

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK
COD 2023 FEB 21 AM 8:54

FAIRHAVEN COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Meeting Minutes January 12, 2023

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

Contact: cod@fairhaven-ma.gov

Present: Town Hall: Marcus Ferro (chair), Pamela Whynot (vice-chair). Eleanor Chew (secretary), Annemarie Chagnon.

ZOOM: Donna Maino Lavalley, Ronnie Medina

Absent: Sarah Buck, Glenn Gabbard

Guests: Jeff Dougan, Cameron Durant (staff liaison). Fairhaven Cable TV

ALL VOTES WERE TAKEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE

I. CALL TO ORDER: Marcus Ferro, chair, called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and read the state guidelines for meetings.

II MEMBERSHIP: Pam welcomed our two new members- Annemarie Chagnon and Ronnie Medina to the commission.

GUEST SPEAKER: JEFF DOUGAN- MASS COD: Pam introduced Jeff Dougan from the MA. COD and explained that he was joining us to discuss best practices among COD's. Jeff thanked us for inviting him and said he wants a working relationship with us. He encouraged us to email him with any questions, needs or concerns at any time. Pam spoke about closed captioning and how it does not show up on the tv as an option. Jeff said he would send us the documents he was showing us. He offered to join us again by Zoom or to come out in person should we want him to. he explained his role at MA. COD Community Services Unit. He informed us that there is a lot of information on the State COD website that anyone can access. Jeff said the rules for public accessibility of roads has rule that are changing and there is no standard to look at. They use the best practices from the Department of Justice (DOJ). Their goal is the removal of architectural barriers and communication barriers. There is a grant application process that we may want to look into. He spoke about the Personal Emergency Preparedness Program. Pam asked for notifications if everyone could be on it or if it had to be one person. Jeff responded that they want the chair or one main contact person for notifications, but an individual could sign up through their constant contact list. He guided us through the website. Cameron asked who the town's ADA Co-ordinator was and if it should be the building inspector or someone else. Jeff said MA. COD had no criteria for this but it must be a responsible town employee and that the building inspector may not be the best person as it would increase their workload. Marcus said our ADA Co-ordinator is the town administrator. Jeff asked what the grievance policy would be if the town administrator is that person.

Marcus asked Jeff if he had spoken with other town COD's and what things they were facing. Marcus expressed our desire to have more people with disabilities serve on the commission which can be difficult for them to do. Jeff said this is a huge issue, but the majority need to be disabled. Jeff said membership can be thirteen but warned us to be careful as this can create quorum issues. Marcus said ours was set at nine but he wants to go to thirteen to

include more people with disabilities. Jeff suggested that we advertise on the town website and consider starting a Friends of the Commission group to bring people along and to be ready when they are needed. He suggested we contact various groups, departments in town to seek members. Jeff asked if the money from handicapped parking tickets was going to us or the general budget. He said that under MGL 40, Section 22G that we can do this and we could work with the Board of Selectmen to accomplish this during a meeting. He was asked about by-laws and said that the laws governing us were a template and we could use what worked in it. Pam said that we have a template but not concrete by-laws. Jeff suggested that we meet with department heads to let them know we are here and want to work with them and determine what their needs are. Jeff said if we make changes to our by-laws, we should make sure it includes powers and duties. Pam said that with changes to buildings that the Historical Commission which may have different priorities trumps the ADA with changes. Jeff said with renovations the local Historical Commission needs to go through the state Historical Commission for waivers. Marcus thanked Jeff, saying we appreciated his coming but that we needed to wrap this up. Jeff closed by reminding us that we need to have all six of the breakdown goals in whatever our by-laws say. Jeff left the meeting at 5:59 p.m...

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Pame made a motion to accept the December minutes with Donna seconding it. The motion passed with 4 in favor, and 2 abstentions. (Note; the abstentions were from new members who were not part of the December meeting).

III. MEMBERSHIP: Marcus said that we were established at the annual town meeting in 1997 with a limit of nine members. Annemarie asked for an explanation of the process. Marcus asked if we should increase to 13 and increase the town by-laws. Eleanor said we should keep it at nine until this is secure. She asked if we can do alternates with friends and any change will need to go through the town. Marcus said we need to make quorums. Eleanor said with alternates they could be the next to be appointed when someone resigns and they would be up to speed.

Marcus passed the chairmanship of the meeting to Pamela Whynot, vice-chair, at 6:07 p.m.

IV. TOWN HALL ACCESSIBILITY:

Donna said there was no update on the closed captioning and she has spoken with the couple who brought this up. Annemarie said it is hard for her not to be able to access closed captioning. Pam said we need to start here with Donna responding that we need closed captioning. Eleanor asked if she had reached out to Derek Frates which Donna said she had not done. Pam asked Donna to tell Derek we are available if he needs help with this. Annemarie said the deaf community has devices that work with technology and will find out what the specific item is. Donna said we need a solution that will help many with hearing issues and we need to institute this across the board.

Eleanor said that nothing new has been done to address the accessibility issues as we are waiting for the Joe Booth Study to be finalized.

B. PUBLIC SAFETY: Pam asked for any comments and Ronnie asked if we had been working on this before. Cameron asked if we had ever issued a policy for HP fines before. Annemarie stated there is an issue at the high school with spots and with the curb cuts. Annemarie said she does not feel the general population understands the need of the extra space with the HP parking spots.

C. INFRASTRUCTURE: Pam said this was completed and should be removed from the agenda. Pam explained that this was there as people in wheelchairs cannot access the bus stops after it snows. She explained what we had done and that someone needs to find people to do the stops.

D. SPECIAL EDUCATION: Pam said Jenna is working on a resource list and she has reached out to the family Resource Center at the middle school. Cameron asked if the schools could provide us with a point person. It was agreed that this was a good idea.

E. HOUSING/NEWSLETTER: Pam said we need to do the article for the Housing Authority newsletter which needs to be approved by the board in advance. The goal of this is to present Tenant Rights to tenants. Eleanor asked if this could be sent out in advance so we could approve it at the next meeting. Cameron said there may be an extra step due to open meeting laws. Pam explained open meeting laws as the question arose as to what we meant.

F. SOCIAL MEDIA: Pam said that Cameron has done a great job on this and Cameron invited us to join him on this endeavor. He asked us to like the page and to invite our friends to do the same. Eleanor asked if we could announce the ASD seat belt covers on the Facebook page. Cameron said yes and that people could come to town hall to pick them up.

G. MISSION STATEMENT/BY-LAWS: Pam said we need to write a focused set of by-laws. Annemarie asked if something was outside of our role what we would do. Pam said we would refer them to appropriate person/agency.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT/BUDGET: Eleanor said Glenn had provided her with information and she read the comments he had from Ann Carreiro, Treasurer. Cameron said we need to use the money or we will lose it. Eleanor said we may need to use them within the categories listed. Pam asked for ideas to use the money. Donna said they did sign language class before. She asked if we need to change line items. We need to ask Glenn about the line items. Cameron said we may be able to do a transfer of funds. Can Glenn check with Ann C.? Pam asked if we could use the money to make the meetings more accessible. Eleanor said we need to figure out our needs and the costs and come back with the process to expend the funds. Annemarie said android devices may be good.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. ANNUAL MEETING REPORT BOOK: Eleanor asked if we could by consensus agree to submit a report for 2022 for the town's annual report book. It was agreed by consensus with Eleanor to do a draft for the next meeting.

B. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: No one had anything additional to discuss.

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE: The motion was made by Eleanor and seconded by Annemarie that we meet on Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: Eleanor made a motion to adjourn and Annemarie seconded it. The motion passed unanimously and we adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eleanor Chew
Secretary