to be community specific? Does a student, resident, working in Concord qualify or can we adopt a sister city that doesn't have the same resources and give it to them?

The commission agreed that a connection to Concord should be included in the grant allocation process.

New Business

Use of motorized vehicles for mobility assistance on Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT)

Barbara Pike brought concerns regarding the access to the trail from the parking area at the bridge over Nashoba Brook. After repaving the parking, a curbing was added to the access point making it inaccessible to the travel lane for BFRT. The parking is located at the back of the West Concord Commuter Parking lot. There is currently no direct access to the trail and a wheeled chair or vehicles would have to go 30 yards back to the nearest access point. Jennifer suggested reaching out to DPW to

ask them why the change had been made. Jean offered to go to DPW on behalf of the commission, and advocate to make trail accessible. Richard suggested that Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management for the Town of Concord will know about the curb and may be able to explain the curbs.

There was discussion regarding the use of motorized vehicles on BFRT. The commission expressed that vehicles that were not initially designed for accessibility, like a golf cart could be excluded from being considered a ADA mobility device. A golf cart is four feet wide and the trail is five feet wide. If the facility will not accommodate you can say they are not allowing mobility impaired trail users.

Jennifer pointed out that this is a sticky area. Laws that allow those with disabilities to use “whatever” as a mobility aid. Richard agreed and stated that there has to be a policy at the highest level for the trail as a whole. Richard commented that they have not had an issue with people wanting to use a golf cart, but it should be a State-wide decision regarding mobility vehicles as there is no way to determine if people can use motorized vehicles.

Richard invited and encouraged further discussion regarding mobility vehicles at the next BFRT meeting June 3rd 7pm on Zoom.

Resting accommodations on BFRT

This was not discussed at this meeting.

Correspondence & Miscellaneous: None

Next meeting June 10th at 5:30 PM via Zoom

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Barretta