

FAIRHAVEN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK
RCUD 2023 SEP 13 AM8:16

Meeting Minutes July 13, 2023

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

Contact: cod@fairhaven-ma.gov

Present: Town Hall: Marcus Ferro (chair), Pamela Whynot (vice-chair), Eleanor Chew(secretary), Glenn Gabbard (treasurer), Donna Maino Lavalley, Cameron Durant (staff liaison), Keith Silvia (Select Board Representative)

ZOOM: Ronnie Medina

Absent: Annemarie Chagnon

Guests: Fairhaven Cable TV

ALL VOTES WERE TAKEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE

I. CALL TO ORDER: Marcus Ferro, chair, read the meeting call to order and the state guidelines and chair, Marcus Ferro called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Pam made a motion to accept the minutes and Glenn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. MEMBERSHIP: Marcus said there was nothing new and we were fine with the members we have. Pam said one person reached out on Face Book and said the state wants people with disabilities on the commission. Glenn asked who the town official was on the commission with the response being that Keith Silvia is the Select Board Representative who is a non-voting member. Eleanor said the two openings are posted on the town's volunteer page. Pam restated the belief nothing about us without us. Glenn said that with nine members we would not still have a majority of five with disabilities. Marcus said he would like more from this community but now he is fine with the board as it is.

IV. TOWN ACCESSIBILITY:

A. Town Hall: Eleanor said there is no new update.

B. Public Safety: Marcus said he spoke with Lt. Kobza and they are working on something but it was too soon to release information. There are seat belt covers at the police station as well as town hall.

C. Infrastructure: Marcus said that Pam had noticed that the mats were not down at the town beach. Marcus said he has spoken with Vinnie Furtado at the BPW who said they may not be getting put out daily. This needs to be followed up on. Glenn said the entrance is hard to get through as king how to get to the boardwalk. Cameron stated that the boardwalk is 30 plus years old and the walk needs repairs. Marcus talked about lobbying for capital improvements. Keith said there was no wheelchair with big wheels. Pam asked how someone gets access to the beach chair. Cameron asked if the chair was for emergencies with Marcus saying it was for general use. Keith asked if we needed a sign there stating the chair was available. Eleanor said it needs to be on the CPC plan. Glenn suggested that we look at what other towns who

have done it well as this can be done badly. Pam said we need to see what is there. Marcus said the SMILE Group donated an inflatable beach wheelchair. Glenn assured us that they were an actual respected group. Action Items: 1. Beach items need to go down daily. 2. Make sure people know the chairs are available. Marcus said there needs to be a new boardwalk. Eleanor said we need to get funding to do an accessibility study in town and that would be included in this. Glenn shared concern that this could be a liability if misused and Cameron responded that staff may need to be trained. Pam asked about additional action items. Donna asked if there were other areas to access the beach that would be better and that the Conservation Committee needs to be involved in talks about this. She asked if another beach would be better for the chairs. She offered to find out where all the beaches are in town. Cameron asked what our plan was long term, with Marcus responding a new boardwalk.

D. Special Education/ Fairhaven Public Schools: Marcus said he spoke with Brian Monroe, the Vice-Chair of the School Committee about the parking issues around the high school. Brian asked him to email the superintendent, chair and himself so they could discuss this and that they would notify the students. Marcus will do this once he has specific information with Pam suggesting that he reach out to Annemarie as she was the one who initiated this.

E. Housing: We can take this off of the agenda

F. Social Media: Pam said Glenn is sending her things regularly and our numbers are increasing. Glenn said the goal was to have something up frequently.

G. Mission Statement: Eleanor handed out a draft of all the mission statements that had been presented. Pam let Ronnie know it was in his email. Marcus said he liked statement two the best. He asked for our input and thoughts saying two was the best as it was succinct and made the points. Pam said she preferred the ones that talked about inclusion. Marcus said four did that, reading statement four aloud. Her thanked everyone who worked on this. Eleanor said that statement five was missing a part and Glenn said it was on the back of the page. Eleanor thanked him. Pam said statement three is more visionary and Marcus read this one aloud. Eleanor said she liked that one the least as it talks about who we collaborate with asking if most people cared saying she liked four and five. Pam asked Eleanor to clarify that these are just something we do and does not need to be a part the statement. Eleanor said yes. She explained a mission statement has two parts: First it is to guide us in what we do and secondly it tells people who we are and what we do and that she thought most people cared more about what we do locally and that we can work with whoever we want to. Marcus said five is succinct. Glenn said four captured five but added more. Marcus asked Ronnie which one he liked with Ronnie responding statement four. Donna said let's do four and Marcus responded that we need a majority who like one of them. He asked if anyone objected to statement four. Donna said she liked the part in three that talked about the other barriers as she thought people have stereotypical views of people with other disabilities and we often talk about mobility issues. She said we need to be more aware of people with less visible disabilities that keep them from being fully involved. Eleanor asked how we add that wording into statement four with Glenn suggesting we wordsmith it. Marcus said let's just add it in.

Marcus suggested that we adopt as our Mission Statement: The Fairhaven Commission on Disability serves to identify and eliminate architectural, procedural, attitudinal and communication barriers in town, ensuring that all residents have equitable access to services. We work to design, advocate, coordinate and implement services that address the needs of people with disabilities while educating the community and enlisting their support and participation. Our aim is to work with other agencies and organizations to support the needs of people with disabilities within the state and federal guidelines, making Fairhaven a more inclusive and equitable place for all. Eleanor moved the motion as presented by Marcus. It was voted unanimously.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT/BUDGET: Glenn reminded us that we have \$1,000.00 in our budget for this year.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. MA. COD Meeting: Glenn shared that there was a meeting with Evan about the grant process on July 19th at 11:00 and to let him know if we want to join the ZOOM meeting.

B. Disability Pride Event with the Belonging Committee: Cameron informed us this event was planned for Sunday, July 30th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging Building. He told us to reach out to Jessica Fidalgo for information. Pam said this is on the agenda as we want to have a booth there. Glenn handed out an information sheet with costs for a banner and a flyer. saying the banner would be reusable. Eleanor asked what would be on the banner and wants to see the final design. Glenn said we could do a one page flyer for events for \$70.00 with the revised Mission Statement. Pam moved that we spend \$70.00 for 100 copies of the flyer with Donna seconding it. The motion passed with five yes and one no vote. Pam moved that we purchase a 2foot by six foot banner with the town seal and Fairhaven Commission On Disability on it at a cost of \$66.00, with Glenn seconding it. Eleanor asked if this cost included the printing on the banner or if it was just for the banner. The motion passed with five yes votes and one no vote. Eleanor said she voted no not because she was against the purchases but because she did not think this was the way to do this.

C. Snow Removal: Pam shared the language in the town's by-laws about snow removal and said she contacted Johanna at the police station to see if anyone had ever been fined for not removing snow. Johanna said not that she was aware of. Marcus said in some situations it could be done. Glenn said the police department should be the first defense. Pam said the fire department is removing if needed. Donna talked about how this was safety for all.

D. Emergency Preparedness Webinar: Pam said she wanted this meeting to be on record.

E. MA. COD Statewide Meetings: Eleanor said there was information on their website to sign up for the statewide meetings on ZOOM.

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Meetings with Department Heads: Eleanor spoke about what meetings she and Glenn had done with the COA, Veteran's and Recreation Center directors. Glenn said that the library director had asked him to meet with us.

VIII. Public Comments: No public comments were received

IX. New Meeting Date: Eleanor moved that we meet Thursday, August 17th at 6:00 p.m. at town hall with Pam seconding it. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Closing Comments/Adjournment: Eleanor made a motion that we adjourn at 7:20 p.m. with Pam seconding it. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Chew
Secretary