

**Bridgewater Disabilities Commission
November 26, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 2:00pm via ZOOM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Motion to accept the August 27, 2024, minutes were made by Gloria; seconded by Karen.

Members present: David, Lorraine, Gloria and Karen. Guests: Estelle Wenson (soon to be a member).

Public Comments: None

New Business

Speaker Tom Pilla: Tom Pilla, Outreach from Independence Associates gave a highly informative presentation. He highlighted the various programs and services that Independence Associates offers. This agency serves thirty-one towns along the South Shore. They do not offer housing but assist those seeking housing. Independence Associates promotes the right of people with disabilities to live independently in the community.

MOD (Mass Office on Disability) David announced an upcoming program from MOD's Fall newsletter: Quarterly Tea with Municipal Commissions on Disability, December 19th from 10-11:30am.

October Disability Forum the BCCR (Bridgewater Communities for Civil Rights) group hosted a Forum on Disabilities at the Bridgewater Library on October 22, 2024. BCCR invited our Commission to attend the event and staff an informational table. Lorraine gave the Board an overview of the forum including the agencies that were present and the panelists. Karen and Gloria also attended and gave their input.

Disability Commission staffing updates Karen Kelleher was appointed to the Board. Estelle Wenson had her interview and will be appointed shortly. The Commission will be fully staffed.

Opportunity for a presentation at Senior Housing Lorraine asked the Board if they would like to have the Disabilities Commission sponsor an outreach event at the Bridgewater Housing Authority in the Spring. A short presentation would highlight what the role of the Disabilities Commission is and provide resource material. It was also suggested to have the COA participate too. The Board thought it was a great idea. Lorraine offered to coordinate this event and will connect with the Housing Authority Director for input and potential dates. The Tenant's Association and the Bridgewater Housing Authority Commissioners will also be contacted.

Crosswalk Safety in Downtown Bridgewater Area the Commission continues to address Crosswalk Safety throughout the Town. Flashing signals for the crosswalk connecting Heritage Circle and Hemlock Drive were also discussed.

Marathon Park Modification request David suggested that an effort be made through the Town to create a special needs playground at Marathon Park. Special needs playgrounds are getting the support

of many communities around the area. A formal draft will be written. This is an important project that this Commission could get involved in. The Board thought it was a great idea and discussed what the next steps would be including contacting the Parks and Recreation Board and the Town Manager's Office regarding potential grants.

Suggestions for future topics Lorraine will contact BSU's SAS (Student Accessibility Services) to see if they are available to join us on ZOOM at a future date.

Comments from Board members Karen gave the Board a report regarding her observations on Voting in Bridgewater/ ADA Checklist during the November Presidential Election. Overall, she felt that the Town did an excellent job accommodating and meeting the needs of disabled individuals who came in to vote. The one area of improvement would be around parking. There were only 2 Handicap spots. Karen felt that temporary HC parking spots could be created using traffic cones. Karen did a report that is on file.

Next Disability Commission Meeting January 28, 2025, at 2:00pm on ZOOM. There is no December meeting.

Adjournment Motion made by Gloria; seconded by Karen at 2:56pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Vice Chair Lorraine Carrozza