

FAIRHAVEN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Meeting Minutes November 9, 2023

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

Contact: cod@fairhaven-ma.gov

Present: Town Hall: Pamela Whynot (vice-chair), Eleanor Chew(secretary)and Cara Viveiros.

ZOOM: Marcus Ferro (chair), Donna Maino Lavalle, Ronnie Medina, Annemarie Chagnon, and Martha Reed(Staff Liaison)

Absent: Glenn Gabbard (treasurer)

Guests: Fairhaven Cable TV and Kelly Ferreira

I. CALL TO ORDER: Pamela Whynot, vice-chair, read the meeting call to order and the state guidelines and called the meeting to order.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Pam made a motion to accept the minutes and Annemarie seconded the motion. The motion passed with 5 yes and 1 abstention. One member was also late and did not vote.

III. MEMBERSHIP: Marcus said there was nothing new and that we have a good, involved board. There is no one reaching out to join us so we are good. We have one opening and if you're interested please reach out to join,

IV. TOWN ACCESSIBILITY:

A. Town Beach Accessibility: Marcus talked about what we have done and there is currently no movement on the beach. Eleanor responded that at the last meeting we decided to hold off to see if we got the funding from MA COD so we weren't duplicating efforts.

B. Cushman Park Letter: Marcus provided background about the park needing more connectivity saying he talked to Vinnie (BPW) and the funding request was from Lisa Elliott. Eleanor said she wrote the letter and delivered it to the Planning Department so it could be placed in their committee's packets.

C. Public Safety: Marcus spoke about the Blue Envelope Program, thanking Lt. Kobza for this noting other towns are following his lead in this and how other towns are following Fairhaven's lead on this.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT/BUDGET: Pam gave a report stating that we had \$806.00 left in our budget.

VI. NEW BUSINESS: Was taken before Old Business as listed on the agenda by consensus of the commission members

A. Housing: Eleanor shared that the Housing Authority was willing to put our Mission Statement and any other information we wanted in their newsletters. All we have to do is provide it before the end of each month.

B. Annual Report: Eleanor moved that we submit a report for the 2023 Annual Town Report Book with Pam seconding it. It was voted unanimously with Marcus offering to wrote the draft. Discussion occurred as to whether the report was for the calendar year or the fiscal year.

C. Meeting Inclusion In The Neighborhood News: Eleanor asked why we were not being listed in the meeting calendar in the Neighborhood News and Marcus offered to reach out to the paper.

D. Decorating Christmas Tree: Marcus said he was very excited about decorating a tree at Town Hall. Keith said the Historical Commission did the new lights and they preferred that groups decorating use white lights on the trees. Pam moved that we decorate the tree at town hall with Annemarie seconding this. Pam moved that we allocate up to \$200.00 for tree decorations with Annemarie seconding it. Both motions passed unanimously. Eleanor reminded us that we need to buy outdoor decorations and we discussed a theme for the tree. We agreed to use the colors of the Disability Pride flag. Marcus said he wated to be the point person on this.

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Department Head Meetings: Eleanor said she met with Housing and she and Glenn met with Vinnie and Josh from the BPW.

B. MA COD Application: Pam said we had not heard anything yet. Martha said they reached out asking for additional information.

C. COD Email Address: Marcus said he received an email from MA COD to update our email information. Annemarie asked if with all of Fairhaven's emails if people had access to her information. Marcus said that like all boards emails are considered public information under Open Meeting Laws.

D. By-Laws: Eleanor said she and Donna were going to meet to discuss this.

VIII. Public Comment: Marcus asked if there was anyone from the public that wanted to speak. Keith said a teacher of sign language reached out to him about teaching a class. Marcus said he would like to learn and we need to figure out a schedule. Donna said they had done it at the COA at night in the past and it needs to open to younger people as well as adults. She said she was willing to help get this going. Annemarie said she uses this daily and thinks this is fantastic. Martha said we could run multiple sessions a year doing one time for younger people. Eleanor asked if the \$70.00 cost was per session. Martha said we could try and scholarship this asking if we know any groups to help with this. Donna asked if the COD covered the cost before. Pam spoke about Deaf Inc, in New Bedford. Donna made a motion

to put together a working group to set up an ASL class. It was passed unanimously. It was agreed to have Donna, Annemarie, Martha and Keith work on this.

IX. Comments from Commission Members: Marcus said he would send out our contact information to everyone.

X. New Meeting Date: Eleanor moved that we meet Thursday, December 14 at 6:00 p.m. at town hall with Annemarie seconding it. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Closing Comments/Adjournment: Pam made a motion with Annemarie seconding it that we adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Chew
Secretary